

At a Glance – the fourteen Strategic Actions

The Taskforce set a vision for the aged care industry and its workforce:

*'We exist to inspire people to **want to care**,
enable people to **properly care**
and **enhance life through care**.
Because how we care for our ageing
is a reflection of who we are as a nation.'*

A Matter of Care – Australia's Aged Care workforce strategy is made up of fourteen strategic actions. These give the industry tools to prepare the workforce for the future and improve the quality of aged care for all.

1. Creation of a social change campaign to reframe caring and promote the workforce

This action focuses on changing negative attitudes to ageing, recognising that reframing care is a social challenge. A multi-year workforce and industry positioning campaign that also addresses these perceptions while promoting employment opportunities in the aged care industry is required.

2. Voluntary industry code of practice

This will enable industry to define its consumer promise, standards, workforce practices and commitment to quality and safety. Standards and workforce practices that focus on the needs of the consumer and on attracting and retaining committed, high-quality staff are the hallmarks of the code.

3. Reframing the qualification and skills framework – addressing current and future competencies and skills requirements

This action is based on two interrelated building blocks – job architecture, including job design, job roles, progression and related competencies; and modernising and realigning vocational training. It is also linked to higher education, along with additional support for on-the-job and non-formal learning.

4. Defining new career pathways including accreditation

The aim is to support an agile workforce by rethinking and opening job pathways and career options. It recognises the emergence of new roles based on integrated and living well models of care. Pathways are linked with reframed qualifications and skills, recognising competencies, creating new and moving to longer career paths and an industry standard for worker and volunteer accreditation.

5. Developing cultures of feedback and continuous improvement

This focuses on workplace culture, including workplace-based feedback measures by supporting consumer, employee and leadership surveys/feedback, better pre-employment vetting of potential employees, and 360-degree feedback for development

of existing employees and line managers. It reinforces the central place of feedback on consumer outcomes and the role of organisations' governing bodies in reviewing and acting on feedback mechanisms and data.

6. Establishing a new standard approach to workforce planning and skills mix modelling

With aged care organisations required to demonstrate that the workforce is planned and the number and mix of staff deployed enables the delivery and management of safe and quality care and services, a standard approach to the fundamental elements of workforce planning is needed. The elements are: an organisation's business model (including model of care offered); profiles of each consumer; development and updating of holistic care plans; organisation of work (staff numbers, composition and skills); reporting and accountability to consumers, including provision for an integrated care and clinical governance committee for coverage of care delivered.

7. Implementing new attraction and retention strategies for the workforce

This action goes to how better employee engagement and enablement will improve attraction, retention and workplace culture in individual organisations and across the industry. Consistent follow-up action on this needs to be complemented by scaling up successful industry models, well-organised and purposeful student workplace placement and experiences and targeted strategies for specific groups, particularly for young people and a diverse workforce. These actions will reinforce finding and retaining the right people with the right fit and keeping valued skills and talented people.

8. Developing a revised workforce relations framework to better reflect the changing nature of work

This action recognises that, while individual organisations must be responsible for their industrial arrangements, opportunities need to be taken for the industry peak bodies, employers, employees and their representatives to open dialogues on modernising approaches to workforce organisation and productivity. The focus needs to be on the consumer needs, preferences and values driving the industry, the quality of jobs and realigning business and workforce models as the world of work changes. This action also recognises the value of all parties aligning on the funding required to underpin the sustainability of the industry.

9. Strengthening the interface between aged care and primary/acute care

This action responds to the need to better support the health and quality of life of each older person, based on their stage of life and personal goals. The interfaces and workforces involved are across the continuum of care and systems, and cover primary care, acute care and dental services. It recognises the impact on older people of siloed funding and systems. This action aims to maximise integrated care, take full advantage of well-tested regional coordination mechanisms and promote dialogue across all levels of government on areas needed for short-term and longer-term improvement.

10. Improved training and recruitment practices for the Australian Government aged care workforce

This action focuses on developing the capability of government workforces that work closely with consumers, organisations and the industry. These workforces are customer

facing and in direct and daily contact with consumers and aged care organisations. They must be knowledgeable about aged care and the industry, as their skills and competencies can influence how care is delivered and the timing of access to care.

11. Establishing a remote accord

Workforce issues in remote and very remote areas call for specific and tailored actions, informed by on-the-ground experience. A united remote and very remote industry voice is envisaged, with action to engage on workforce issues needing attention and develop pathways for change involving all levels of government, industry and the community.

12. Establishing an Aged Care Centre for Growth and Translational Research

This will provide a collaborative research ecosystem required to support current and future aged care organisations and their workforces in accessing the best empirical evidence to guide improvements in models of service delivery, the application of new models and technology into practice and the workforce capability required. This will serve as a resource to help develop the industry's potential in services export markets through priority-driven, outcomes-focused research.

13. Current and future funding considerations, including staff remuneration

This action focuses on the current funding and related innovation challenges for the industry. It recognises the need to have a more nuanced, open and aligned conversation on sustainable long-term funding in order for the industry to support and recognise their skilled workforce and meet evolving community expectations.

14. Transitioning the existing workforce to new standards

This is focused on an approach by which industry can lead execution of the strategic actions in a coordinated and systematic manner through an Aged Services Industry Council. The council, made up of industry chief executive officers (CEOs), would establish the voluntary code of practice and implement a transformation program based on six cross-industry work streams. Each would be led by a CEO and cover the principal strategic actions with clear accountabilities and timelines for completion.