



Care Workforce Labour Market Study

Discussion Paper



19 May 2021

Contents

Part 1 About the Care Workforce Labour Market Study	2
1.1 Overview	2
1.2 Purpose	2
1.3 Terms of Reference for the Study.....	2
Part 2 Approach and Themes	4
2.1 Our approach.....	4
2.2 Preliminary occupations in focus.....	5
2.3 Existing work.....	6
2.4 Themes.....	6
Part 3 Your feedback	9
3.1 Discussion questions	9
3.2 Making a submission.....	10
Appendix A	11

Part 1 About the Care Workforce Labour Market Study

1.1 Overview

The care and support workforce provides essential services to Australians and includes some of the fastest growing occupations in the labour market.

On 9 March 2021 the National Skills Commissioner, Mr Adam Boyton, was tasked by the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, to undertake an in-depth study on the factors affecting the supply and demand of care workers both in the near term and longer term to 2050.

There are a range of factors contributing to demand across aged, disability, veteran and mental health care, including:

- an ageing population and increased life expectancy
- the increased uptake of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- measures to improve mental health outcomes.

Accordingly, demand for workers in the care and support workforce is expected to continue to grow through to 2050.

However, labour shortages are emerging, which can be more pronounced in regional and remote communities. Without sustained growth in the care and support workforce, particularly over the next 5 years, the capacity to provide essential services will be challenged.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to support the National Skills Commissioner's examination of the care and support workforce labour market. This paper outlines the scope and focus of the Care Workforce Labour Market Study (the Study), including

existing work that will be used in the analysis. This paper also includes discussion questions (Part 3 Your Feedback) to guide your responses on areas where a deeper understanding would assist in informing the Study.

1.3 Terms of Reference for the Study

Without limiting related matters on which the Commissioner may report, the Commissioner should:

- examine the current profile of the care and support sector workforce, including occupation, qualifications and employment type, and the main sociodemographic characteristics, including gender, education and ethnicity
- examine the current balance of labour supply and demand in the sector, including geographic distribution and the extent to which current workforce arrangements meet community need including those in regional and remote Australia
- examine factors affecting the supply for care workers in the near term (over the next five years) and longer term in light of the ageing population (to 2050) including:
 - » potential challenges to labour supply including, but not limited to: remuneration, employee turnover, suitability of current skills and training model, employee engagement and enablement, ability to attract and retain talent and opportunities for career progression
 - » education and training pathways available to enter the care and support sector, including international qualifications
- assess the likely future growth in demand for workers in the care sector and the extent to which it can be met over the near and longer term. This should include consideration of current strategies to meet that need

including workforce planning, migration settings and linkages to the education and training sectors and employment programs and services

- draw on domestic and international policies and experience, where appropriate
- have regard to the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and lessons to date from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and implications for workforce that may stem from them
- develop a framework to monitor and assess pressures in the care and support sector workforce over the short, medium and long term.



Part 2 Approach and Themes

2.1 Our approach

Our approach encompasses 5 workstreams.

1. Research and synthesise

Identify and synthesise the wide range of reports relating to the care and support workforce (see Appendix A for an illustrative list of key reports).

2. Consult

Engage and consult with stakeholders, including through this discussion paper and submission process.

3. Model

Undertake cross-sectoral demand and supply modelling of the care and support workforce.

4. Analyse

Use quantitative and qualitative analysis to examine the demand and supply issues affecting the care and support workforce.

5. Framework

Develop a framework to monitor and assess the pressures on the care and support workforce.

2.2 Preliminary occupations in focus

The following lists the occupations the Study will consider as part of its analysis (at the ANZSCO 4-digit level¹). The employment size of each occupation by headcount is included in brackets as reported in the Labour Force Survey February 2021.

Care and Support Workers	4231 Aged and Disabled Carers (230,400)	4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers (91,500)			
Health and Welfare Support Workers	4113 Diversional Therapists (6,300)	4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses (27,700)	4115 Indigenous Health Workers (500)	4117 Welfare Support Workers (71,200)	
Registered Nurses	2543 Nurse Managers (21,500)	2544 Registered Nurses (287,000)			
Managers	1342 Health and Welfare Services Managers (32,900)				
Allied Health	2511 Nutrition Professionals (7,000)	2524 Occupational Therapists (23,800)	2525 Physiotherapists (29,500)	2526 Podiatrists (5,500)	2527 Audiologists and Speech Pathologists or Therapists (13,200)
Social Professionals	2721 Counsellors (29,600)	2723 Psychologists (37,500)	2724 Social Professionals (12,900)	2725 Social Workers (36,900)	2726 Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers (37,100)

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey February 2021

¹ Where possible analysis will be undertaken at the ANZSCO 6-digit level. ANZSCO refers to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

There are many occupations connected to the care and support workforce. The key considerations that have informed the selection of occupations in focus for the Study include:

1. Cross-cutting

Those occupations that are shared across aged, disability, veteran and mental health involved in direct care and support.

For the purposes of the Study, ancillary occupations are out of scope, as are roles predominantly in the medical and hospital settings.

2. Number of workers

Those occupations where a significant number of workers are employed in residential, in-home or community care and support.

While it is acknowledged unpaid and informal carers make an important and valuable contribution to care and support, for the purposes of the Study unpaid care is out of scope.

3. Data availability

For the Study, we will use ANZSCO and ANZSIC² to capture the widest range of available data. Because there are limitations with both these classifications, the Study will leverage other data sources where possible to supplement and explore the care and support workforce.

2.3 Existing work

In conducting the Study, it is acknowledged that extensive work to understand the care and support workforce has already been undertaken by governments, industry, peak bodies and advocacy groups. This includes recent and current Royal Commissions, inquiries of the Productivity Commission and various workforce strategies (see Appendix A for further examples).

The Study will supplement this work with additional research and analysis by the National Skills Commission (NSC) to gain a deeper understanding of demand and supply factors for the care and support workforce.

2.4 Themes

This section is a high-level synthesis of our research and understanding to date, which can be broadly grouped into the following themes.

1. Sustained growth
2. Challenges and opportunities
3. Data gaps

These themes have been drawn from the wide range of available reports and analysis relevant to the care and support workforce, including those where stakeholders have provided submissions on a broad range of topics.

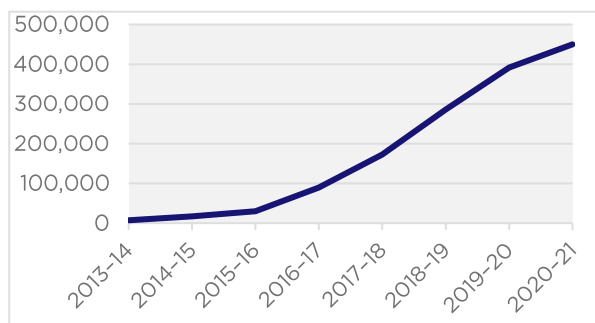
The themes outlined in this section are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather they are intended to highlight the key themes relevant to the Study and inform its background context.

There remain a number of areas where information is not readily available, is not as well understood, or is emerging in nature. These are outlined in Part 3 Your Feedback, with sample discussion questions designed to explore these areas further.

1. Sustained growth

Sustained growth in the care and support workforce is critical to ensuring there is capacity to provide essential services to Australians. For example, Chart 1 shows the growth in NDIS participants since it commenced in 2013-14.

Chart 1 NDIS participants



Source: *Federal Budget 2021-22 Guaranteeing Essential Services*

² Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Workforce Planning

Industry and government are working together on a range of workforce planning activities within each of the relevant sectors.

- The Study attempts, to the extent possible, to take a holistic view across sectors to better understand the common workforce trends and implications. It seeks to leverage and reuse existing material to inform the analysis.

2. Challenges and opportunities

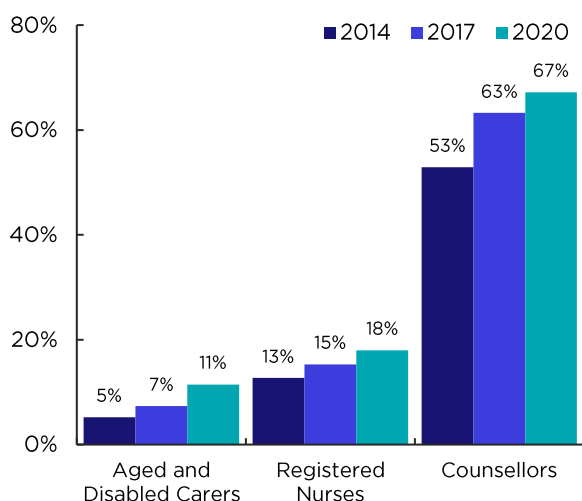
Significant challenges and opportunities exist in developing and sustaining a growing care and support sector, including:

Responsive and capable workforce

Building and enhancing a responsive and capable workforce to ensure that the workforce has the right skills and experience to consistently deliver high quality care and support. Given the importance of person-centred approaches across sectors this will likely require a more diverse skill mix.

For example, Chart 2 suggests employers are increasingly looking for mental health skills when advertising for a range of care and support roles.

Chart 2 Proportion of online job advertisements requesting mental health skills



Source: *Burning Glass Technologies, NSC analysis*

Training and qualifications

Training and qualifications play an important role in skilling, upskilling and ongoing professional development of the workforce.

There is criticism that training, both formal and informal, as well as qualifications may not be entirely fit-for-purpose.³ There are also indicators that aspects of the training system are responding to emerging skills requirements of the sector with new training being implemented (for example, the Entry into Care Roles and Infection Control Skill Sets) and industry-led updates underway (for example, Certificate III in Individual Support, Certificate IV in Ageing Support and Certificate IV in Disability).

Work context

Helping people is intrinsically rewarding. However, care and support can be challenging and difficult as aspects of these roles can take a physical, emotional and/or mental toll.

There are also a range of negative attitudes and perceptions surrounding care and support work.⁴

Work may be inefficiently organised and work hours are often fragmented. Casual employment is also a feature across the sectors, particularly in the NDIS and in-home based care.

Migration

Migrants have contributed to meeting demand for care and support roles in Australia.

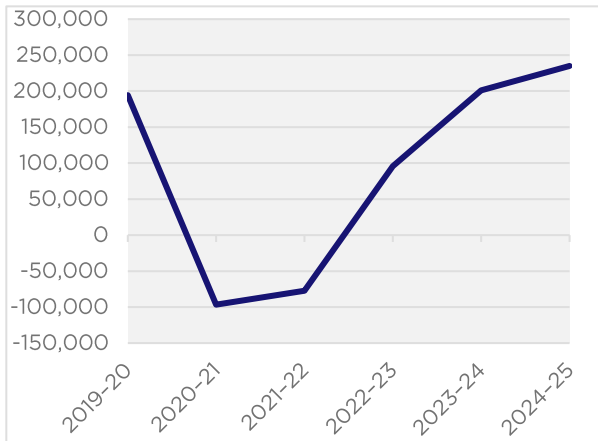
Skilled migration pathways are only available for some care and support occupations. Recently, the international movement of people has been significantly affected by COVID-19, as illustrated by Australia's net overseas migration estimates in Chart 3.

³ Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, *NDIS Workforce Interim Report*
Commonwealth of Australia Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2021, *Final Report: Care*

Dignity and Respect
Department of Health, 2017, *Legislated Review of Aged Care 2017*

⁴ Department of Health, 2018, *A Matter of Care Australia's Aged Care Workforce Strategy*

Chart 3 Net overseas migration



Source: 2021-22 Federal Budget, Budget Paper 3

There is also ongoing global competition for workers across a range of care and support roles.⁵

Thin markets

The capacity to provide and access essential services and training in some regional and remote locations in Australia is limited by thin markets.

Definition

Thin markets are defined as inadequate availability of services resulting in an inability to meet demand.

Thin markets may also emerge in the context of access to and provision of culturally appropriate services.

System settings

System settings within and across sectors have undergone a mix of significant reform and incremental change.

There is complexity in the systems that may contribute to workforce barriers and inefficiencies (for example, pricing, funding and regulation) particularly where providers and the workforce operate across sectors.

Around one-third of aged care providers operate across the NDIS and/or veteran care.⁶

3. Data gaps

Data gaps limit an accurate and complete understanding of the current care and support workforce profile and the implications for the future.

There is no clear and agreed view on who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the care and support workforce, even within existing structures.

Classifications

ANZSCO and ANZSIC have not kept pace with the changing nature of the care and support sector, resulting in a lack of accurate definitions for job roles and industry segments relevant to the care and support workforce.

Workforce data

Workforce data generated and collected is inconsistent across aged, disability, veteran and mental health care and support, making it difficult to develop a holistic understanding of the labour market and workforce implications for all care and support services.

⁵ World Health Organisation, 2017, *Women on the Move: Migration, care work and health*

⁶ Department of Social Services (DSS), 2020, DSS unpublished analysis.

Part 3 Your feedback

In view of the themes outlined in 2.4, the following sets out several focus areas where we welcome stakeholder insight and input. You are encouraged to focus your submission and responses on these areas where a deeper understanding would assist in informing the Study:

1. Workforce observations
2. Workforce attraction, retention and development
3. System settings
4. Thin markets
5. Technology
6. Monitoring framework
7. Data gaps.

The discussion questions below may relate to more than one aspect of the Study's Terms of Reference at 1.3.

3.1 Discussion questions

Workforce observations

What observations do you have about the job roles in the care and support workforce? Over the past 5 years how have you seen the care and support workforce change? How do you expect the workforce to change in the near-term and out to 2050?

Consider:

- emerging/new job roles
- skill change (required and new skills)
- job design
- specialisation and hybridisation of roles
- transferability of skills across different job roles
- skills for person-centred approaches to care and support
- entry pathways
- employment conditions
- workforce leadership and management.

What do you consider to be the key drivers of change to the care and support workforce into the future? How will the workforce need to adapt?

Workforce attraction, retention and development

To what extent are *mobility* and *skills transferability* between and across job roles important factors in workforce/worker attraction and retention?

What strategies and tactics are most effective in attracting and retaining a workforce/worker with the right skills?

What barriers exist to entry and establishing career pathways for the care and support workforce/workers?

What role do formal and informal training have in contributing to the supply and ongoing development of the care and support workforce?

Is there anything specific, which has not been previously identified that is a blocker to attraction, retention and/or ongoing workforce development?

System settings

In addition to previously identified system complexities (for example, funding, pricing, regulation), are there any other system issues (big or small) that are impacting the care and support workforce and the capacity to deliver quality care and support?

Thin markets

What strategies, initiatives and organisational structures are effective in improving the availability and sustainability of the care and support workforce in thin markets?

Technology

What role do you see for technology in enabling the care and support workforce?

Consider:

- training and skills acquisition for the workforce
- optimising the delivery of care and support
- enhancing care and support activities
- monitoring and enhancing quality
- potential change in ways people access services
- provider resource management
- technology adoption factors.

Monitoring framework

There are many challenges in ensuring a ready workforce to deliver the essential services Australians require. There is an ongoing need to monitor and assess pressures in the care and support workforce. What should be included in a workforce monitoring framework?

Consider:

- key elements of the framework
- data required, new or existing, to support the framework
- information needed for the framework to be an effective input into planning for, and development of, the care and support workforce.

Data gaps

What workforce data gaps have you observed and how could these be addressed?

Other information

Is there any other information about the care and support workforce that you would like to provide?

3.2 Making a submission

To make a submission go to our website.

www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/careworkforce

Submission options

To submit your input to the Study, you can:

1. Use the online form to respond to questions in this discussion paper
2. Use the online form to upload a document that addresses the questions and/or provide supplementary information.



Wednesday 16 June 2021

Submissions close.

Further information

For further information, email us at careworkforce@skillscommission.gov.au

Appendix A

A non-exhaustive list of reports, inquiries and material relating to the care and support workforce that will be used to inform the Study.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, *Mental health services in Australia*

Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, *2015 Intergenerational Report*

Commonwealth of Australia, 2021, Federal Budget 2021-22

Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2021, *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention - Interim Report*

Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, 2020, *NDIS Workforce Interim Report*

Commonwealth of Australia, Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2021, *Final report: Care, Dignity and Respect*

Commonwealth of Australia, Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Commonwealth of Australia, Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Commonwealth of Australia, The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2017, *Future of Australia's aged care sector workforce*

Department of Health, 2016, *National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey - The Aged Care Workforce 2016*

Department of Health, 2018, *A Matter of Care Australia's Aged Care Workforce Strategy, Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce*

Department of Health, 2020, *2019-20 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act 1997*

Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2017, *The labour market for personal care workers - in aged and disability care Australia 2017*

National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020, *National Disability Insurance Scheme Disability Support Worker Cost Model 2020-21*

National Disability Services, 2019, *Australian Disability Workforce Report 3rd Edition July 2018*

OECD, 2020, *Who Cares? Attracting and Retaining Workers for the Elderly*, OECD Health Policy Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris

Productivity Commission, 2019, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, Report no. 93

Productivity Commission, 2020, *Mental Health*, Report no. 95

Social Policy Research Centre UNSW Sydney, 2020, *Working in new disability markets: A survey of Australia's disability workforce*

State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, 2021, *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System Final Report*

