

CompliSpace Aged Care Workforce Report

Impossible Task: Workers' Views on
the Rising Demands of Aged Care



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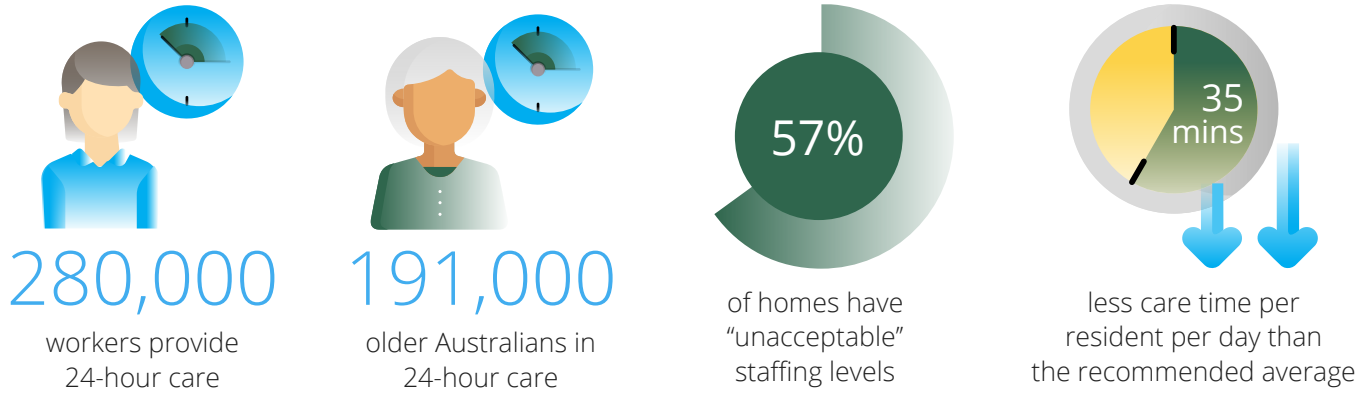
Table of Contents

Infographic Key Findings	3
Introduction from David Griffiths	4
About CompliSpace and Aged Care Essentials	6
Executive Summary	7
Crisis and Opportunity: A Profile of the Residential Aged Care Industry 2022	15
The Workforce Now: Increasing Demands Without Increasing Support	23
The Workforce in the Future: Facing the Impossible	27
About the Survey	30
What Aged Care Workers Are Saying	36

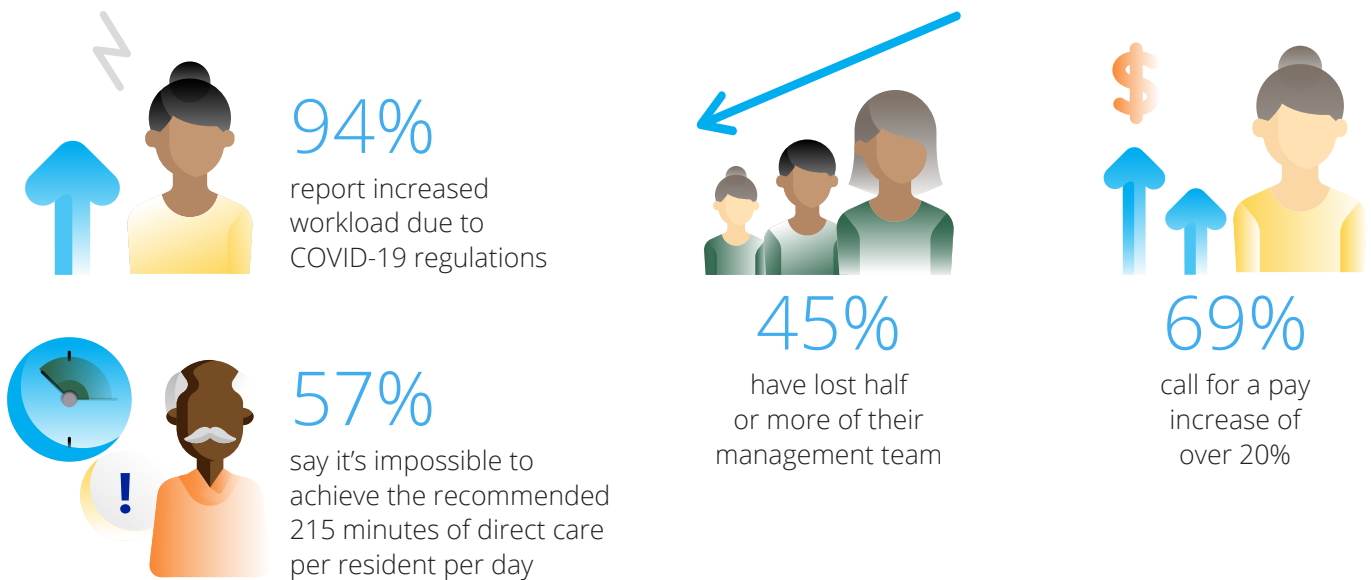
Impossible Task: Workers' Views on the Rising Demands of Aged Care - Key Findings

Australia's aged care sector is under-resourced and under pressure.

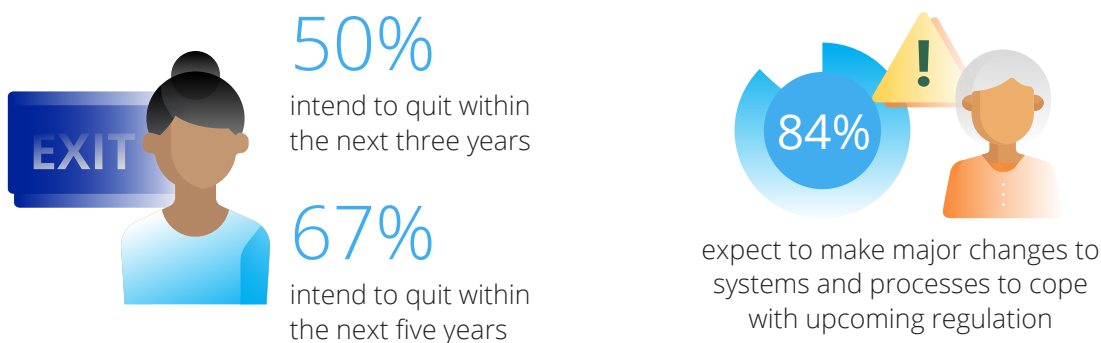
The Current Climate



More Demands, Same Support



What's to Come





Introduction from David Griffiths

Australia's aged care sector is under-resourced and under pressure. At current staffing levels, workers cannot provide aged care residents with the quality of care and services they need and deserve.

On average, the 191,000 aged care residents in Australia each receive 180 minutes of direct care per day.¹ This is 35 minutes below the 215 minutes of care time per day recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.²

The Australian Government has accepted the Royal Commission's recommendation and pledged to impose mandatory staffing requirements in residential aged care homes. By October 2023, homes will be required to provide 200 minutes of direct care to each resident, daily. This will rise to 215 minutes from October 2024.³

This mandate is much needed. Yet, currently, it is unattainable.

Our report shows that more than half of aged care workers across the nation (57%) believe that it is impossible to achieve the mandatory 215 minutes care time per resident, per day.

The reason is a lack of qualified aged care staff.

Ninety per cent of aged care workers (90%) across the country are desperate to see more staff in their facilities within the next year. Those in the ACT and NT are particularly feeling the pinch with all workers confident that the introduction of additional staff would be a major benefit in 2022/23.

New staff need to be properly trained because, currently, too many are not.

Almost half of aged care workers (48%) say that new staff are not prepared for their new role and pose a potential risk to residents. Tasmania has the greatest concern for incoming staff, with 64% of existing staff describing new team members as unprepared or very unprepared.

Without an influx of new, well-trained staff to support them, existing aged care workers face an ever-increasing burden, and for many the burden is too much.

¹Stewart Brown, Aged Care Financial Performance Survey Sector Report (March 2022), p 12. <https://www.stewartbrown.com.au/news-articles/26-aged-care>.

²Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report, recommendation 86. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>

³Labor: Better Care. <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-nurse-in-every-nursing-home>. Accessed June 2022.

Half of our residential aged care workforce (139,000 people⁴) plan to leave the industry within the next three years. Sixty-four thousand cannot see their time in the industry extending beyond the next 12 months. As well as the clear impact that further reductions in frontline care staff is having on residents and remaining staff, this exodus is carving a hole in leadership teams. Forty-five per cent (45%) of workers report that they have lost half or more of their management team in the last year. This can only worsen the impact caused by inexperienced and unprepared staff – if no-one is available to provide new staff with support and role models, the time it takes for them to learn will be even longer.

Low pay is one of the main reasons that staff are walking away from the sector. This is a long-standing issue but is enhanced by the environment of very low unemployment in Australia right now, which means that alternative roles are easily attainable. It is therefore not surprising that across the country two-thirds of all workers (69%) believe that they should receive an annual pay increase of more than 20%. Indeed, almost half (47%) of workers believe that the pay increase should be more than 25%.

There is a chance that workers will soon receive at least some of what they're asking for. The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is currently hearing a case to vary several Awards to increase pay for aged care workers by 25%.

Prior to the 2022 federal election, Labor committed to accepting and funding the outcome of the FWC case. This goes some way to explaining why the majority (79%) of aged care workers believe that Labor offered the best aged care policies in the recent federal election.

Alongside this hope, however, is scepticism. Almost 80% of workers have no confidence that the reforms flowing from the aged care Royal Commission will improve outcomes for residents.

This is the third annual aged care workforce report by CompliSpace. We hope you find the insights in this report valuable contributions to the national debate about how we care for older Australians and the staff who support them.

David Griffiths
CEO | CompliSpace

⁴Based on the Department of Health's 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report estimate of 277,671 staff in residential aged care. <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/10/2020-aged-care-workforce-census.pdf>.



About CompliSpace and Aged Care Essentials

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[CompliSpace](#) is a leading SaaS provider that helps high impact organisations in highly regulated industries meet their governance, risk and compliance obligations. This allows our customers to focus on providing the highest quality of service and care for those they serve.

CompliSpace provides services across the aged care, education, not-for-profit and corporate and financial services sectors. We have experienced aged care specialists on staff.

agedcareessentials BY COMPLISPACE

[Aged Care Essentials \(ACE\)](#) is a free weekly online publication, published by CompliSpace, focused on helping aged care providers understand their ever-changing and ever-increasing regulatory and compliance obligations.

Executive Summary



I work in this sector because I genuinely care and I believe in the organisation I work for. However, the unrealistic workload and lack of finances to achieve what you want to achieve is deflating.

Manager

5-10 years in aged care, TAS





Around 191,000 older Australians live in one of Australia's 2,700 communal residential aged care homes.⁵ They are cared for and supported 24 hours a day by a workforce of 280,000 dedicated managers, registered nurses, enrolled nurses, care workers, cleaners, caterers and support teams.⁶

Despite their dedication, these workers cannot provide all residents with the care and services they need.

On average, each aged care resident receives 180 minutes of direct care per day.⁷ This is 35 minutes below the 215 minutes of care time per day recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission).⁸

The Australian Government has accepted the Royal Commission's recommendation and pledged to impose mandatory staffing requirements on residential aged care homes. By October 2023, homes will have to provide 200 minutes of direct care per resident per day. This will rise to 215 minutes per day from October 2024.⁹

However, this report reveals that the care time mandate, while much needed, is impossible to achieve at current staffing levels. More than half of aged care workers across the nation (57%) say that it is impossible to achieve the proposed mandatory 215 minutes care time per resident per day. Victorians are among the most daunted, with 65% of Victorian workers convinced that the 215-minute target is impossible to achieve.

Almost all workers anticipate that they will have to make major changes in the year ahead and would benefit from an influx of new staff. But the opposite is happening. Existing staff are leaving the industry in unprecedented numbers, with 50% of workers (139,000 people) intending to leave within the next three years.

This exodus is carving a hole in leadership teams. Forty-five per cent (45%) of workers report that they have lost half or more of their management team in the last year. Losses are heaviest in Tasmania where 59% of workers have lost half or more of their management team in the last year, including 17% who have lost their entire management team.

This deprives workers of much-needed guidance and oversight from experienced managers which in turn undermines stability and workers' capacity to provide continuity of care for residents.


⁵ GEN Aged Care Data: <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics>. Last updated 29 April 2022.

⁶ Department of Health: 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report. <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/10/2020-aged-care-workforce-census.pdf>.

⁷ Stewart Brown, Aged Care Financial Performance Survey Sector Report (March 2022), p 12. <https://www.stewartbrown.com.au/news-articles/26-aged-care>.

⁸ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report, recommendation 86. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.

⁹ Labor: Better Care. <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-nurse-in-every-nursing-home>. Accessed June 2022.



Stress and low pay are the top reasons that staff are leaving the industry. Not surprisingly, two-thirds of all workers (69%) believe that they should receive an annual pay increase of more than 20%. In fact, almost half (47%) of workers believe that the pay increase should be more than 25%.

Low pay is not only driving existing workers from the industry, it is keeping new workers out. The Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) predicts that, without interventions including improvements to pay and working conditions, there will be a shortfall of over 110,000 aged care workers by 2030.¹⁰

Those new workers who do arrive are often underprepared. Almost half of aged care workers (48%) describe new staff as either unprepared, or very unprepared, when they commence at a new facility. This includes 10% of workers who describe new staff as so unprepared that they pose a risk to residents even with extra training and supervision.

Within the industry, workers are seeking to increase efficiencies where they can, with around half of the workforce adopting new technology to help ease the paperwork burden and free up more time for delivery of care. But the scale of the problem demands more than internal change.

Workers have mixed feelings about government intervention in the industry. Most (79%) believe that Labor offered the best aged care policies in the recent federal election and welcome the change of government. However, almost 80% have no confidence that the reforms flowing from the Royal Commission will improve outcomes for residents.

This is the third in a series of reports by CompliSpace into aged care and it shows an alarming trend. Burdens on staff have increased since last year, staff are more daunted by the future and more of them are planning to leave the industry.

¹⁰ Across all sectors including residential and home care. CEDA: Duty of Care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge 2021. https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/researchcataloguedocuments/recent%20research/pdfs/aged-care-workforce-2021-final_1.pdf. See also: CEDA: Duty of Care: Aged Care Sector in Crisis 2022. <https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/attachments/duty-of-care-aged-care-sector-in-crisis.pdf>.

Key Findings

The Workforce Now: Increasing Demands Without Increasing Support

New staff are too few and too inexperienced to meet the demands imposed by increasing regulation. Key staff are leaving the industry at this critical time and many of those who remain have adopted new technology with mixed results.

New Staff Are Unprepared

- Only 9% of workers describe their new staff as well prepared and only 2% describe them as very well prepared.
- 41% describe new staff as adequately prepared (requiring extra training/supervision but posing no risk to residents).
- 38% describe new staff as unprepared and in need of extra training/supervision to prevent risk to residents.
- 10% describe new staff as so unprepared that they pose a risk to residents even with extra training and supervision.

Significant Gaps in Management

- 45% of workers have lost half or more of their management team within the last 12 months.
- This includes 11% of workers who have lost their entire management team within the last year.
- Losses are heaviest in Tasmania where 59% of workers have lost half or more of their management team in the last year, including 17% who have lost their entire management team.

Increased Workloads Due to Increased Regulation

- 94% of workers experienced an increased workload due to COVID-19 regulations in the last year.
- 85% of workers experienced an increased workload due to the introduction of the 2019 Aged Care Quality Standards.
- These numbers were already high in 2021, with 85% of workers reporting increased workloads due to COVID-19 regulations and 74% reporting increased workloads due to the Aged Care Quality Standards. In 2022, both numbers jumped by 10%.

Adoption of New Technology

- Many in the industry (47%) have adopted new technologies in the past year to make it easier to manage increasing regulatory burdens.
- Experiences with new technology are mixed, with 54% of aged care workers reporting that it has improved the quality and efficiency of their work, 31% saying that it has had no effect and 15% saying that it has harmed quality and efficiency.
- The take-up of new technology by aged care workers varies across Australia, with Canberrans most likely to have done so (75%), followed by Victorians (49%), Western Australians (48%) and South Australians (48%).
- Tasmania is lagging, with 40% of operators adopting new technology in the last 12 months to deal with their compliance obligations.
- Compared with 2021, around 15% fewer workers are adopting new technology in the last 12 months to deal with their compliance obligations. Of those who have adopted new technology, 5% fewer see it as a benefit.

The Workforce in the Future: Facing the Impossible

Workers are daunted by mandatory care times and are leaving the industry in unprecedented numbers because of stress and low pay. They are calling for more staff and higher pay, and while they welcome the new Labor Government, they are sceptical about the value of government intervention in the industry.

Impossible Task: Workers' Views on Mandated 215 Minutes Care Time

We asked workers about the feasibility of achieving the Royal Commission's recommendation of a mandatory 215 minutes of care time per resident per day:

- 57% say that this is impossible to achieve.
- 39% say that this is difficult to achieve.
- 4% say that this is easy to achieve.
- Victorians are among the most daunted, with 65% of Victorian workers convinced that the 215-minute target is impossible to achieve.

Mass Exodus: 50% of Staff Plan to Leave Within Next Three Years

- 50% of workers (139,000 people) intend to leave the residential aged care industry within the next three years. This includes 23% (64,000 people) who plan to leave within the next 12 months.
- 67% of workers (186,000 people) intend to leave within the next five years.
- The exodus has worsened since last year, with 10% more workers joining the cohort who plan to leave the industry within the next three years, bringing the total up from 40% in 2021 to 50% in 2022.
- Reasons for staying or going remain roughly the same, with stress and pay still the main reasons that workers leave the industry and "relationships with residents and their families" still the main reason they stay.

Top Reasons for Leaving:

- 43% rank "stress" as their top reason for leaving the industry; 78% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.
- 24% rank "remuneration" as their top reason for leaving the industry; 63% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.
- 19% rank "excessive overtime/expectations" as their top reason for leaving the industry; 79% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.

Top Reasons for Staying:

- 43% rank "Relationships with residents and families" as their top reason for staying in the industry; 89% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- 25% rank "Job satisfaction and fulfilment" as their top reason for staying in the industry; 81% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- 19% rank "Relationships with co-workers" as their top reason for staying in the industry; 85% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- Only 8% of workers rank "remuneration" as their top reason for staying in the industry, and only 21% include it in their top three reasons for staying.

More Staff and Major Changes Needed in the Next 12 Months

- 90% of workers say that the addition of new staff over the next 12 months would be “very beneficial”.
- Workers in the ACT and NT are particularly feeling the pinch with all (100%) of ACT and NT respondents describing the addition of new staff in 2022/23 as “very beneficial”.
- 84% of workers anticipate that the aged care homes that they work for will need to make major changes to systems and processes to cope with regulatory changes in 2022/23.
- An overwhelming 95% of workers in Tasmania say that major changes will be needed to cope with the year ahead, followed by 87% of those in the ACT.
- Compared with last year, many more workers are daunted by the future. In 2021, 60% of workers anticipated that they would need to make major changes to systems and processes to cope with upcoming regulatory changes. In 2022, that number has jumped to 84%.

Wages Gap

Residential aged care workers continue to receive lower pay than comparable workers in other industries.¹¹ Some of these workers will benefit from the 5.2% increase to the National Minimum Wage, announced by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) in June 2022.¹²

More significantly, the FWC is currently hearing a case to raise the Award wage for many aged care workers by up to 25%. The FWC began accepting written evidence in the matter on 26 April 2022. In June 2022, the FWC granted the new Labor Government permission to join the case and make submissions. Final oral hearings in the case have been rescheduled to 24 and 25 August 2022 in Melbourne and 1 September 2022 in Sydney.¹³ Labor has promised to accept and fund the outcome of the case.¹⁴ In terms of what aged care workers are seeking:

- 69% believe that they should receive an annual pay increase of more than 20%
- this includes 47% of workers who believe that the pay rise should be more than 25%.

Scepticism About Reform

In May 2021 the Australian Government announced a suite of regulatory reforms in response to the Royal Commission. We asked aged care workers how they thought these reforms would affect outcomes for aged care residents.

Most workers (79%) have no confidence that the reforms will improve outcomes for residents. This includes:

- 33% who believe that the reforms will have no effect.
- 35% who believe that the promised reforms are all talk and will never actually be implemented.
- 11% believe who believe that the reforms will make outcomes worse for residents.

A significant minority (21%) believe that the reforms will improve outcomes for residents.

Tasmanians are the most sceptical, with almost half (46%) convinced that the reforms will never happen.

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Comparison with Last Year's Report

Burdens have increased since last year, staff are more daunted by the future and more of them are planning to leave the industry.

- The exodus is worsening, with 10% more workers joining the cohort who plan to leave the industry within the next three years, bringing the total up from 40% in 2021 to 50% in 2022.
- Reasons for staying or going remain roughly the same, with stress and pay still the main reasons that workers plan to leave the industry and “relationships with residents and their families” still the main reason that they plan to stay.
- Even more workers are burdened by increasing workloads. These numbers were already high in 2021, with 85% of workers reporting increased workloads due to COVID-19 regulations and 74% reporting increased workloads due to the Aged Care Quality Standards. In 2022, both numbers jumped by 10%.
- Compared with 2021, around 15% fewer workers have adopted new technology to help them cope with increasing regulation. Of those who have adopted new technology, 5% fewer see it as a benefit.
- Many more workers are daunted by the future. In 2021, 60% of workers anticipated that they would need to make major changes to systems and processes to cope with upcoming regulatory changes. In 2022, that number jumped to 84%.

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Conclusion

Australia's aged care sector is in the midst of a crisis.

Despite their tireless efforts, workers cannot provide aged care residents with the quality of care they need and deserve. There are simply not enough staff. Many fear that the situation will only worsen, with low pay driving existing workers out of the industry while making it unattractive to potential new workers, particularly in the face of the rising cost of living and low unemployment.

Without intervention, the residential aged care industry will be drastically understaffed within the next three years, exacerbating an already fragile framework of quality service delivery. Residents will not get the care that workers want to give them, the care that the government has legislated. Along with lack of care will come increased risk of harm.

The data in this report confirms what aged care workers have been reporting anecdotally for years: the way to fix our broken residential aged care industry is to attract and retain more staff. With the solution firmly articulated, Australia can move on to a more productive national debate about how to put it into action.

Crisis and Opportunity: A Profile of the Residential Aged Care Industry 2022

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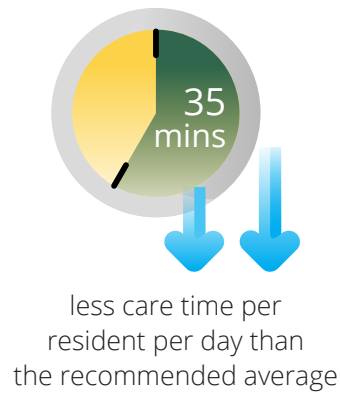
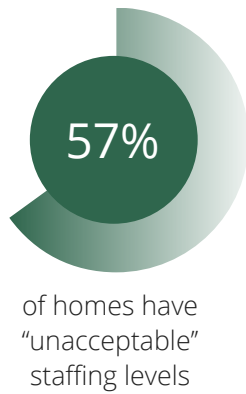
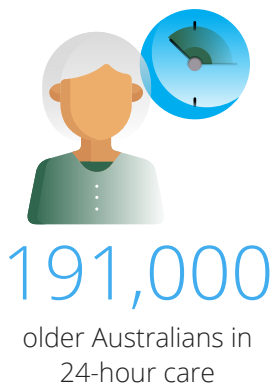
Staffing remains an issue and affects day-to-day care of residents and the mental health of the team. It is an ongoing struggle to lift the morale of the team when they are working to maximum capacity and still feel they can't achieve what they want to.

Manager

10+ years in aged care, WA



Overview



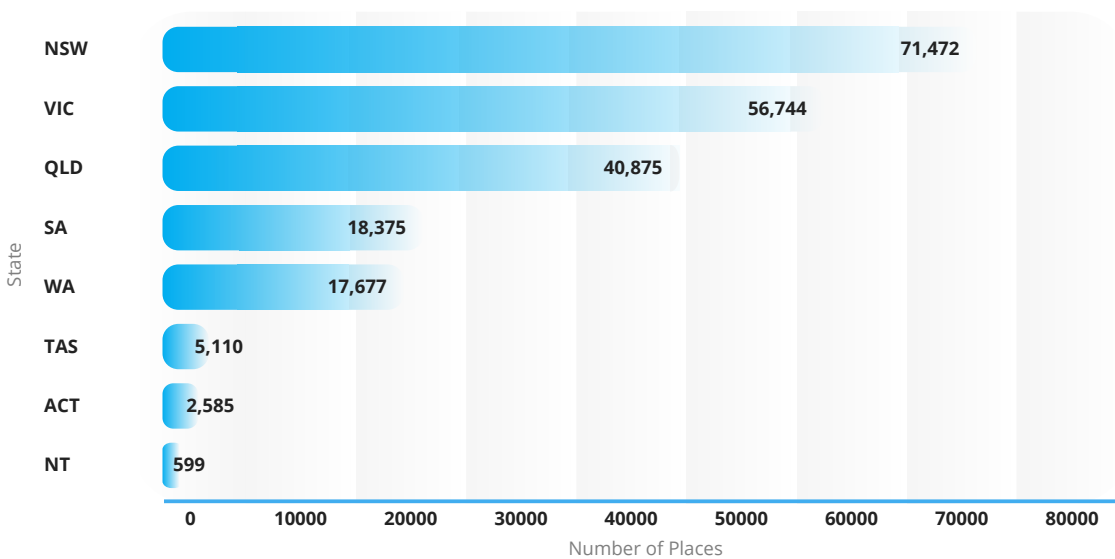
- > 2,704 residential aged care facilities are home to 191,000 Australians.
- > Demand for residential aged care is increasing as Australia's population ages.
- > More aged care staff will need to be engaged to keep pace with demand.
- > Lack of adequate numbers of aged care staff is a major risk in the aged care industry that could impact hundreds of thousands of Australians.

Residential aged care offers long-term (permanent) or short-term (respite) stays in an aged care facility.

At 30 June 2021, there were 830 organisations providing residential aged care in Australia. Many of these organisations provided care through a number of different homes, or "services". At 30 June 2021, there were 2,704 services in Australia providing permanent or respite care to 191,000 residents.

Residential aged care services are located across the country with 78% in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Almost two-thirds (63%) are located in metropolitan areas, compared with 21% located in rural, remote or very remote areas.¹⁵

Figure 1
Places in aged care by state and program type (residential care) 30 June 2021



¹⁵ GEN Aged Care Data, Providers, services and places in aged care. <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics/Providers-services-and-places-in-aged-care>. Last updated 29 April 2022.

The Majority of Residential Aged Care Providers are Small, Not-for-Profit Organisations

57%

of residential aged care services in Australia are run by not-for-profit organisations

34%

of residential aged care services in Australia are run by private organisations

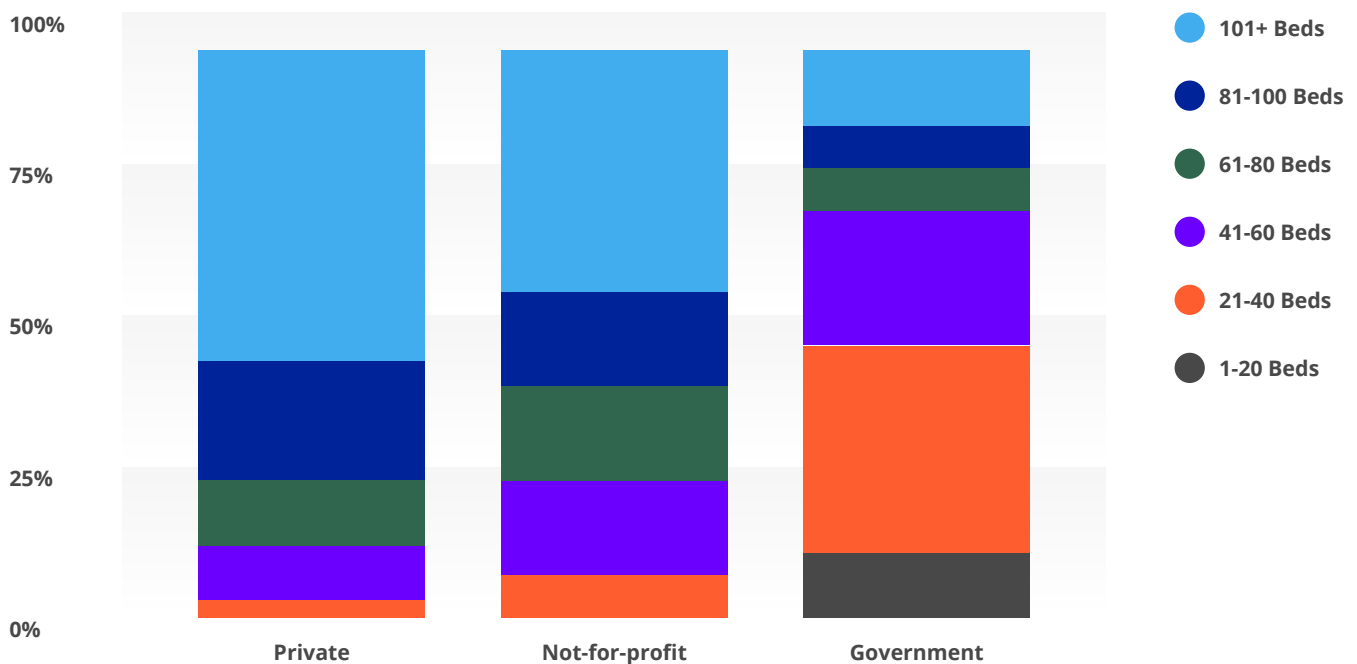
9%

of residential aged care services in Australia are run by government.

The services (homes) managed by not-for-profit organisations tend to be smaller than for-profit organisations, with 55% of homes managed by not-for-profit organisations having fewer than 101 beds, compared with 42% of for-profit organisations having fewer than 101 beds. Eighty-seven per cent (87%) of government-run homes have fewer than 101 beds.

Figure 2

Places in residential care by organisation type, 30 June 2021

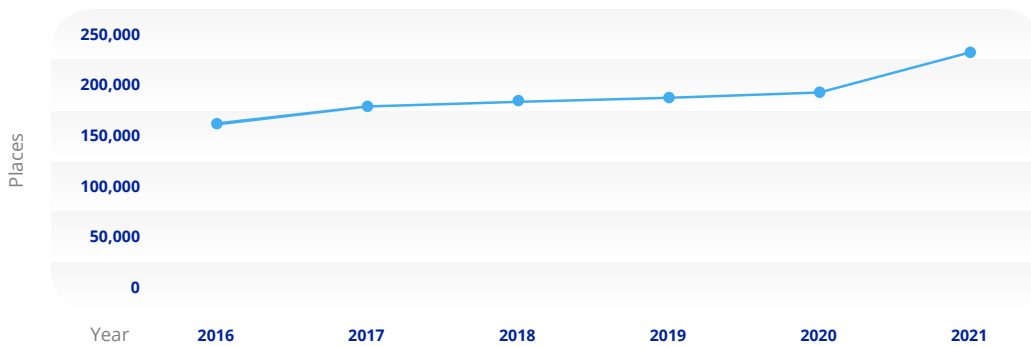


Demand is Increasing

As Australia's population has aged, the number of residential aged care beds has increased.

Figure 3

Residential aged care places, 2016 to 2021



The demand for aged care places and staff will continue to grow as the Australian population ages.

About 16% of the Australian population, or 4.3 million people, are over the age of 65.¹⁶ This is expected to increase to 20% (around six million people) by 2031.¹⁷

Regulation is More Complex

Over the last few years, there has been a substantial increase in the complexity of the compliance regulations that govern residential aged care homes.

On 1 July 2019 the Accreditation Standards were replaced with the more complex Aged Care Quality Standards. In so doing, a two-page fact sheet and short Guide setting out four Standards and 44 expected outcomes were replaced with a 197-page Guide setting out eight Standards, 42 requirements, and more than 600 examples of actions and evidence that providers must follow to ensure compliance.¹⁸

In 2021 the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) commenced, imposing complex new incident reporting obligations on all residential aged care homes.

Also in 2021, the Royal Commission published its Final Report in eight volumes containing 148 recommendations. In response to the Royal Commission's recommendations, the Morrison Government issued a major law reform agenda. This was delayed by the change of government in May 2022 but was reintroduced, with some changes and additions, by the new Labor Government in July 2022.

Meanwhile, federal and state/territory governments continue to issue and update COVID-19 regulations for aged care facilities, for example, by requiring weekly data reporting and mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release>. Reference period September 2021.

¹⁷ CEDA: Duty of Care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge 2021. https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/researchcataloguedocuments/recent%20research/pdfs/aged-care-workforce-2021-final_1.pdf.

¹⁸ Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, Quality Standards. <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards>.

Profile of the Workforce

Most residential aged care workers (75%) are direct care workers. This direct care workforce is comprised of 70% personal care workers, 23% nurses and 7% allied health professionals. Around half the direct care workforce is over the age of 40, and about 86% of workers identify as female. Most (77%) are employed in a permanent position with 19% in casual or contract positions and 4% employed as agency staff or sub-contractors.¹⁹

Current Inadequacies in Staffing

Adequate staffing is a prerequisite for high quality aged care.²⁰ Yet many of Australia's residential aged care homes are understaffed.

On average, each aged care resident receives 180 minutes of direct care per day.²¹ This is 35 minutes below the 215 minutes of care time recommended by the Royal Commission.²²

According to research by the Royal Commission, 57% of residential care recipients are in homes that have "unacceptable" levels of staffing – and therefore unacceptable quality of care.²³

The researchers estimate that we need a 20% increase in total care staffing to reach "acceptable" levels of staffing across Australia. To reach "best practice" levels we need a 49% increase.²⁴

This means that Australia's residential aged care industry needs at least 41,000 more direct care workers right now, along with thousands more managerial and other non-clinical staff to provide support and help direct carers navigate increasingly complex compliance requirements.²⁵

If current trends continue, the situation is projected to worsen. In its 2021 report, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) predicted that there will be a shortfall of 110,000 aged care workers (across all sectors including residential and home care) by 2030.²⁶ In its 2022 report, CEDA noted that, if trends in staff shortages were not turned around quickly, "CEDA's 2021 forecasts of a cumulative shortfall of 110,000 workers by 2030 will look like a significant underestimate of the workforce shortages facing the sector".²⁷

¹⁹Department of Health: 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report.

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/10/2020-aged-care-workforce-census.pdf>.

²⁰Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report, vol 3A, p 421. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.

²¹Stewart Brown, Aged Care Financial Performance Survey Sector Report (March 2022), p 12. <https://www.stewartbrown.com.au/news-articles/26-aged-care>.

²²Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report, recommendation 86. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.

²³Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Research Paper 1: How Australian Residential Aged Care Staffing Levels Compare with International and National Benchmarks, p 1. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/research-paper-1.pdf>.

²⁴Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Research Paper 1: How Australian Residential Aged Care Staffing Levels Compare with International and National Benchmarks, p 1. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/research-paper-1.pdf>.

²⁵Based on an estimated 208,903 direct care staff working in residential aged care. See: Department of Health: 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report, p 10.

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/10/2020-aged-care-workforce-census.pdf>

²⁶CEDA: Duty of Care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge 2021.

https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/researchcataloguedocuments/recent%20research/pdfs/aged-care-workforce-2021-final_1.pdf.

²⁷CEDA: Duty of Care: Aged Care Sector in Crisis 2022.

<https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/attachments/duty-of-care-aged-care-sector-in-crisis.pdf>.



Government Response

In March 2021, the Royal Commission alerted the Morrison Government to the increasingly dire staff shortage in the aged care industry and made several recommendations for action. In response, the Morrison Government issued its “generational plan for aged care”, which set out a raft of investments and law reforms to be implemented over five years.²⁸

The most significant law reforms were to be implemented via the second Royal Commission Response Bill.²⁹ This included the introduction of a mandatory 200 minutes of care time per resident per day to be introduced in October 2023, rising to a mandatory 215 minutes by October 2024. The Royal Commission Response Bill lapsed in May 2022 because of the federal election. Labor promised to reintroduce the Royal Commission reforms and begun this process with the introduction of two Bills to Parliament in July 2022.

Labor has promised to “return the dignity to aged care and better support workers” by investing in the following policies at a cost of \$2.5 billion:

- **Making it mandatory to have a registered nurse onsite 24 hours a day in residential aged care facilities.**
Commencing from July 2023.
- **Lifting the average care time for each resident to 215 minutes per day, including 44 minutes with a registered nurse.**
According to Labor, this is “an average of an extra 35 minutes of care time per resident per day than current levels”. This reform would commence from October 2024. The new Labor Government will maintain the planned mandatory 200 care minutes date of October 2023.
- **Backing a real pay rise for aged care workers.**
Labor will support workers’ calls for better pay with a submission to the work value case, which is before the Fair Work Commission (FWC). The Labor Government will fund the outcome of this case.
- **Establishing a registration scheme for personal care workers.**
This will include requirements for ongoing training, criminal history screening, English proficiency and a new code of conduct. Commencing mid-2023.
- **Improving care continuity by requiring providers to prefer direct employment.**
Commencing from January 2023.³⁰

²⁸Parliament of Australia, Aged care: residential aged care and workforce – Budget Review Index 2021-22.

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview202122/AgedCareResidentialAgedCareWorkforce.

²⁹Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Response No. 2) Bill 2021 (Cth).

³⁰Labor: Better Care. <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-nurse-in-every-nursing-home>. Accessed June 2022.

Aged Care Wages Case

The Health Care Services Union and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation have brought a case before the FWC to seek to vary several Awards to increase pay for aged care workers by 25%.

The Union and Federation are arguing that pay rates in aged care don't meet the Fair Work Act's requirements of a fair minimum wage, with an hourly rate of just \$22 being reported for personal care workers.³¹ Industry stakeholders have also suggested that a wage rise is needed to attract and retain skilled workers in the industry.³²

If the case succeeds, a 25% wage increase would apply to:

- Enrolled Nurses, care workers, Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners working under the Nurses Award who work in aged care
- care workers, general and administrative service employees and food services employees under the Aged Care Award
- home care workers, crisis assistance and support housing staff, social and community services workers and family day care scheme workers who fall under the Social, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award.

The wage increase would mean different things for different workers depending on their level under the applicable Award. Generally, it could see the minimum wage in aged care rise by at least \$5.00 an hour.

The FWC began accepting written evidence in the matter on 26 April 2022. In June 2022, the FWC granted the new Labor Government permission to join the case and make submissions. Final oral hearings in the case were rescheduled to 24 and 25 August 2022 in Melbourne and 1 September 2022 in Sydney.³³ The Labor Government has promised to accept and fund the outcome of the case.³⁴

³¹The Conversation: When aged care workers earn \$22 an hour, a one-off bonus won't help.

<https://theconversation.com/when-aged-care-workers-earn-22-an-hour-a-one-off-bonus-wont-help-176136>.

³²Aged Care Stakeholder Consensus Statement: 17 December 2021.

<https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/sites/work-value-aged-care/submissions/am202099-subs-stakeholders-171221.pdf>.

³³Fair Work Commission: Work value case – Aged care industry. <https://www.fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/major-cases/work-value-case-aged-care-industry>.

³⁴Labor: Better Care. <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-nurse-in-every-nursing-home>. Accessed June 2022.

Other Research Confirms the Urgency of the Aged Care Staffing Crisis

In the wake of the Royal Commission, the staffing crisis in aged care has become a hot topic. Universities and think tanks are weighing in with major research and reports, most from an economic viewpoint. These include:

Committee for Economic Development of Australia: Duty of Care: Aged Care Sector in Crisis³⁵

This report finds that across the aged care industry (including residential and home care) “the annual staff shortage has doubled in less than a year – escalating from 17,000 to 35,000 due to a combination of challenging pandemic driven circumstances and a lack of action by governments”.

Other Research Confirms the Urgency of the Aged Care Staffing Crisis³⁶

According to the Discussion Paper, “there are already significant constraints on the sustainable availability of an appropriately skilled aged care workforce, which will likely worsen as the working-age proportion of the population declines ... Staff wages and conditions must rise so that the sector can compete for skilled workers. Additional investment funding is also needed in the sector to respond to growing demand”.

Crisis and Opportunity

Increased regulation and COVID-19 are upping workloads for already overburdened staff. Many are leaving the industry. Meanwhile, stunted immigration, low unemployment and low pay are blocking the influx of new staff. The industry is spiralling toward collapse.

But at the same time, unique circumstances are combining to create an opportunity to solve the crisis. After an initial push from the Royal Commission, the momentum for change is growing. Law reforms continue but now there is also recognition that a higher standard of care can only be achieved if more staff are attracted to the industry.

Government, regulators, consumers and the wider community are coming to realise what aged care workers have been reporting anecdotally for years: the solution to fixing our aged care crisis is to attract and retain more staff. With the solution firmly articulated, Australia can move on to a productive national debate about how to put it into action.



³⁵<https://www.ceda.com.au/ResearchAndPolicies/Research/Economy/Duty-of-Care-Aged-Care-in-Crisis>.

³⁶https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/158194/2/UARC_Sustainability%20Discussion%20Paper.pdf.

The Workforce Now: Increasing Demands Without Increasing Support



“

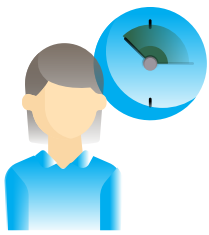
I love what I do, my residents, and my co-workers. However, I cannot continue to work in an industry that does not treat staff with respect and dignity.

Carer

1-3 years in aged care, NSW

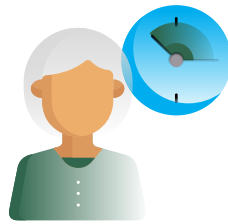
Increasing Demands

Australia's 280,000 residential aged care workers face increasing demands.



280,000

workers provide
24-hour care

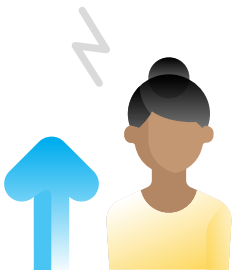


191,000

older Australians in
24-hour care

Simply providing quality care to these residents is demanding enough, but at the same time workers face an increasing administrative burden.

A complex new set of Aged Care Quality Standards was introduced in July 2019, only months before the industry began grappling with new and rapidly-changing COVID-19 regulations.



94%

report increased
workload due to
COVID-19 regulations

Adding to the burden, the Final Report of the Royal Commission was released in March 2021, and the Australian Government's sweeping aged care reform agenda followed with the 2021-22 Budget in May. Many of the key reforms were put on hold during the 2022 federal election, but the Labor Government has pledged to continue, and expand, the reform agenda.

³⁷GEN Aged Care Data: <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics>. Last updated 29 April 2022.

³⁸CEDA: Duty of Care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge 2021.

https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/researchcataloguedocuments/recent%20research/pdfs/aged-care-workforce-2021-final_1.pdf

Lack of Support

In the face of increasing demands, aged care staff need increased support in the form of new, well-trained staff. But the opposite is happening. New staff are scarce and underprepared.

57%

workers report that 15 or fewer new staff had commenced at their aged care home in the last 12 months.

9%

of workers describe their new staff as well prepared and only 2% describe them as very well prepared.

41%

describe new staff as adequately prepared (requiring extra training/supervision but posing no risk to residents).

38%

describe new staff as unprepared and in need of extra training/supervision to prevent risk to residents.

10%

describe new staff as so unprepared that they pose a risk to residents even with extra training and supervision.



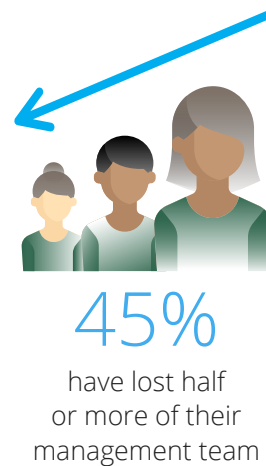
³⁷GEN Aged Care Data: <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics>. Last updated 29 April 2022.

³⁸CEDA: Duty of Care: Meeting the Aged Care Workforce Challenge 2021.

https://cedakenticomedia.blob.core.windows.net/cedamediacontainer/kentico/media/researchcataloguedocuments/recent%20research/pdfs/aged-care-workforce-2021-final_1.pdf

Staff scarcity is carving a hole in leadership teams.

- 45% of workers have lost half or more of their management team in the last 12 months.
- This includes 11% of workers who have lost their entire management team within the last year.
- Losses are heaviest in Tasmania where 59% of workers have lost half or more of their management team in the last year, including 17% who have lost their entire management team.
- Growing gaps in leadership deprive workers of much-needed guidance and oversight from experienced managers which in turn undermines stability and workers' capacity to provide continuity of care for residents.



Within the industry, workers are seeking to improve competency and increase efficiencies where they can.

- The majority of workers (70%) are impressed with the quality of annual compliance update training, including 47% who describe the training as good quality, and 23% who describe it as very good or excellent.
- 47% of workers have adopted new technologies in the past year to make it easier to manage increasing regulatory burdens.
- Experiences with new technology are mixed: 54% of workers report that it has improved the quality and efficiency of their work, 31% say that it has had no effect and 15% say that it has harmed quality and efficiency.
- The take-up of new technology by aged care workers varies across Australia, with Canberrans most likely to have done so (75%), followed by Victorians (49%), Western Australians (48%), and South Australians (48%).
- Tasmania is lagging, with 40% of operators adopting new technology to deal with their compliance obligations in the last 12 months.

The present situation is dire. Without intervention, the future will be worse.

The Workforce in the Future: Facing the Impossible



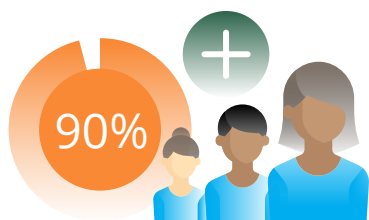
“

We are so short-staffed. Some days we have two members of staff to 25 residents with behaviour issues on a dementia ward.

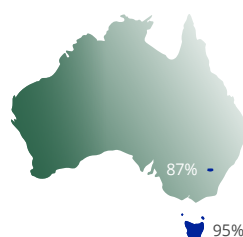
Carer

1-3 years in aged care, NT

Almost all workers anticipate that they will have to make major changes in the year ahead and would benefit from an influx of new staff.



90% of workers say that the addition of new staff over the next 12 months would be “very beneficial”.



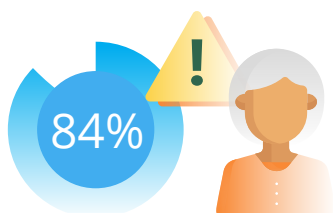
An overwhelming

95%

of workers in Tasmania say that major changes will be needed to cope with the year ahead, followed by

87%

of those in the ACT.



84% expect to make major changes to systems and processes to cope with upcoming regulation.

Without an influx of new staff, many workers see the provision of quality care and services as an impossible task.

Workers' Views on Mandatory Care Times

On average, each aged care resident in Australia receives 180 minutes of direct care per day.³⁹ This is 35 minutes below the 215 minutes of care time recommended by the Royal Commission.

The Australian Government has accepted the Royal Commission's recommendation and pledged to impose mandatory staffing requirements on residential aged care homes. By October 2023, homes will have to provide 200 minutes of direct care per resident per day. This will rise to 215 from October 2024.⁴⁰

This mandate, while much needed, is impossible to achieve at current staffing levels.

We asked workers about the feasibility of achieving the Royal Commission's recommendation of a mandatory 215 minutes of care time per resident per day:

- 57% say that this is impossible to achieve.
- 39% say that this is difficult to achieve.
- 4% say that this is easy to achieve.
- Victorians are among the most daunted, with 65% of Victorian workers convinced that the 215 minute target is impossible to achieve.



57%

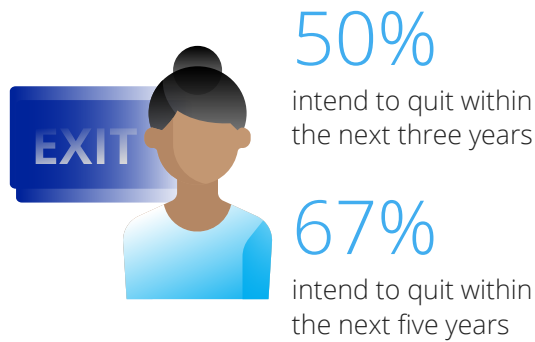
say it's impossible to achieve the recommended 215 minutes of direct care per resident per day

³⁹Stewart Brown, Aged Care Financial Performance Survey Sector Report (March 2022), p 12. <https://www.stewartbrown.com.au/news-articles/26-aged-care>.

⁴⁰Labor: Better Care. <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-nurse-in-every-nursing-home>. Accessed June 2022.

Mass Exodus

The explanation for this grim outlook is simple: aged care homes are understaffed now and the situation is expected to get much worse as staff continue to leave the industry in unprecedented numbers.



The top reasons for leaving are stress, pay and excessive overtime/expectations.

- 43% rank “stress” as their top reason for leaving the industry; 78% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.
- 24% rank “remuneration” as their top reason for leaving the industry; 63% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.
- 19% rank “excessive overtime/expectations” as their top reason for leaving the industry; 79% include it in their top three reasons for leaving.

Those who remain do so because of the bonds they’ve formed with residents and their families, and because of a sense of job satisfaction and fulfillment.

- 43% rank “Relationships with residents and families” as their top reason for staying in the industry; 89% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- 25% rank “Job satisfaction and fulfilment” as their top reason for staying in the industry; 81% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- 19% rank “Relationships with co-workers” as their top reason for staying in the industry; 85% include it in their top three reasons for staying.
- Only 8% of workers rank “remuneration” as their top reason for staying in the industry, and only 21% include it in their top three reasons for staying.

Pay Rise

At the time of writing this report, the FWC is hearing a case to raise the Award wage for many aged care workers by up to 25%. We asked aged care workers for their views on an appropriate pay rise.



Hope and Scepticism

The FWC case is clearly welcomed by the aged care workforce, as was the recent change of government.

- 79% of workers said that Labor offered the best aged care policies at the recent federal election.
- 17% rated the Liberal Party policies as best.
- 4% rated the Greens policies as best.

However, many workers remain sceptical about the value of government intervention in the sector. In May 2021 the Australian Government announced a suite of regulatory reforms in response to the Royal Commission. We asked aged care workers how they thought these reforms would affect outcomes for aged care residents.

Most workers (79%) have no confidence that the reforms will improve outcomes for residents. This includes:

- 33% who believe that the reforms will have no effect
- 35% who believe that the promised reforms will never be implemented
- 11% who believe that the reforms will make outcomes worse for residents.

This scepticism is not surprising in an industry that has seen increasing regulation, scrutiny and criticism without a significant increase in support.

If that support is not provided soon, the residential aged care industry will be drastically understaffed, exacerbating an already fragile framework of quality service delivery.

About the Survey



“

The work is backbreaking, the expectations unrealistic in the extreme, the regulations overbearing and frankly it's worse than I have ever seen it due to underfunding.

Director

10+ years in aged care, QLD

Overview

- The 2021 Aged Care Workforce Survey was issued on 27 May 2022 and closed on 12 June 2022.
- There were 1,110 responses to the survey from respondents representing more than 300 services (or approximately 11% of the 2,704 services operating in Australia as at 30 June 2021).
- Survey responses were anonymous but provided demographic information that indicated that most respondents were managers, carers or other clinical staff working in residential aged care homes across Australia, but predominantly in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.
- The survey aimed to better understand the challenges and needs of Australian aged care workers in relation to the Royal Commission, Aged Care Quality Standards, COVID-19, wages and law reforms.

Who Issued the Survey

The survey was issued by CompliSpace in association with its publication Aged Care Essentials (ACE). CompliSpace is an Australian company that specialises in helping organisations, including aged care providers, to manage their legal and regulatory obligations. CompliSpace periodically conducts surveys about workers' experiences in the aged care, education and other industries.

ACE is a free online source of regulatory and compliance news and updates for aged care providers. ACE has seen a 73% increase in subscriptions over the past two years, with currently over 4,200 weekly subscribers. ACE periodically surveys readers about a range of issues relevant to the aged care industry.



Who Responded to the Survey?

Survey responses were anonymous but provided demographic information that indicated that most respondents were managers, carers or other clinical staff working in residential aged care homes across Australia, but predominantly in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland:

55%

of respondents described themselves as **carers (PCA, AIN, ECW) or clinical staff**

29%

of respondents are **aged 61-74**

22%

of respondents described themselves as **managers**

14%

of respondents are **aged 31-45**

60%

of respondents said they had worked in the industry for **more than 10 years**

3%

of respondents are **under the age of 31**

37%

of respondents identify a **TAFE certificate** as their highest achieved qualification

74%

of respondents work in **residential aged care**

33%

of respondents identify a **Bachelor's degree** as their highest achieved qualification

44%

of respondents work in **residential care only**

15%

of respondents identify a **Master's degree** as their highest achieved qualification

16%

of respondents work in a **combination of residential care and NDIS**

14%

of respondents identify a **secondary school qualification** as their highest achieved qualification

14%

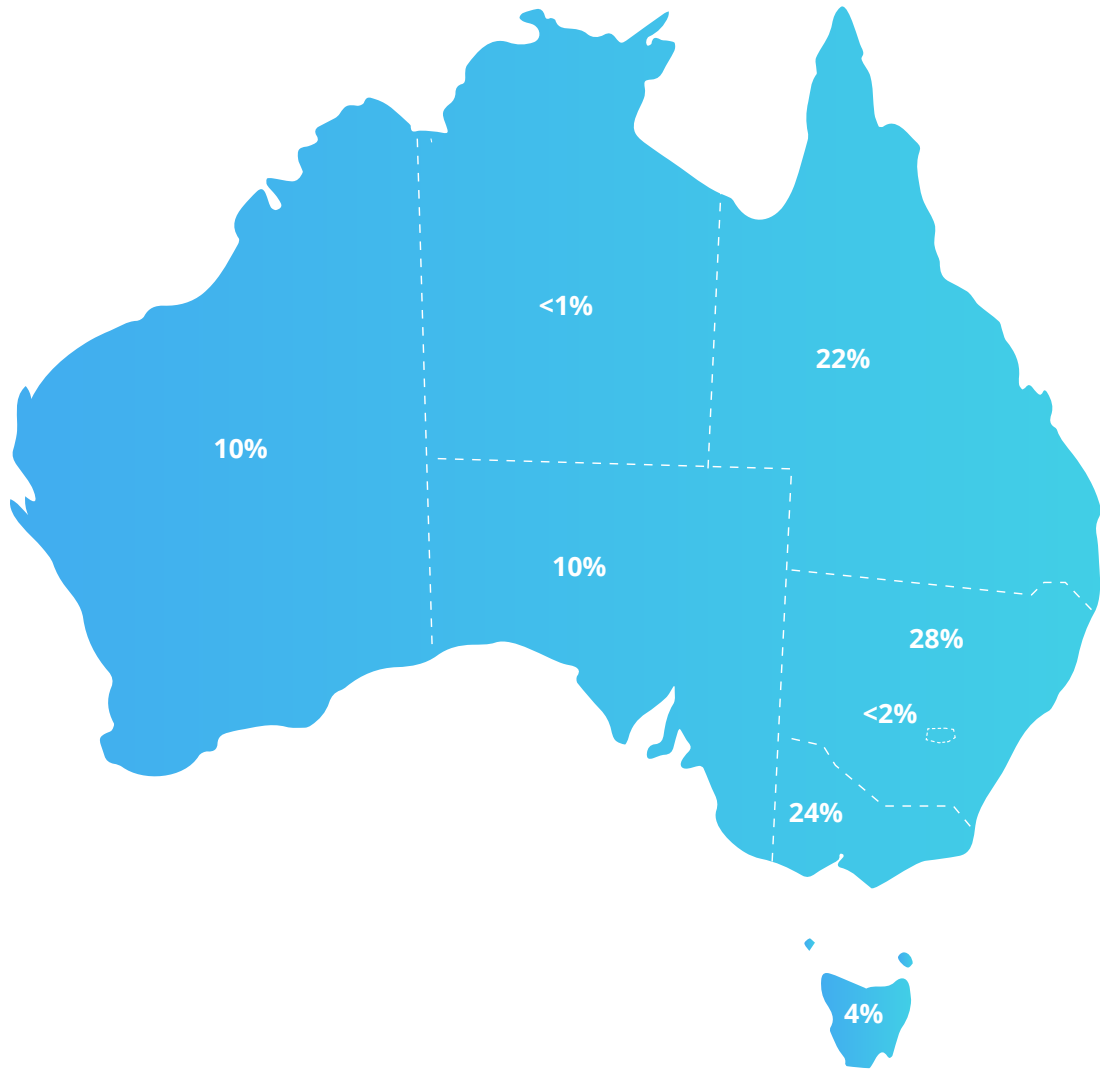
of respondents work in **residential and home care**

53%

of respondents are **aged 46-60**

>245

of respondents **volunteered** to be interviewed for further comments



28%

of respondents said they worked in **New South Wales**

10%

of respondents said they worked in **South Australia**

24%

of respondents said they worked in **Victoria**

4%

of respondents said they worked in **Tasmania**

22%

of respondents said they worked in **Queensland**

<2%

of respondents said they worked in the **Australian Capital Territory**

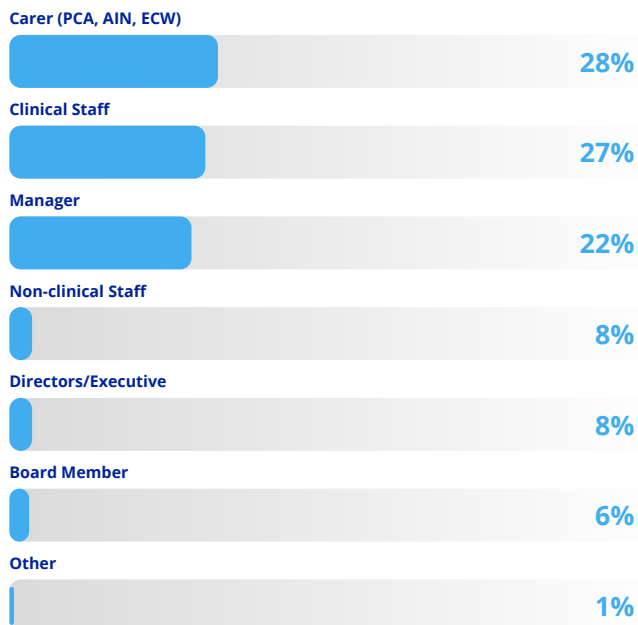
10%

of respondents said they worked in **Western Australia**

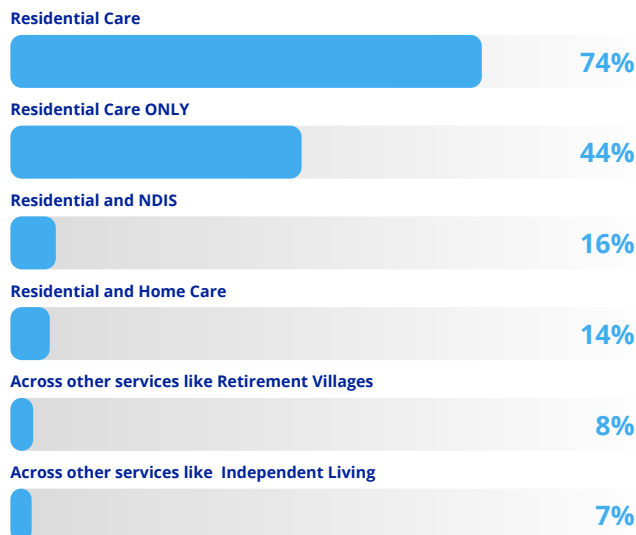
<1%

of respondents said they worked in the **Northern Territory**

A little over half of respondents (55%) identified as either “Carer (PCA, AIN, ECW)” or “Clinical Staff”. About 22% identified as “Manager”. A further 22% identified as directors/executives, non-clinical staff or board members. Some respondents identified with multiple roles.

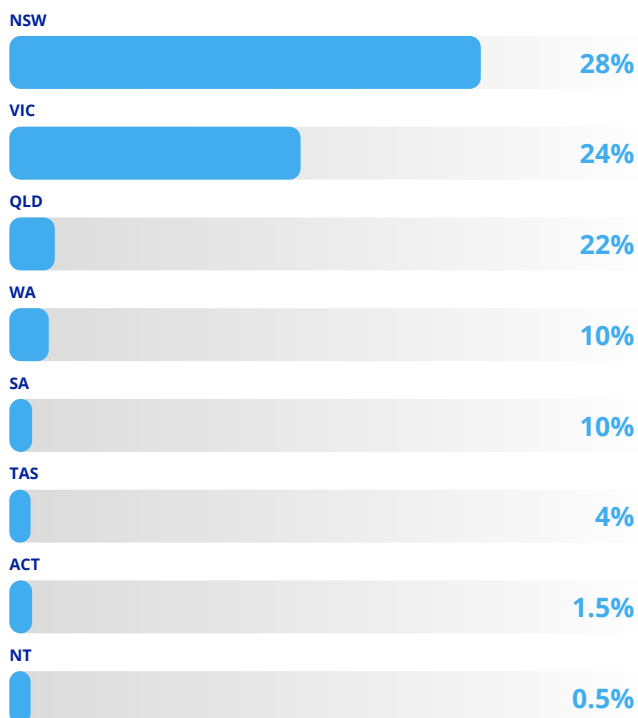


Most respondents (74%) work in homes that provide residential aged care. Many work in residential care only (44%) while some work across both residential and NDIS (16%) or residential and home care (14%). Some respondents reported working across other services such as retirement villages (8%) and independent living (7%), either exclusively or in addition to their work in residential aged care.



Respondents represented every state and territory across Australia. Most (74%) of respondents selected their state as New South Wales, Queensland or Victoria (compared to 78% of total residential aged care homes being located in these states).

Note: some respondents work across multiple states.





What Did the Survey Ask?

The survey asked aged care workers about:

- changes in workloads caused by the Aged Care Quality Standards and COVID-19 regulations
- the adoption of new technologies to cope with increasing regulation
- numbers of new staff and their preparedness
- the adequacy of training for new and existing staff
- the turnover of the management team
- attitudes towards:
 - the feasibility of meeting a mandatory 215 minutes care time per resident per day
 - policies offered by the major political parties at the last election
 - the value of regulatory reforms made in response to the Royal Commission
 - the proposed 25% pay rise for aged care workers
- whether they expected to make major changes to systems and processes to meet regulation and compliance requirements over the next 12 months
- how beneficial additional staff would be to the facility over the next 12 months
- how long they intended to work in the aged care industry and their reasons for staying/leaving.

The survey also asked aged care workers to offer any additional thoughts and insights.

What Aged Care Workers Are Saying

Michelle Schupelius, CEO in SA



Single facility, community owned NFP 53 beds, 84 staff

Industry experience: More than 10 years

I joined the industry about 20 years ago, first as a carer before studying to become a registered nurse. After spending a year in the hospital sector, I returned to aged care as I felt that, in acute care as a patient in a hospital, you are a number, not a person and that is not why I got into nursing.

I've spent the past 15 years of my career in different management roles. At the start, my focus was on ensuring that documentation met the funding needs to assist in meeting the right employment strategies. But even back then there was a lot of staff turnover. So I have studied different workforce concepts and have a focus on workforce retention. In the past 12 months we've experienced turnover of up to 28% annually and it's currently sitting at about 2% per month. In the past three months we have readjusted our approach to attract and retain staff.

We are trying to be proactive to resolve workforce issues. I think more broadly we need to look at training of registered nurses differently, adopting an apprenticeship model to attract them to work and stay in the sector. We can't compete with the acute care sector financially, which needs to be addressed at all levels.

In our facility, we have begun employing staff to learn on the job whilst they complete their training through an apprenticeship model. Initially this placed additional pressure on staff, however, in the longer term it allows us to fill staffing gaps and support trainees to become better carers by ensuring that they get practical, hands-on experience. From a staffing perspective, rostering RN shifts poses the biggest challenge so, whilst we are meeting our direct care minutes easily, meeting the RN minutes is going to be a struggle. There appears to be a disconnect between us on the floor and the government and the Commission, which is disheartening. We need more collaboration to turn around the culture.

Recent changes to legislation, which were rolled out with minimal notice, are adding to the documentation burden on an industry that's already under pressure. When you add to this the impact on our industry of the ongoing COVID outbreaks, it feels like a rush job, meaning most facilities are missing an opportunity for real, constructive, planned and measured change.



When I speak to high school students I say, if you want to be a nurse, want to be a doctor, want to be a chef, work in Aged Care. It's an industry about people, people will love you for who you are. You will find inspiration in their stories, and you will laugh.

Michelle Schupelius

What Aged Care Workers Are Saying

Jacene S., General Manager in SA



Home Care

Industry experience: More than 10 years

The industry itself has changed significantly since I started, especially around training. In those early years, it was on the job, situational training. What I see now is people coming in without training but also without the soft skills needed to hit the ground running. On top of that, you have the government saying that you need to be compliant with all these new regulations. The industry expectations seem to have become “you need to be a jack of all trades as well as a specialist in everything”. For us in home care, we’re currently looking at 120 min per consumer per day but this is significantly increasing as a greater number of Level 4 clients with complex needs are preferring to age at home than enter a residential aged care facility. Even for those in an aged care home, it’s more realistic to allow 200 minutes per consumer per day.

Through the workforce pressures, we’ve begun to lose a lot of innovation. The switch has been to meeting requirements and “what we must do” has taken up all our time, leaving no time for “what we can do” for our carers and consumers. You spend so much time on processes that you forget about what is best for the client. We’ve become so disjointed - from those making the regulations - to those in management - to those on the floor. What we are currently doing as service providers, in my opinion, is risk mitigation for the Commonwealth.

With dire workforce shortages, new workers entering the industry need to know and understand that there are so many pathways available to them. It is not just the face-to-face contact with consumers but the entire end-to-end from administration, hospitality services, diversional therapy, leisure and lifestyle, asset management and accounting to service, operational and organisational management. The aged care industry is a challenging but resilient sector.



The expectations seem to be more about reporting and yet we (aged care workers) keep going on about quality of care.

Jacene S.



What Aged Care Workers Are Saying

Dianne Mehmet, Carer in VIC



Residential Aged Care

Industry experience: 8 years

I've worked as a carer in the aged care industry for over eight years now. I was attracted to the industry because I have an interest in healthcare and wanting to help others. My sister also worked in the industry, so I completed my training and started straight away at the same facility as her.

In those first few months it did feel like being thrown into the deep end, but it was manageable. Nowadays it's a lot harder, it's truly an industry in crisis. People are unhappy in the sector, there's staff shortages and the pandemic merely exposed these issues further. COVID-19 did not create these problems.

I feel that nothing has changed since the Royal Commission. The problems we face have only gotten worse with very little support offered from the government. It's not just about pay rises for staff but overall funding for the sector to have the support that it needs. For example, the recommended mandatory 215 minutes care time, per resident, per day, is not achievable if we don't have the staff on the floor to do that. It's just not possible without enough staff. Same for the new standards that came in. If we don't have the staff numbers to implement them, it's impossible to follow.

On top of all that, you have new staff coming in that are not properly trained. This then takes time out of the already busy day of other staff to train up new staff as they go. These training gaps pose a risk not only to carers but to the residents themselves. The level of training that incoming staff have is so low because the sector just needs more workers in the door, regardless of the quality of that worker.

At the end of the day this is about people's lives. We as staff are doing everything possible to keep residents safe and looked after, but we can't do that with added pressure and the continued lack of resources. The staff want to be able to look after residents properly without having to worry about all the other stuff on top of it. It's beyond a payrise, it's about proper changes to the industry.



Aged care workers can't all be wrong. We are all saying the same thing because we care. We wouldn't be doing this job if we didn't care.

Dianne Mehmet

What Aged Care Workers Are Saying

Christine Sutton, Carer in VIC



Home Care

Industry experience: More than 10 years

I've been in the community care industry for nearly 20 years. In the early years, we had a much smaller-sized staff who worked closely together with the main office. Open communication and transparency were key. The training provided was hands on and helped the staff as they progressed in their roles. Comparing all that to now, there is very little communication between carers and management, the pay does not justify the extra hours worked, and it seems like a fight to get anything done properly.

The 25% pay increase would simply be the very minimum that they should do. You do not stay in this industry for the money. There is so much more that needs to change in the industry, from better management to new systems.

Even with the new change in government, I feel it will just continue as is, with very little change on the ground level. Take training for example, the training that is offered to us has not changed in over 15 years. It is not tailored to home care needs. New staff coming in are not adequately prepared for their jobs and are set up to fail. If you're coming into this industry, you better be self-driven. Take every training course that you can find.

The government has not been listening to what's been going on and more people need to hear and care about it before we see change.



Home care is a very broad field, with the people making decisions for us really having very little idea of what our roles entail.

Christine Sutton



What Aged Care Workers Are Saying Arlet Anastasia, Clinical Role in VIC



Residential aged care and home care

Industry experience: More than 10 years

I don't believe aged care has been an industry of innovation. I got involved in the industry by chance and have enjoyed working as part of a team. The ability to assist the older generation made the work worthwhile. In the over 30 years I've been part of the industry, there has been insufficient help offered by governments. It is disheartening to know that after many royal commissions into aged care, very little has changed.

Living wages and adequate staffing levels have always been on top of the list of requests. Just as important is the need for free quality aged care education. We are having to train newcomers on the job which is unacceptable because geriatric care is a specialised field that requires professional teachers to teach it. It is not ethical to expect individuals with minimal training to work in a complex environment with highly vulnerable people.

The current requirement of 215 minutes per carer per day is just not possible and I don't see that happening in our facility. Staff are not being supported enough to reach those requirements.

For those wishing to come into the aged care sector, you must be equipped and ready to contribute to making changes that reform this environment for a better quality of life for all involved.



I have more hope with the new government in power.

Arlet Anastasia

