

What are the key issues concerning the current formal aged care workforce, including remuneration and retention, and the attractiveness of the aged care environment relative to the broader health and community care sector?

Views are sought on reform options to secure a larger, appropriately trained and more flexible formal aged care workforce into the future. In particular, views are sought on the need for and nature of reforms to models of care, scopes of practice, occupational mix, service delivery, remuneration, education, training, workforce planning and regulation.

Are reforms required to more appropriately support informal carers and volunteers?

Are there unexploited productivity and efficiency gains in the aged care sector? Where such unexploited gains are seen to exist, what policy changes are needed to support their realisation? How might technology be used to enhance the care of older Australians? Are there any impediments to technological developments that could ease workforce demand or enable higher levels of support?

Key future workforce challenges include:

- ensuring a sufficiently large, skilled workforce in a market situation where labour intensive activities will face growing pressures, given the anticipated slowdown in workforce growth across the whole economy and increasing labour demand from other service sectors, in particular health
- responding to the increasing demand for formal care services as Australia's population ages and accommodating an expected relative decline in the availability of informal family carers and growing competition for voluntary workers
- upgrading the skills base and training opportunities available to workers to ensure the improved delivery of safe, quality care services to older Australians
- adapting the aged care sector and its workforce to changes in consumer needs and preferences, which seem likely to increase the demand for community based care relative to residential care (PC 2008).

For informal carers and volunteers, the key reform challenges include:

- providing adequate access to information about the support services available to older people and their carers
- improving access to respite and other care services to support informal carers to continue caring
- enabling informal carers to participate in the broader workforce through appropriately structured financial support and workplace flexibility
- providing training and education to ensure that informal carers are able to undertake their caring role in a sustainable and safe manner
- encouraging volunteers to participate in supporting the aged and reducing the regulatory barriers to participation.



Who Cares for Older Australians?



**A Picture of the Residential and Community
based Aged Care Workforce, 2007**

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Table 3.3: Nature of employment contract of Residential Aged Care workers, 2007 (estimated total number and per cent)

Employment Contract	Registered Nurse	Enrolled Nurse	Personal Carers	Allied Health workers	TOTAL
Permanent full-time	3,713 (16.6)	1,707 (10.5)	5,697 (6.7)	1,019 (10.3)	12,139 (9.1)
Permanent part-time	13,407 (59.9)	11,882 (72.9)	59,188 (69.8)	6,919 (70.1)	91,393 (68.6)
Casual or Contract	5,279 (23.6)	2,705 (16.6)	19,861 (23.4)	1,937 (19.6)	29,781 (22.3)
Total employees	22,399 (100.0)	16,293 (100.0)	84,746 (100.0)	9,875 (100.0)	133,314 (100.0)

Source: Census of residential aged care facilities.

Note: Estimated total numbers are the estimated total number of workers in each category employed in all Australian aged care facilities. Thus, we estimate that altogether, aged care facilities employ 3,713 Registered Nurses, on permanent full-time contracts. The numbers in brackets are per cent of total number in each occupational group. Thus 16.6% of Registered Nurses are employed on a permanent full-time basis.

Table 3.4(a): Distribution of hours worked per week, Residential Aged Care workforce, by occupation (per cent)

Hours worked per week	Respondent	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total
1-15	Workers response	5	6	8	6
	Facilities response	26	22	35	24
16-34	Workers response	51	57	50	55
	Facilities response	51	57	48	54
35-40	Workers response	34	31	38	32
	Facilities response	21	19	16	19
>40	Workers response	10	6	5	7
	Facilities response	2	2	1	2

Source: Census of residential aged care facilities and survey of residential care workers.

Table 3.9: Post-school qualifications of the Residential Aged Care workforce, by occupation (per cent)

Post-school qualification	Nurse		PC		Allied Health		Total	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
No post-school qualifications	5.6	11.8	16.4	23.7	17.1	17.9	12.8	19.8
Certificate III in aged care	7.1	9.7	65.9	64.6	25.5	36.9	42.9	46.6
Certificate IV in aged care	4.9	5.2	7.9	13.3	9.3	17.5	7.0	11.3
Certificate IV/diploma in enrolled nursing	26.6	35.1	2.9	3.4	2.9	2.5	11.0	12.5
Bachelor degree in nursing	23.6	28.3	1.7	1.6	3.9	0.6	9.3	9.3
Other basic nursing qualification	34.6	21.4	7.3	3.8	8.3	4.6	16.7	9.0
Post basic nursing qual in aged care	13.2	10.0	2.8	0.7	3.4	0.8	6.4	3.4
Post basic nursing qual not in aged care	16.2	15.1	1.9	1.1	2.4	0.2	6.8	5.1
Other	9.0	12.3	9.8	13.7	49.0	44.7	12.4	15.6

Source: Surveys of residential care workers.

Note: Because staff can have more than one qualification, the totals do not sum to 100. Figures for 2003 have been adjusted to use same weighting principles as 2007.

Table 3.12: Tenure in current job of the Residential Aged Care workforce, by occupation (per cent)

Tenure in current job	Registered Nurses		Enrolled Nurses		PCs		Allied Health		Total	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
Less than 1 year	21.4	21.4	17.5	18.8	26.0	27.8	23.5	22.6	23.7	25.2
1 to 5 years	41.2	43.8	39.4	39.3	48.1	48.5	45.9	47.6	45.3	46.5
6 or more years	37.4	34.8	43.1	41.8	26.0	23.7	30.6	29.8	30.9	28.4

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.13: Weekly wage in current job of the Residential Aged Care workforce before deductions, by occupation (per cent)

Weekly wage (\$)	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total
1-500	14.3	31.4	40.4	27.1
501-1000	57.4	67.3	56.4	63.7
1001-1500	24.4	1.2	3.1	8.0
1501-2000	3.7	0.1	0.0	0.1
2000+	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.18: Most important reason for leaving previous aged care job, Residential Aged Care workers, by occupation (per cent)

Most important reason	Nurses	PCs	Allied Health	All direct care workers
Other: relocated/ moved/migrated	13.7	17.8	18.8	16.3
To be closer to home	15.2	17.5	9.6	16.0
To get shifts or hours of work I	12.9	15.1	9.2	13.8
To find more challenging work	12.2	9.1	15.7	10.8
To fulfil care responsibilities	8.8	10.1	7.7	9.4
To avoid managers or	7.9	3.3	9.6	5.5
To achieve higher pay	5.2	5.2	2.7	5.0
The job was too stressful	6.6	3.8	5.7	5.0
Other: redundant/	4.9	3.5	5.7	4.2
Other: study	4.1	0.9	3.4	2.3
Not able to spend sufficient time	1.5	2.0	3.4	1.9
To avoid workmates or	1.2	1.8	2.7	1.7
To find easier work	0.8	1.1	0.8	1.0
Other	4.9	8.7	5.0	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Note: Categories above that begin with 'Other:' were not explicitly offered to respondents in the question; they are a summary of common responses written in to an unspecified 'other' category in answers.

Table 3.22: Responses of the Residential Aged Care workforce to the question “I am able to spend enough time with each resident” by occupation (per cent)

Response	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total	New hires Total
Disagree	58.4	51.3	52.0	53.4	50.0
Neither agree or disagree	18.4	22.8	18.4	21.2	21.6
Agree	23.2	25.9	29.6	25.4	28.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.23: Responses of the Residential Aged Care workforce to the question “In a typical shift, how much time do you spend in direct caring?” by occupation (per cent)

Time spent caring	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total
Less than a third	36.1	11.6	17.4	19.2
Between one third and two thirds	40.2	33.0	43.7	35.9
More than two thirds	23.7	55.4	38.9	44.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.25: Responses of the Residential Aged Care workforce to the question “I have the skill I need to do my job” by occupation (per cent)

Response	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total	New hires Total
Disagree	0.9	2.3	2.5	1.9	2.8
Neither agree or disagree	3.0	4.3	4.9	4.0	7.2
Agree	96.1	93.4	92.6	94.1	90.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.26: Responses of the Residential Aged Care workforce to the question “I use many of my skills in my current job” by occupation (per cent)

Response	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total	New hires Total
Disagree	5.5	2.4	3.0	3.3	5.0
Neither agree or disagree	8.6	4.3	5.3	5.6	7.2
Agree	86.0	93.3	91.7	91.1	87.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.29: Responses of the Residential Aged Care workforce to the question “Considering all my efforts and achievements, I receive the respect and acknowledgement I deserve” by occupation (per cent)

Response	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total	New hires Total
Disagree	19.6	22.5	15.7	21.2	16.7
Neither agree or disagree	17.0	18.9	17.7	18.2	20.1
Agree	63.3	58.6	66.6	60.6	63.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.33: Average job satisfaction scores, Residential Aged Care workforce, various dimensions of job satisfaction, by occupation

Satisfaction with:	Nurse		PC		Allied Health		Total		New hires Total	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
Total pay	3.91	4.83	3.55	4.04	4.51	4.37	3.74	4.29 (6.94)	4.54	4.58
Job security	7.16	7.12	7.07	7.05	7.48	7.47	7.13	7.10 (8.07)	6.81	6.93
Work itself	6.46	7.02	7.22	7.30	8.14	7.94	7.03	7.26 (7.61)	7.38	7.42
Hours of work	7.42	7.26	7.07	7.44	7.48	7.60	7.22	7.40 (7.29)	6.74	6.97
Opportunity to develop abilities		6.79		6.99		7.28		6.95		6.96
Support from team		6.96		6.96		7.38		6.99		7.23
Work / Non-work flexibility	6.66	6.87	6.90	7.06	7.11	7.53	6.83	7.04 (7.55)	7.03	7.13
Overall job satisfaction	6.73	7.09	7.31	7.33	7.83	7.76	7.15	7.29 (7.72)	7.53	7.43

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.

Table 3.36: Most likely sources if hiring new PCs

Employment source	Per cent of facilities likely to use method
Wait for walk-ins	18.8
Word of mouth	27.6
Newspaper job ad	37.5
Internet job ad	6.8
Newspaper and internet job ad	32.6
Existing job placement workers	24.3

Source: Census of residential aged care facilities.

Table 3.37: Sources of information about the vacancy for their job for the most recently hired Residential Aged Care workers (per cent)

Source of job information	Nurse	PC	Allied Health	Total
Walk in	38.4	51.8	19.4	46.4
Newspaper advertisements	23.9	15.6	37.1	19.0
Word of mouth	18.3	18.5	25.8	18.9
Internet sites	4.8	2.6	8.1	3.5
Company or professional contacts	4.8	2.8	8.1	3.6
Other	9.8	8.7	1.5	8.6

Source: Survey of residential aged care workers.