

Let's dive into... WORKFORCE

Friday 22 October 2021 | Chiton Rocks SLSC, Lot 440 Hindmarsh Esplanade, Hayborough, Victor Harbor 5211

A combined regions collaborative THINK TANK to explore workforce solutions for the home and community aged care sector

Q&A Panel members:

- Leanne Hill (Employment Facilitator Adelaide South, Local Jobs Program, an Australian Government initiative)
- Mark Kemperman (Manager, Training Products and Capability, Department for Innovation and Skills)
- Roy Inglis (Program Manager) & Louise Hamilton (Assistant Director - Acting), Aged Care and Health Network - South Australian Office, Ageing and Aged Care Group, Australian Government Department of Health
- Richard Scollin (Regional Workforce Program Manager, Regional Development Australia – Adelaide Hills Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island)
- Craig Frost (Team Leader SA/NT Workforce Industry Development and Sector Support, ACSA)

*please note the following information was current as of 22/10/2021, further updates are expected as the reforms progress

Q&A Panel Questions (on the day)

What is being done to market the sector as a desirable career pathway?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal Government initiates for Job Seekers or people changing their career pathways.• Getting information out to the community and students about the pathways to their careers and career mapping tools.• Real people sharing their stories about their roles in aged care and disability care this is a powerful tool that is relatable especially for school leavers.
In Pillar 4 of the new reforms, it states that by 2025 “Tangible improvements will be seen in staffing levels, skill mix and training of the care workforce” and “Workforce will continue to meet demand for aged care services, particularly in-home care”. What responsibility do each of us have to be able to achieve this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department’s responsibility is to work with industry in a collaborative way as new opportunities arise.• Reference made to HCW Tenders from the government regarding whom is nominated to provide services, suggestion to consider to collaborate with the successful recipients.
Another proposed outcome of the workforce reforms, is “personal care workers will be supported to grow their aged care skills and acquire qualifications which will enhance their skills and knowledge and career opportunities”. Will there be a review of wages and conditions to appropriately remunerate staff for their skills, knowledge and expertise?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A case is underway with the Fair Work Commission regarding remunerations and the four awards covered and how they will be affected, these outcomes will be shared in due process.
How will outcomes be measured and tracked related to the specified annual targets of Pillar 4 Workforce reforms? And how will any issues related to unmet targets be addressed in future improvements?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The department has formulated an overarching plan, and has resourced this well. Measures are both internal and external and feedback is generated from the sector through evaluations and milestones, this is a very structured process.• Metrics are in place around the Job Trainer expansions which is one of the work force suites coming out of the Federal budget, with 33 hundred national training places. In SA this equates to a doubling of existing efforts which is an ambition target to grow the numbers of participants but this needs people to train.

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How do we find an RTO to work with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check out the Skills Portal that the state government runs or ring the Skills Line to connect with which RTO runs that particular course.• Another strategy may be to ask that perfect person you have just hired where they completed their training and replicate that opportunity for others.
Due to skills shortage, will Department for Innovation and Skills revise the decision to enable TAFE SA to deliver Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing/Disability) in the metro areas?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchasing decisions are made by the purchasing minister, avenues to write to the minister with concerns and issues are in place and of course TAFE SA are also able to raise their concerns/challenges and ask any questions they may have, open communication is encouraged. This will also help the department to gauge what is needed in the sector for the next 12 to 18 months.• Comment made that succession planning and forward planning are needed.
Once the person is trained and 'right fit' what will be the ongoing support for quality workforce, ongoing development with coaching, mentoring, and mental health support in ongoing ways? (to keep people in the sector rather than burn them out)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The perception can be that you stay in the sector forever, but in reality people will have 5 to 6 careers changes in their life time. Career opportunities are also varied and different to those historical choices and this has brought new and varied roles. Example include workforce mentoring, marketing, comms.• RTO's, universities and TAFE have in place Post Placement supports for individuals including pathway programs.• For people with existing skills there are opportunities to build on these through a variety of courses available. Including micro credentials in specialist roles.• Comment made that costs for training / skilling of workforce is becoming a core part of the business model• ACSA runs a Mentoring Program called the Graduate Nurse course across 3 Eastern States, future direction to make available to SA.
How can employers shift their approach to PR and recruitment to attract young employees who are selecting employers based on:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Career development - training opportunities - demonstrated values - on the job support - honesty - engagement in organisation decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comment made that young people don't want to work in this sector, don't want to volunteer and everyone knows how to use a computer. These are of course not true.• The challenge for young people their mentors and teachers as well as their parents is what they do want to do in their careers at such a young age.• Approaches to recruitment will need to change in the future and different generations require a different approach, this must be taken into consideration when recruiting and marketing your offer.• Campaigns to promote aged care as a viable career choice and pathway is underway.• Utilising personal stories can be a powerful way to change perspectives.• This is not about the sector but more about the roles.• The value of one on one career conversations is a powerful tool and it brings meaning to people wanting to make career choices.• Example 'A Life Changing Life' DSS career advertisements may be worth a look http://www.careandsupportjobs.gov.au/

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How do we do ongoing conversation when initial training is complete with isolated workers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a number of initiatives for upskilling including scholarships and Grad nursing programs• Ongoing skill development and the use of various platforms and technologies including utilising online platforms which can be more responsive to rural and remote needs, not forgetting the need during pandemic situations and state closures.• Regional centres pooling resources• Financial supports and incentives such as Retention Payments , Upskill Payments, Relocation Payments• Comment made- It is a community responsibility as well as an individual responsibility to make this possible, offering mentoring & coaching, accepting new people into communities all play a part.
How does the sector respond to ongoing safeguards to make conscious the harm in people doing TASKS for people?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Awareness of safeguarding vulnerable people in our practice is vital. Understanding the right relationship and professional boundaries must be top of mind.• Quality standards, organisations such as ARAS and the role of employees to monitor workers and volunteers, as well as feedback from clients.• Reforms including Standard 8 - Governance, Board members / roles and structures and the shared responsibility to ensure safety.• Educational component in training and quality of training and the qualification must become standardised and consistent.
The Australian Government is establishing the Council of Elders to play a crucial role in making sure that those most central to the system, "Senior Australians", have input into shaping the aged care system. How will the Council of Elders be involved in the reforms related to 'workforce'?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These councils of Elders are being established as an independent source, empowered to engage with the government, sector and the Older Australian. It is a powerful advisory body.• It will be a National Body and Elders, currently being recruited.
Mandatory vaccinations for in-home care in SA?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the moment it is not mandatory for in Home Care Workers*, however it is strongly suggested, to make sure we protect our most vulnerable people. *Post-Forum note: COVID-19 vaccination is now mandatory for in-home and community aged care workers, link to SA webinar can be accessed here: Webinar for in-home and community aged care workers in South Australia

Extra Q&A Panel Questions (followed up after the Forum)

The recent Workforce Fact Sheet provided by the Department of Health, states that "within two years the workforce will need to increase by around 3,600 Registered Nurses and 34,200 personal care workers" – this is an ambitious target. Do you have any annual data about the number of new workers entering aged care from the previous few years?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The National Health Workforce Data set (NHWDS), through a high response survey of nurses at annual registration, shows that the number of registered nurses working in aged care as their primary area grew in number from 27,674 to 32,918 from 2016 to 2020; average annual growth of 4 per cent per annum over this period.• The 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census shows that the number of personal care workers in residential care increased over 2016 to 2020 from 108,126 to 146,378; a growth of 35% over this

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period. These figures will have some duplication of workers both within and across different service providers so it is difficult to be definitive, however it is reasonable to assume that there has been some substantial growth over this time.

What opportunities are there for collaboration in the sector with regard to workforce issues/challenges/opportunities?

- The Department of Health works closely with aged care stakeholders in the design and development of workforce initiatives.
- Interested bodies should keep up to date by going to the Department's website <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aged-care-reforms> to check out for opportunities to get involved.
- Where State or Federal Governments are looking to invest training/pre-employment dollars into a region there is an opportunity for providers, especially smaller ones with less organisational infrastructure to collaborate to create critical mass that enables Governments to effectively support local/tailored delivery. Take this a step further perhaps those organisations with larger infrastructure could reach out to those smaller providers to include them in project submissions.

In addition to 'training-up' potential employees in physical aspects of care, is there any intent to provide people with an education in trauma-informed person-centred care to ensure no harm is done to clients with complex histories of mental health and trauma?

- The Australian Government announced \$12.4m as part of the Aged Care COVID-19 grief and trauma response package to funding expert organisations to provide free grief, trauma, dementia and advocacy support for aged care recipients, their loved ones and those working and caring for people in the aged care sector during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As part of this, Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health is delivering a sector-wide trauma-informed care package that provides a trauma training and resources for aged care residents, their families and aged care staff, including through the establishment of a dedicated website.
- The Department of Health established a consultative group of key stakeholders including diversity stakeholders and representatives from 4 large providers. Phoenix Australia used a process of co-design with the consultative group, diversity stakeholders and lived experience experts to ensure the trauma resources were appropriate for the target audience as well as to understand sector experiences with, and responses to, trauma, develop a trauma-informed approach to aged care service delivery, and communicate this through practical resources.
- Since it was launched, the brochures for the aged care workforce have been downloaded over 1,700 times and there's been over 200 downloads of the brochures for managers. Phoenix has had 250 people access their trauma training and 105 aged care providers have download the training onto their learning management system.
- Further information about the trauma-informed care package is available at [Trauma and Aged Care - Phoenix Australia](#). Further information about the Government's Aged Care COVID-19 grief and trauma response package is available at [COVID-19 aged care grief and trauma support services | Australian Government Department of Health](#).

In the Department of Health Workforce webinar screened in August, it specified that financial incentives will be available to help attract and retain RNs in the aged care workforce and build on their skills and qualifications, including those working in rural and remote areas and those having additional qualifications or training responsibilities. How are these incentives accessed?

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- In the 2021-22 Budget, the Australian Government announced a payment for registered nurses (RNs) working in aged care.
- The Aged Care Registered Nurses' Payment is available to RNs who work for the same aged care provider over the following two 12 month periods:
 - 1 November 2021 – 31 October 2022
 - 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2023.
- Full time RNs can receive a payment of \$3,700 and part-time and casual RNs can receive a payment on a pro-rata basis. RNs will also be eligible for one additional payment per year of up to \$2,300.
- To receive this additional payment RNs must:
 - work in a rural or remote area
 - hold a formal postgraduate qualification (Graduate Certificate or higher), or
 - take on additional leadership or training responsibilities in their workplace.
- Providers will access the payment on behalf of their registered nurses, through a non-competitive grant process. More information, including Grant Opportunity Guidelines, will be made available in the new year. The Department of Health will communicate with the sector as more details about the payment become available.

Where do you see staff remuneration (wages) in the next 5 years? Changes/raises/recognition of skills and qualifications?

- The Australian Government recognises aged care workers are critical to the wellbeing of so many older Australians and our success in slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- Decisions on the modern awards system, including pay and conditions, are made by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) independently of Government. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended increases in award wages for aged care workers under three awards: the Aged Care Award 2010, the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010, and the Nurses Award 2010 (recommendation 84).
- The Health Services Union and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation have made claims to the FWC for increased wages for aged care workers covered by these three awards. The Government is supporting the FWC to make an independent decision by providing information and data as required.

There is a current trend of experienced aged care staff moving to the disability sector, to take up disability support jobs and team leader roles. How can we compete with the employment conditions and higher wages that are offered in the disability sector?

- In the 2021-22 Budget, the Australian Government announced an historic \$17.7 billion investment to ensure respect, care and dignity in the aged care sector, and grow the aged care workforce. This includes a \$91.8 million investment to support providers to attract, train and retain 13,000 new personal care workers, with a focus on home care. Funding is also being provided to support providers to undertake workforce planning as part of the existing Business Advisory Service, which will include tools to support recruitment, training and retention of workers.
- The Government also acknowledges that aged care and disability care programs are highly connected. Around 30 per cent of aged care providers also operate in the NDIS or other care and support fields. Many workers work across both sectors, especially in the home care workforce. In order to encourage more Australians to consider a career in the care and support workforce, the Government has launched a campaign titled 'A Life Changing Life'. This campaign shines a light on the rewarding, varied and sustainable job opportunities available in the sector, and encourages people with the right skills and personal qualities to consider working in care and support. You can find more information at: www.careandsupportjobs.gov.au.

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Can you please tell us a bit more about the funding available through the 'Home Care Workforce Support Program', and how organisations can access these grants?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission's Final Report, the Government announced funding for the Home Care Workforce Support Program (the Program) which will provide \$91 million in grant funding over two years from 2021-22 for targeted support to assist the aged care sector to increase the size of the personal care workforce.• Up to nine grants will be provided to help home care providers to attract, train and support the retention of an additional 13,000 personal care workers nationally to the home care sector by 2023. It is anticipated that South Australia will be administered as one single grant under the program.• In regional and remote (MMM6 and 7) communities, grant recipients will be afforded greater flexibility to meet home care workforce needs, including working with other types of care providers to address workforce needs in thin markets. Applications for the grants are currently being appraised by the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck with an announcement expected soon. Once a grant agreement is in place, the successful applicant will be required to work with all providers of home care services across South Australia.
It has been announced that funding is available for aged care providers to access a free, confidential and independent Workforce Advisory Service – can you provide more information about this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 11 October 2021, residential aged care and home care service providers can apply for a free, independent and confidential workforce advisory service.• This service supports providers to develop workforce training and skills plans. The service also provides strategies to help providers attract, retain and grow the skills of workers.• Providers can find out more on the Department's Website or apply directly for the service here.
How can providers keep up to date with opportunities to contribute to consultation and feedback related to the new reforms?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aged care providers can keep up-to-date with opportunities to contribute to consultation and feedback related to the new reforms through the Department's Ageing and Aged Care Engagement Hub.
Will there be universal language terms used throughout the new reforms? It is noted in recent publications and announcements, that the term "senior Australians" is being used, this is a variation from the CHSP Manual which uses "older people".
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In alignment with Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck's position as the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged care Services, the Department of Health typically uses "senior Australians".
With the introduction of My Aged Care in 2015 so many promises were made, what makes these new reforms different?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Australian Government called the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety to ensure our oldest and most vulnerable Australians receive care that supports and respects their dignity, and recognises the contribution they have made to society.• The Government agrees with the Commissioners that strong action is needed for fundamental and ambitious reforms.• The 2021–22 Federal Budget provides a comprehensive response to the Royal Commission's final report and the \$17.7 billion aged care reform package is designed to deliver sustainable quality and safety in home and residential aged care services.• This once-in-a-generation opportunity to confront the inadequacies in aged care will bring real change to the system.