

Federal Government urged to adopt National Aged Care Alliance's key recommendations for aged care workforce

The National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) today released its position paper, *Key propositions for career development and pathways for the aged care workforce* endorsed by a range of peak national organisations, including providers, unions, consumer groups and health professionals.

The paper, prepared by the NACA's Workforce Strategic Priority Group, includes a list of fourteen propositions that aim to ensure the aged care sector has a highly professional workforce with the right skill mix and staffing levels, and that is resourced, to deliver safe and high-quality care in diverse aged care environments.

Following the Federal Government's recent introduction of the rights-based Aged Care Act, the propositions in the paper will be integral to meeting the objectives of the new Act.

NACA has looked at several policy levers available to Government and the sector that will assist in building strong aged care career pathways, including

- building care work into a professional career via registration and other means,
- establishing a clear scope of practice and ensuring practitioners are working to their full scope,
- building stronger partnerships with the tertiary education sector,
- and ensuring all aged care workers, regardless of cultural background, have access to skills development and career pathways.

With Australia's ageing population and workforce, it is essential that a meaningful investment in long-term careers for aged care workers is made now and is accessible to all workers currently in or looking to join the rapidly growing sector.

ENDS

Summary of propositions listed below. The paper is available at <https://naca.asn.au/publications/>

For inquiries about the paper, please contact Amber Mills and Luke Hiscox

Media Contact: Amber Mills, amills@aag.asn.au and Luke Hiscox, lukeh@hsu.net.au

About NACA

The Alliance is a unique and independent group of national peak bodies who work within the aged care system. The Alliance's membership collaborates within and across four key aged care constituencies: consumers, aged care providers, unions, and health professionals.

Further information about the Alliance is available at naca.asn.au

Summary of Propositions

1. Aged care work must be an attractive, valued, and visible career to current and prospective aged care workers.
2. Quality aged care requires a workforce consisting of various diverse occupational groups, including personal care workers, nurses, allied health professionals and medical practitioners, as well as non-direct care staff. Specific workforce plans are required to enable quality service planning in aged care.
3. Registration is an important mechanism for professionalising the personal care workforce and developing clear career and training pathways.
4. Mandatory qualifications will help professionalise the personal care workforce and create stronger career development prospects and pathways.
5. Allied health assistants must work under nationally consistent, appropriate delegation and supervisory frameworks.
6. Workers in non-direct care roles, like hospitality and food services, must have visibility of career pathways and access to ongoing training to expand skills within their role.
7. Recognising advanced practice qualifications, micro-credentials and improved training pathways will identify and increase access to career pathways and skills development.
8. Strong partnerships with the Vocational and Tertiary Education sectors must be established to ensure students receive quality aged care training and are attracted to choose a career in the sector.
9. New models of training and funding are needed to enable nursing and allied health students to gain practical experience in aged care, including adequate access to and time with experienced practitioners.
10. Nursing, allied health professionals and medical practitioners in aged care must have better access to career pathways and wages or income equal to competing sectors.
11. Service planning in aged care requires establishment of a national allied health workforce dataset and associated workforce strategies that recognise the impact of other care and support sectors on allied health worker demand.
12. Nursing, allied health professionals and medical practitioners in aged care must be enabled to work to their full scope of practice. This contributes to establishing aged care as an attractive, viable career pathway. Career pathway and qualification recognition opportunities must be equally available and inclusive of people from culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with diverse sexual orientations, genders and variations of sex characteristics. Growth and recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care workforce is vital to meet the needs of older First Nations people and to support ageing on and return to country.
13. The Government must invest in ongoing training and development of the aged care workforce, including both professional development and attaining qualifications that lead to career progression.
14. Older people must be engaged in co-design and co-production of aged care training, education and service delivery.

national AGED CARE alliance

The Key propositions for career development and pathways for the aged care workforce Position Paper is endorsed by the following NACA members:

