Aged Services IRC Meeting Minutes
Date: Friday, 01 March 2019
Time: 10.00am – 3.00pm
Location: Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation Offices (SA Branch),
191 Torrens Road, Ridleyton, SA 5008

Action Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>By whom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ross Johnston to distribute data on the impact of residents’ behaviour towards aged care workers to committee members.</td>
<td>Ross Johnston</td>
<td>Following meeting</td>
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<td>Ian Hardy, Robert Bonner, Yasmin King and Melinda Brown to draft initial components of the Certificate III in Ageing Support and circulate to IRC members for their input.</td>
<td>Chair, Deputy Chair, Yasmin King and Melinda Brown</td>
<td>15 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>SkillsIQ to circulate the timeframe for next steps to IRC members.</td>
<td>SkillsIQ</td>
<td>With meeting minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Yates to circulate examples and case studies concerning partnerships between universities and aged care providers.</td>
<td>Rachel Yates</td>
<td>Following meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>SkillsIQ to circulate the membership of the Nutrition and Mealttime Experience Group to IRC members.</td>
<td>SkillsIQ</td>
<td>When distribution is approved by the Department</td>
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<td>Chair to investigate if Dementia could be considered as one of the major job cluster advisory groups. (Note that Dementia is already one of the Specific Interest Advisory Committee)</td>
<td>Ian Hardy, Chair</td>
<td>Following meeting</td>
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Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ian Hardy (Chair)</td>
<td>Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Bonner (Deputy Chair)</td>
<td>Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)</td>
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<td>Christine Stirling</td>
<td>Australian Association of Gerontology</td>
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<td>Kylie Ward</td>
<td>Australian College of Nursing</td>
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<td>Denise Ruth</td>
<td>Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)</td>
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<td>Patsy Yates</td>
<td>Palliative Care Australia</td>
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<td>David Sykes</td>
<td>Dementia Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther Huber (proxy for Robyn Chapman)</td>
<td>Assistive Technologies Australia</td>
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<td>Karen Williams (proxy for Karen Williams)</td>
<td>Carers Australia</td>
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The meeting was opened at 10:07am. The Chair welcomed all the attendees and Geraldine Paull from the Department of Education was introduced by SkillsIQ.

The Chair requested that members review the Register of Interest and SkillsIQ asked members who had not completed the Register of Interest to complete the form, declaring all affiliations and memberships even if no potential conflict is identified, in the interests of full transparency.
2.0 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair discussed the focus on 'job families' and their supporting functions. A job family is a classification or cluster of jobs that share a specific set of core characteristics such as skills, knowledge, behavioural attributes and accountabilities.

The AISC had proposed ten Aged Services Specialist Advisory Groups, as follows: Consumer Needs and Expectations; Residential Care; Home Care and Community Care; Indigenous and Remote Services; Diversity and Inclusion; Dementia; Palliative Care; Mental Health; Nutrition and the Mealtime Experience; and Pathways and Tertiary Education.

Out of these ten Specialist Advisory Groups, four major common interest groups had been identified, as follows: Mental Health; Indigenous and Remote Services; Pathways and Tertiary Education; and Nutrition and the Mealtime Experience which will be overseen collectively by the Chair and Deputy Chair and Yasmin King and Melinda Brown for SkillsIQ.

Dr David Sykes asked why Dementia was not considered to be a major job cluster group given the complexity of care required by dementia sufferers, and the Chair advised that he would take note of this question and investigate accordingly.

3.0 PRESENTATION BY LAKSHMAN GUNARATNAM FROM MILES MORGAN

Lakshman Gunaratnam introduced himself and noted his assumption that the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Report had been read by all the Committee members. He discussed the strategic actions that arose from the report: namely, the conferring of a greater focus on a voluntary industry Code of Practice; a reframing of the qualification and skills framework; the definition of new career pathways, including how the workforce is accredited; and the implementation of new attraction and retention strategies for the workforce at government, industry and organisational levels. All of this would require that the industry and workforce be transitioned to new standards.

Voluntary industry Code of Practice

The aged care industry does not have a Code of Practice, and such a code is urgently required in order that the sector’s workforce exceed growing community expectations. This presents a substantial opportunity for the aged care industry to collectively strive for aspirational change.

Reframing the qualification and skills framework

The report analysed the value of Personal Care Workers (PCWs) in the current workforce within the residential care, direct care and personal care sub-sectors. It showed that the PCW role is significantly undervalued, and yet stakeholders have high expectations of these workers. Currently, PCWs are perceived as having low-paid, low-status roles and yet they form the majority of the aged care workforce and have a significant impact on both individual organisations and the industry generally. Industry should therefore look for different ways in which we can value these workers, and attract and retain the right people with the right attributes.

The Korn Ferry Hay’s job design methodology (Input>Throughput>Output) is used to provide a common language that enables jobs in different organisations, functions and countries to be
consistently evaluated. The challenge is that there is an inconsistent approach to job families, job design, job pathways, career development and succession planning in the aged services sector.

Korn Ferry had interviewed home residential care providers in regional and remote areas to understand the current status of the workforce and to explore possible career pathways. It found that there is a significant ‘scope creep’ in, particularly, nursing roles. It was proposed that there should be a shift from a more traditional view of nursing in the aged care sector and that the Code of Practice should be extended to cover clients’ clinical, functional and cognitive requirements.

Emerging roles in the workforce needed be recognised in areas such as family liaison, the scheduling of coordinated care, and the ability to act as a linkage between multiple types of care providers. There was also evidence that the industry had been struggling to find the right balance between clinical expertise and managerial skills, which had resulted in poorly defined and extremely stretched managerial roles.

The challenge was to **modernise education and training to support the workforce of the future**. The task of this committee would be to find opportunities for collaboration across the relevant VET, higher education and industry sectors to ensure the qualifications that were to be developed could respond quickly to support both workers and industry in a changing environment, and ensure that both the national training and higher education systems ensured that workers had the competencies, agilities and skills to meet current and future requirements.

**Defining new career pathways and accreditation**

As a group, the committee’s task was to look at the construction of job families and how an agile workforce could be supported by re-thinking and opening job pathways and career options. The current structures did not allow for career progression and there was strong misalignment between the skills and competencies required for direct care roles and the current educational framework.

A person might theoretically start as a PCW and gradually move to a Care Team Leader, or a Nurse, or a Business Manager. The problem was, however, that, a lack of actual career progression was a primary disincentive to working or remaining in the aged care sector.

When designing any new qualification, new models of residential care based more on a **social and humanistic approach to caring for the aged** should be considered, focused on positive ageing and reablement which had been shown to improve function, independence and the quality of life of older people.

To support this, key guiding principles should be employed, such as integration; career progression; role re-engineering; interdependence; clarity; a focus on core competencies; and collaboration. A workforce needed to be built which could match the needs of the new model and the current industry by providing PCWs with the opportunities to upskill, reinvent their roles, and acquire the right skills, as well as the confidence to perform their duties, in order to deliver much better and more meaningful care experiences to the consumers they serve.

It was suggested that committee members might focus on any particular classification or job family with a view to analysing what exists now in terms of the typical roles of PCWs and to consider what
micro-credentialing would be needed to upskill those PCWs to enable them to take on higher level roles such as Care Team Leaders.

**Implementing new attraction and retention strategies for the workforce at government, industry and organisational levels**

Based on the conclusions of the Korn Ferry report titled *Reimagining the Aged Care Workforce*, the committee discussed the following:

- The role of the nurse in the aged care sector included complex decision making and risk analysis. It was critical to ensure that this complexity was not lost.
- In the Home Care job families, the role of Allied Health Worker should be considered, as PCWs liaise with Allied Health professionals every day and this could also lead to a potential career pathway.
- The challenge for the IRC lay in how it developed a unique model of care in response to identified industry issues. The committee might consider using the Korn Ferry report’s conclusions as a starting point and incorporate some of the findings into any new qualifications for PCWs.
- The committee should consider the complex issues faced by PCWs and nurses. PCW roles are currently not designed to address complex issues. However, there is a space for PCWs to perform specific tasks, and these workers should be encouraged to think more critically.
- Consideration should be given as to how more value can be assigned to the role of the PCW and how a qualification can be developed that prepares workers for both the technical and non-technical aspects of their roles.
- As the aged care industry has become consumer driven there will be a fundamental shift in outlook which will affect both the nature of the role of the PCW and the quality of life of ageing people within the aged care system.
- It was noted that HSU had conducted an independent national survey and found that the majority of responses did not indicate that career progression was the most common concern of PCWs. The major issues were found to be the way in which workers were treated by those for whom they cared; the fact that complaints were not acted upon; that employing organisations often dismissed workers’ concerns; and that workers left their employers’ organisations because they were asked to perform roles above their level of responsibility.
- It was agreed that different career pathways should be identified through the acquisition of specialist knowledge such as micro-credentialing.
- Employers should be responsible for onboarding and inducting their new staff members to a far greater extent than happens currently.
- Because residents’ behaviours were cited as a leading cause of workers leaving their employing organisations, Units of Competency relating to the management of residents’ behaviours should be included in any new qualifications. It was agreed that Ross Johnston would circulate data on the impact of residents' behaviour towards workers to committee members. The committee additionally noted that Regis Aged Care routinely conducted behavioural-based screening interviews in order to identify potential employees. This has resulted in a relatively high retention rate of staff members.
4.0 QUALIFICATION REVIEW PLAN – PROPOSED CERTIFICATE III IN AGEING SUPPORT

It was proposed that the committee fast-track the immediate review of the Certificate III in Ageing Support in order to make the process more effective. This would involve repackaging the qualification using the existing Units of Competency that were already available, in order to address identified industry needs.

It was proposed that the short-term goal should be to look at the current content of the Certificate III in Individual Support and package the new qualification by drawing out aged care-specific content to form a Certificate III in Ageing Support. It was agreed that the Chair, Deputy Chair, Yasmin King and Melinda Brown would draft the initial content of the qualification and circulate it to committee members for their review prior proceeding to the initial Draft 1 stakeholder consultation stage.

SkillsIQ outlined the process for the development of the new stand-alone Certificate III in Ageing Support qualification which would be able to be readily adopted by industry. Once the committee had approved the draft qualification there would be approximately six weeks of public consultation, including workshops and stakeholder engagement via the proprietary Online Feedback Forum on SkillsIQ’s website. The aim would be to obtain comprehensive feedback from the broader industry in order to develop the qualification further. Once the consultation phase had come to an end, SkillsIQ would collate feedback and circulate a report to committee members.

The next step would be to hold a teleconference or video conference to review the stages of the development process (or do this via email). After stakeholder views on the first draft had been received, the committee would decide what adjustments to the draft content were needed. A second draft would then be developed and again released for stakeholder validation. A final draft would then be developed for submission, after sign-off by the Chair, to the Department of Education and Training who in turn would submit it to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) for approval. Melinda Brown would circulate a proposed timetable for the development process to committee members with the meeting minutes.

SkillsIQ would seek the guidance of the committee in determining the content for inclusion in the Companion Volume Implementation Guide, which is the document that would accompany the qualification and which would provide advice on industry expectations and on the qualification’s implementation. The committee was also asked to identify any high-risk areas and use its collective expertise to create new mandatory rules within the overall structure of the Training Package, rather just relying on the Companion Volume itself.

The problems associated with short-duration and online courses were discussed. There had been significant criticism within industry of these courses and delivery methods. SkillsIQ stated that it was currently not possible to specify assessment methods, as the current arrangement gave RTOs flexibility in the assessment process. However, if it were the view of the committee that learners should be assessed only via first-hand observation by the assessor, this could be specified in the Assessment Conditions.

The following points were noted:
• In order to attract large numbers of potential employees to the aged care sector, people in
regional areas who currently had no access to large training providers needed to be
reached. In order to meet the needs of learners moving forward, digital means of delivering
the Training Package Products would also need to be employed.
• Changes to the TAE qualification to be enacted from April of this year would have a
massive impact on the current assessors.
• The committee was supportive of the registration of accreditation in the workforce and of
workers having access to further training in order to upskill.
• Industry had stressed the need for a workforce with more specialised skills, and it was
within the Terms of Reference of the committee to recommend specific skill sets, which
were combinations of Units within Training Packages designed to meet defined industry
needs.

5.0 SPECIFIC INTEREST ADVISORY COMMITTEES

I. Nutrition and Mealtime Experience Group

The membership of this group had been established by Professor John Pollaers, Chair of the
AISC, and had already established its Terms of Reference. The group would be holding their
inaugural meeting in April 2019.

The Chair of the group, dietician Dr. Cherie Hugo from the Lantern Project, was actively involved in
a technical advisory group (NAMETAG), which dealt with current aged care industry issues relating
to nutrition, with a special focus on workforce training. Ian Hardy, as IRC Chair, would be the
conduit between the Aged Services IRC and the Nutrition and Mealtime Experience Specific
Interest Advisory Committee.

The IRC noted the following suggestions:

• Improve the quality of food and the experience of eating. There is evidence that there is a
correlation between muscle strength and muscle mass, and better food would lead to better
health. Additionally, meal times are the daily social highlights for those living in residential
care.
• Consider food security as an issue facing ageing individuals in regional, rural and remote
areas and in Indigenous communities, and consider how to promote and educate both
workforces and the aged on the importance of the mealtime experience.
• Consider the non-residential aspects of mealtimes and the ability to access modified diets
among those who live independently in the community.

II. Pathways and Tertiary Education Group

It had been agreed at the last meeting that the Committee would form the Pathways and Tertiary
Education Specific Interest Advisory Committee. This group had had a teleconference on 15
February 2019 and had agreed to formulate Terms of Reference to obtain a clearer picture of its remit.

This group had identified the need to forge relationships with the higher education sector but was currently exploring its ideal composition, how it would work and how it would achieve its goals. It was agreed that there should be a broader understanding of tertiary education and how it interfaces with the aged care sector.

Suggestions had included consideration of health professionals’ placements; research on optimal models of care; and design of career pathways in which VET and higher educational components both played a part. There was already evidence of the value of developing partnerships and relationships between universities and aged care providers. It was agreed that Rachel Yates would circulate examples and case studies of this kind of mutually beneficial relationship.

Membership of this group was still to be confirmed. The Expression of Interest (EOI) form on the SkillsIQ website was still open, along with EOIs for the other Specific Interest Advisory Committees. It was suggested that the first action of this Specific Interest Advisory Committee might be to organise a meeting with the AQF review advisory panel.

The committee also discussed whether it might add a specialist group dedicated to placements, and how placements could be expanded across the broad range of aged care providers. One barrier to this was the fact that the coordination and leadership within placements was carried out at the State level, not the Commonwealth level where the IRC operates. The IRC discussed considering forming a placement model at a higher strategic level. It was noted that an effective placement model and graduate program could produce work-ready graduate students ready to be placed in the aged care sector.

It was agreed that Specific Interest Advisory Groups were ideal forums for external experts to contribute industry knowledge to the IRC itself on specialist areas of input. SkillsIQ undertook to circulate the membership list of the Nutrition and Mealtime Experience Group to IRC members.

*Please note that the group was previously referred to as Higher Education as a short form title, but the correct title is Pathways & Tertiary Education Specific Interest Advisory Committee as determined by the Department of Education.*

**6.0 ATTRACTION AND RETENTION ISSUES IN THE AGED CARE WORKFORCE**

Discussions took place on the topic of attraction and retention of the workforce. The following was noted:

- The creation of better qualifications for the workforce, together with ensuring that workers had the ability to build career pathways, could assist in addressing attraction and retention issues and provide increased job satisfaction.
- It was critical to get the foundations right and reframe the aged care industry in its entirety by clarifying the qualifications, skills and attributes that industry needed.
- The development of a national initiative in aged care via career expos etc. would help to attract prospective workers. This was a methodology already implemented by the
Australian Defence Force. The challenge was to make the idea of a career in the aged care sector both dynamic and attractive.

- There are elements within the current training and education of the workforce that both assist and hinder attraction and retention. The committee should therefore refer back to the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce Report to identify the areas on which we should focus in order to improve in these areas.

The committee noted that an Aged Services Workforce Council had been established in an attempt to bring together senior management and CEOs of both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations in the interest of furthering the objectives of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce Report.

7.0 NEXT MEETING

It was proposed that the committee hold two face-to-face meetings a year and that other work could be done in the interim via either email, teleconference or video conference. It was agreed that the second face-to-face meeting would be held on 29 August 2019 at the Holiday Inn at Melbourne Airport, with full details to be provided to members in the months ahead.

The Chair closed the meeting at 2.15pm.