The labour market for personal care workers
In aged and disability care
Australia 2017
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The document must be attributed as the (The labour market for personal care workers – in aged and disability care - Australia 2017)
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The Department of Jobs and Small Business conducted a survey of employers in the aged and disability care sectors in September-October 2017, focusing on the recruitment issues of their personal care workers. Key findings from the survey and information from other data sources on the personal care workforce are presented in this report.

Personal care workforce
- ABS data indicate around 277,100 people are currently employed as personal care workers. The workforce has grown strongly over the past five years and this is expected to continue. Personal care workers are predominantly female (79 per cent); 53 per cent are aged 45 and over; and 68 per cent have a qualification at the Certificate III level or above.
- This survey found that a large proportion of personal care workers are employed on a casual basis (40 per cent) and work part-time hours (80 per cent).

Employer requirements
- Personal care workers perform multiple tasks as part of their duties. Workers in disability care were, on average, expected to perform a greater range of tasks than those in the aged care sector.
- Employers in aged care were more likely to seek personal care workers with formal qualifications and experience while employers in disability care were more willing to recruit staff with lower or no qualifications.
- Despite requiring both qualifications and experience, employability skills (personal, people and team skills), were very important to employers in both the aged and disability care sector. This was particularly evident in the disability care sector with employers describing people skills as the most important attribute when recruiting.

Recruitment activity and experiences
- The level of recruitment activity was significant and the vast majority of employers (91 per cent) undertook some form of recruitment in the six months prior to the survey, usually for multiple vacancies.
- With around 76 per cent of vacancies filled, an average 5.6 applicants per vacancy, and 1.6 applicants on average found to be suitable, employers were generally able to find suitable staff.
  - There was more competition for vacancies in the aged care sector, with an average of 9.1 applicants for each personal care worker vacancy compared with 4.0 applicants in the disability care sector.
  - However, disability care employers considered a higher proportion of applicants to be suitable for the role (35 per cent) compared with those in aged care (23 per cent).
- The main reason vacancies were not filled was due to a lack of suitable applicants. Applicants were considered to be unsuitable due to a lack of relevant qualifications and experience, particularly for jobs in the aged care sector. Employers also found applicants to be unsuitable due to a lack of appropriate personal qualities, such as inadequate communication and people skills.
- Employers reported that personal care workers left their jobs predominantly to improve their pay and conditions. However, 54 per cent of disability care employers believed their staff left for jobs outside the industry, compared with 18 per cent in aged care.

1 ABS, Labour Force Survey, August 2018, Department of Jobs and Small Business trend data; Department of Jobs and Small Business, Employment Projections, five years to May 2023.
1. Background

Personal care workers\(^3\) provide care, support and services to the elderly or to those with disability, either in their own home or in a clinic, hospital, residential care facility, or community setting.

The Personal Care Workers Survey was conducted in September-October 2017 and focused on the personal care workforce in the aged and disability care sectors. Similar surveys were run between 2011 and 2014. While the results are not directly comparable with earlier surveys, some comparisons have been made with the 2014 results.

This report provides findings from the survey and highlights key differences between the aged and disability care sectors. Appendix A provides more detailed findings for the disability care sector and Appendix B provides additional insights into the aged care sector.

Other related research into this workforce includes the disability specific *The Australian Disability Workforce Reports* by the National Disability Service (NDS); and for aged care, the *National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey* commissioned by the Department of Health. While both these provide detailed workforce information, they differ in scope and direct comparisons with this Personal Care Workers Survey are limited. However, the results are broadly consistent. A summary of key findings of these reports is found in each of the Appendices.

2. Summary of respondents

Responses were received from 142 aged and disability care providers across Australia, including those in metropolitan and regional areas and in all states and territories. Responses from providers in NSW and the ACT have been combined; and as there were no businesses operating solely in the Northern Territory, these have been included in the ‘multiple states/territories’ group. The surveyed businesses employed more than 34,500 personal care workers, representing around 12 per cent of the total personal care workforce.\(^4\)

Of the respondents, 26 per cent operated in the aged care sector; 38 per cent in the disability care sector; and 36 per cent operated in both sectors. In order to analyse the information from those providers operating in both sectors, this report classifies a respondent as either a disability or aged care provider if they indicated they operated predominantly (more than 50 per cent of services) in that sector.\(^5\)

Other key information about the businesses that responded to the survey includes:

- Some 76 per cent operated as a community/not-for-profit organisation.
- Almost all businesses provided accommodation support. In-home assistance was the most commonly provided service (78 per cent of respondents).
- Client support was provided by 89 per cent of businesses, with personal support being the most commonly provided service (97 per cent).

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\(^3\) The definition for personal care workers is the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes 4231 - Aged and Disabled Carers and 4233 - Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers. See Attachment C for more information.


\(^5\) For those operating in both sectors, 90 per cent provided more than 70 per cent of their services in one sector. See Attachment B for more information.
Around 72 per cent received funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Note that aged care providers are eligible for NDIS funding for the provision of particular services for those aged under 65 in residential care (such as dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and other degenerative diseases). Of the respondents in the disability care sector, 96 per cent provided services under the NDIS. The remainder were employers in regional Queensland where the NDIS roll out had not been completed at the time of the survey.

Key information about the staff employed by the respondents includes:

- Some 58 per cent of personal care staff were employed on a permanent/ongoing basis. The remainder were predominantly casual staff (40 per cent).
- Around 80 per cent worked part-time. Of these, around 71 per cent worked 16 to 25 hours per week, on average.

Further information on the survey methodology and the characteristics of respondents is provided in Attachments A and B.

### 3. What do employers look for when recruiting?

- Employers in aged care were more likely to seek applicants with formal qualifications.
- For all employers, the right personal qualities were essential and were often more highly rated than qualifications and experience.

#### 3.1 Qualifications and experience

Some 62 per cent of respondents always recruited personal care workers who were qualified and experienced but a quarter reported they always sought to recruit newly qualified workers (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Qualifications and experience required for advertised positions](image)

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6 See the Department of Health Factsheet for aged care providers with younger people in residential care.

7 Unless otherwise stated, the source of all data is Department of Jobs and Small Business, Personal Care Workers Survey, 2017, Australia.
When recruiting new personal care staff, 69 per cent of businesses required Certificate III qualifications or higher.

- This was more evident in aged care (83 per cent) than in disability care (58 per cent).
- Employers were more likely to require a minimum Certificate III qualification (or higher) in metropolitan areas (78 per cent) than in regional areas (63 per cent).
- One in four employers in regional areas were willing to employ a personal care worker with no qualifications, compared with 15 per cent of metropolitan employers.
- Around 31 per cent of disability care employers were willing to take on staff with no qualifications, compared with 9 per cent in the aged care sector.

For larger businesses (more than 100 personal care workers), 63 per cent required a Certificate III or higher; however, they were also more likely than smaller organisations to recruit new workers with no qualifications or experience (26 per cent, compared with 15 per cent for those employing 100 or fewer personal care workers). This may in part be due to larger businesses having higher turnover and a greater capacity to train staff.

3.2 The importance of personal skills and qualities

Despite qualifications and experience being important across the industry, employers rated good personal qualities (covering a range of employability, team and people skills) as most important (37 per cent), followed by experience (32 per cent) and relevant qualifications (31 per cent) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Most important characteristic for employers when recruiting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant qualifications</th>
<th>Relevant experience</th>
<th>Personal qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked which personal qualities were most important, respondents identified people skills, a good work ethic, and communication skills (see Figure 3). The research found that 48 per cent of respondents selected all personal qualities to be important or very important.

**Figure 3: Personal qualities sought**

| People skills       | 23% | 74% |
| Work ethic          | 25% | 74% |
| Communication skills| 25% | 72% |
| Teamwork            | 11% | 33% | 56% |
| Flexibility         | 9%  | 40% | 51% |
| Physical ability    | 23% | 30% | 47% |
| Self-management skills| 14% | 41% | 45% |
| Other employability skills | 30% | 42% | 28% |

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4. Tasks performed by personal care workers

Employers were asked about the tasks undertaken by their personal care workers as part of their everyday duties. The most common task was attending to the personal care needs of clients (96 per cent of respondents), including assisting with feeding, grooming and dressing needs.

These workers also provided:
- Domestic services (87 per cent), including cooking, cleaning and shopping for their clients.
- Personal support (87 per cent), which included assisting clients with day-to-day activities such as paying bills and undertaking correspondence.
- Social support (86 per cent), such as assisting clients to participate in social activities in the community.
- Community access (84 per cent) provided in the form of transport and assisted mobility services.

Figure 4: Tasks undertaken in the aged and disability care sectors

While the types of tasks were similar across both the aged and disability care sectors, workers in the disability care sector provided a greater range of tasks, most notably:
- Assisting in the learning and development of life skills.
- Providing education/employment support.
- Community access (transport) and support to participate in social activities.

Not surprisingly, the provision of palliative care was more common in aged care businesses.

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5. Recruitment experiences

- 91% of employers had attempted to recruit staff in the previous six months
- Recruitment to fill new positions is substantially higher than in 2014
- More than half of the businesses surveyed had recruited staff by ‘word of mouth’ or after being approached by the applicant

5.1 Recent recruitment

Employers reported high rates of recruitment of personal care workers. In the six months prior to the survey, 91 per cent of respondents had attempted to recruit these workers, up from 88 per cent in 2014. This compares with an average recruitment rate of 72 per cent for employers across all industries. The rate of recruitment was similar in both the disability care (91 per cent) and aged care sectors (85 per cent). Victorian employers were the least likely to have recruited in the previous six months (82 per cent), while all businesses in Tasmania (noting that there were only seven responses) and all those operating across multiple states had attempted to recruit (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Attempted to recruit in last six months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Recruitment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW/ACT</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple states/territories</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Large organisations were more likely to have attempted to recruit in the previous six months. All surveyed businesses with more than 200 personal care workers had recently recruited, while only 70 per cent of those employers with less than 50 personal care workers had done so.

Employers in metropolitan areas were more likely to have attempted to recruit (95 per cent) compared with those in regional areas (80 per cent). Additionally, 93 per cent of those employers operating partially or solely under the NDIS had recently attempted to recruit compared with 82 per cent of those not operating under the NDIS.

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8 Department of Jobs and Small Business, Surveys of Employers’ Recruitment Experiences (SERE), 2017. The SERE is a quantitative telephone survey (opposed to this survey which was a paper survey) that contacted employers and asked about their recent recruitment experiences.
5.2 Reasons for recruitment

Employers recruited to both replace staff (due to turnover) and to fill new positions. Of the employers that had attempted to recruit in the last six months:

- 94 per cent had recruited due to turnover (compared with 88 per cent in 2014).
- 84 per cent had recruited to fill newly created positions (up substantially from 68 per cent in 2014).

5.2.1 Turnover

All aged care providers who had recruited in the last six months had done so to replace staff compared with 89 per cent of those in disability care.

In metropolitan areas, all businesses recruited to replace staff compared with 88 per cent in regional areas (Figure 6). All employers in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and in those organisations operating across multiple states had recruited to replace staff, while recruitment due to turnover was lowest in Queensland (81 per cent) (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Percentage of employers, who recruited due to turnover, by region

Figure 7: Percentage of employers, who recruited due to turnover, state/territory

All organisations operating in a commercial or private setting had to recruit staff due to turnover compared with 91 per cent of those operating in the community/not-for-profit organisations. Not surprisingly, larger businesses had to recruit staff due to turnover, with 98 per cent of businesses with more than 100 personal care workers having to recruit due to turnover compared with 88 per cent of those businesses with 50 or fewer personal care workers.

5.2.2 New positions

Of the employers who had attempted to recruit in the previous six months, 97 per cent in the disability care sector had recruited to fill new positions, compared with 66 per cent in aged care. This is likely to be due to increasing demand for services in disability care with the introduction of the NDIS.
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Tasmania had the highest rate of recruitment due to new positions becoming available, followed by Queensland (Figure 8). South Australia had the lowest rate (71 per cent). A higher proportion of employers in Queensland had recruited to fill new positions than due to turnover (94 per cent compared with 81 per cent).

In metropolitan areas, 78 per cent of businesses recruited for new positions compared with 85 per cent in regional areas (see Figure 9).

Businesses operating both in metropolitan and regional locations were more likely to have recruited for new positions (87 per cent).

Of businesses with more than 100 personal care workers, 88 per cent had attempted to recruit to fill new positions compared with 79 per cent of those with 100 or fewer.

5.3 Recruitment methods

More than 90 per cent of recruiting respondents used multiple methods of recruitment, with three quarters using three or more. As shown in Figure 10, recruitment websites was the main method used (71 per cent of employers, up from 60 per cent in 2014) particularly with larger employers. Many larger businesses in both the aged and disability care sectors have recruitment pages incorporated into their websites, listing vacancies and allowing job seekers to submit résumés.

Around 67 per cent of employers filled vacancies through ‘Word of mouth’, such as asking current employees if they knew of anyone that would be suitable for the role. In addition, many employers were approached directly by applicants (56 per cent). Moreover, 80 per cent of respondents reported using one or both of these informal recruitment methods.
Social media, particularly Facebook, was being used by respondents in many ways, from advertising vacancies to using Facebook to organise information sessions. Overall, social media (44 per cent) was utilised more frequently to advertise vacancies than newspapers (38 per cent). This was substantially higher than the 10 per cent of employers (across all industries) who reported using social media as a recruitment method in a national survey of employers. At 22 per cent, the use of jobactive was also much higher than the 5 per cent recorded in the same national survey.

6. Recruitment outcomes

- 76% of all vacancies were filled
- A ‘lack of suitable applicants’ was the main reason for not filling vacancies
- Applicants were considered unsuitable mainly due to a lack of:
  - experience
  - qualifications
  - the right personal qualities

6.1 Vacancies

Around 95 per cent of recruiting employers advertised for multiple positions when they last recruited, with two-thirds advertising up to 10 vacancies.

The average number of advertised vacancies in employers’ last recruitment round was 13.5. It is worth noting however, that 10 per cent of employers advertised 30 or more vacancies, accounting for 43 per cent of all vacancies. Large recruitment rounds with 10 or more vacancies were more common in metropolitan areas and in larger organisations. NSW/ACT employers accounted for the largest proportion of vacancies, while Tasmania accounted for the least.

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9 Employer comment, Department of Jobs and Small Business, Personal Care Workers Survey, 2017, Australia.
6.2 Last recruitment round

In their last recruitment round, respondents were able to fill 76 per cent of their vacancies, with the remainder left unfilled. All employers had filled at least one of their vacancies and 62 per cent had filled all their vacancies. In the 2014 survey, 86 per cent of all vacancies were filled, indicating the labour market for personal care workers has tightened in recent years.

Around 27 per cent of vacancies in the disability care sector were unfilled while the proportion was slightly lower in the aged care sector (20 per cent).

Employers in some states found it harder to find suitable personal care workers, with 49 per cent of vacancies in South Australia and 38 per cent in NSW/ACT not filled. By contrast, employers in Queensland and Tasmania filled almost all of their vacancies (only 4 per cent and 3 per cent of vacancies, respectively, were unfilled).

Large businesses with more than 200 personal care workers found it harder to fill vacancies with 29 per cent of vacancies unfilled. By contrast, only 7 per cent of vacancies in smaller organisations (with 50 or fewer personal care workers) were not filled at the time of the survey.

6.3 Reasons vacancies were unfilled

There were many reasons why personal care vacancies were unfilled but, overwhelmingly, employers indicated there were no suitable applicants to fill these roles (85 per cent), with applicants lacking the right skills, qualifications and experience. Figure 11 shows that applicants’ availability was also a significant reason these positions were not filled (61 per cent).

Figure 11: Employers’ reasons vacancies were not filled

- No suitable applicants: 85%
- Availability/working hours: 61%
- No applicants: 37%
- Location: 35%
- Nature of the work: 15%
- Wages not competitive: 15%
- Working contract and/or conditions: 7%
- Low status: 7%
6.4 Suitability of applicants

Overall, employers considered 28 per cent of applicants to be suitable for a personal care worker role. Almost 10 per cent of employers considered all applicants to be suitable and all employers reported having at least one suitable applicant. Of the average 5.6 applicants per vacancy, 1.6 were considered to be suitable.

Figure 12: Number of applicants per vacancy by state/territory

Western Australia had the largest number of applicants per vacancy (an average of 12.7 applicants and 2.8 suitable applicants per vacancy) followed by NSW/ACT (6.7 applicants and 1.6 suitable applicants per vacancy), although proportionally, there were fewer suitable candidates per vacancy. Victoria, with an average of 3.1 applicants and 1.3 suitable applicants per vacancy, had the least number of applicants (Figure 12).

With an average of 9.1 applicants per vacancy, the aged care sector attracted much larger applicant numbers than the 4.0 applicants in the disability care sector (Figure 13). Nonetheless, a greater proportion of applicants were considered to be suitable in the disability sector (35 per cent) than in the aged care sector (23 per cent).

Figure 13 indicates that metropolitan employers found 35 per cent of applicants (an average of 1.6 per vacancy) to be suitable for their personal care positions while in regional areas, employers considered 45 per cent (or 1.5 per vacancy) to be suitable.

Figure 13: Number of applicants per vacancy by area and sector

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6.5 Reasons applicants were considered unsuitable

The two most common reasons employers found applicants to be unsuitable were insufficient qualifications and experience (each cited by 60 per cent of employers). However, 81 per cent of employers believed a lack of personal skills was a contributing factor, with 58 per cent noting a lack of communication skills and 44 per cent a lack of people skills (see Figure 14). A further 35 per cent of employers also thought that applicants demonstrated a limited interest in the profession and 31 per cent thought applicants did not have appropriate personal presentation.

The availability of applicants and their ability to work the shifts and variable hours expected in the sector were also a concern for employers (52 per cent).

One in four employers stated that applicants were unsuitable as they did not have the necessary references and a further 8 per cent stated that the applicants did not have appropriate police checks.

Figure 14: Reasons applicants were rated unsuitable (multiple responses allowed)

- Qualifications: 60%  
- Work experience: 60%  
- Communication skills*: 58%  
- Availability to work when required: 52%  
- Inadequate people skills*: 44%  
- Did not attend interview: 44%  
- Inflexible*: 41%  
- Inadequate English proficiency: 39%  
- Poorly written/presented application: 39%  
- Limited interest in job*: 35%  
- Personal presentation*: 31%  
- Inability to self-manage*: 25%  
- Poor or no references/referees/work history: 25%  
- Teamwork skills*: 24%  
- Physically unable to carry out duties: 18%  
- Work ethic*: 16%  
- Police checks: 8%

*Personal skills and qualities

6.6 Time taken to fill jobs

It took an average of 3.6 weeks to fill personal care worker positions, with 82 per cent filled within four weeks and 35 per cent filled within two weeks (Figure 15). The process was slowest in Victoria where it took an average of 4.3 weeks and fastest in Western Australia (2.4 weeks).
Smaller employers (with 50 or fewer personal care workers) took longer to fill their vacancies (an average of 4.0 weeks) compared with larger organisations (200 or more personal care workers) which took, on average, 3.3 weeks. Employers in metropolitan areas took an average of 3.2 weeks to fill their vacancies while regional employers took an average of 3.9 weeks.

7. Recruitment expectations

- The labour market for personal care workers has tightened in recent years
- 90 per cent of employers were expecting to recruit in the next six months

7.1 Current vacancies

Two thirds of employers had at least one current vacancy for a personal care worker in their organisation, compared with 47 per cent of employers in 2014. Three quarters of employers in the disability care sector had current vacancies compared with 54 per cent in the aged care sector.

On average, each employer had 9.5 current vacancies. Victoria had the most vacancies (13.2) while Queensland had the least, with 5.0 vacancies per respondent (Figure 16). The majority of the current vacancies were for part-time personal care positions (89 per cent).

Of employers with current vacancies, 95 per cent had recruited in the past six months, suggesting many employers are recruiting for personal care workers on a regular basis.

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7.2 Expectations of future recruitment

More than 90 per cent of employers anticipated needing to recruit in the six months following the survey, compared with 78 per cent of employers in 2014. Recruitment expectations were higher in disability care with 95 per cent expecting to need to recruit in the coming six months, compared with 88 per cent in aged care. Some 40 per cent of disability care employers thought future recruitment would be harder than their previous experience, compared with 14 per cent of employers in the aged care sector. In both Queensland and South Australia, 47 per cent of employers believed it would be more difficult while employers in Victoria were most optimistic, at 16 per cent (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Proportion of employers expecting future recruitment to be more difficult

8. Turnover and retention

- 53% of employers thought that staff retention was difficult
- Employers thought the main reason staff left was to seek better pay and conditions

8.1 Retention difficulties

As stated earlier in this report, 94 per cent of employers who had recruited in the preceding six months were replacing staff who had left. More than half of all employers (53 per cent) thought that staff retention was difficult. Employers in disability care found it more difficult (58 per cent) than those in the aged care sector (43 per cent).

Figure 18: Percentage of employers who reported difficulty retaining staff
Large businesses (200 or more personal care workers) reported greater difficulty retaining staff (63 per cent) compared with 40 per cent of smaller businesses (fewer than 50 personal care workers).

Respondents in NSW/ACT (71 per cent), Western Australia (61 per cent) and South Australia (59 per cent) reported significantly greater difficulty retaining staff than those in Queensland (35 per cent) and Victoria (37 per cent). Businesses operating across multiple states (55 per cent) and those operating both in metropolitan and regional areas (69 per cent) also reported higher difficulty retaining staff (Figure 18).

8.2 Reasons for turnover

There were many reasons that personal care staff left their job, although 58 per cent of employers thought they did so to improve their wages and conditions (Figure 19).

![Figure 19: Main reasons employers thought personal care workers left their job](image)

Employers in the aged and disability care sectors reported similar rates of their personal care workers leaving to seek better pay and conditions at 57 and 62 per cent respectively (see Table 1). However, a significantly larger proportion of employers in the disability sector reported their staff left for a job outside the industry. This reflects other findings in the survey that staff retention is of greater concern in the disability care sector compared with the aged care sector.

Table 1: Reasons workers left their job, by sector and business size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For better pay/conditions</th>
<th>For a position outside the industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability care sector</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged care sector</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger businesses (200 or more)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium size businesses (51 to 100)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3 Strategies in place to help improve retention

Many employers had strategies in place to encourage staff to stay, including providing staff flexible hours (76 per cent) while 74 per cent provided training and development opportunities (see Figure 20). Some 47 per cent of employers also converted staff to ongoing contracts where possible.

Figure 20: Strategies in place to help improve retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible hours</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide development &amp; training</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convert to ongoing where possible</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase remuneration</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide other benefits</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify workplace or change work practices</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra leave entitlements</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, 36 per cent of employers provided additional benefits such as a company car, accommodation and sponsoring social events for staff.

9. Training requirements for new staff

Of the employers who had recruited personal care workers, 47 per cent had at least one new staff member who required some form of further training. In the aged care sector, 22 per cent of successful applicants required further training; however, in the disability care sector, this was much higher at 46 per cent most likely as a result of the comparatively smaller pool of qualified applicants.

Additional training employers needed to give their new starters included:

- Manual handling
- Administration of medicines
- First aid
- Behaviour management
- Food handling
- Dementia training.

In their last recruitment round, 14 per cent of all respondents had employed new staff on the understanding that they would complete a Certificate III in Individual Support or equivalent while employed.¹¹

¹¹ For further information on relevant qualifications and training, see the section ‘Training trends for the personal care sector’.

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10. Demographic profile of personal care workers

The personal care workforce is predominantly female and relatively old. At the 2016 Census, 79 per cent of the personal care workforce was female (compared with 48 per cent across all industries). It is worth noting that the proportion of the workforce accounted for by males increased slightly from 19 per cent in the 2011 Census, to 21 per cent in 2016, the equivalent of an additional 11,100 males.

While 41 per cent of the Australian workforce was aged 45 and older in the 2016 Census, for personal care workers, 53 per cent of the workforce was aged 45 or older (down slightly from 55 per cent in 2011). The ageing workforce is an issue that will continue to affect the sector with the median age remaining unchanged at 46 years of age between the 2011 and 2016 censuses. The ageing workforce was observed by surveyed employers, as one quarter reported retirement as the reason their staff had left their jobs.

Table 2: Age distribution for personal care workers and all workers, by location (2016 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Personal care workers aged 45 years and over</th>
<th>Workers in all industries aged 45 years and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional areas</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional NSW</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Victoria</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Queensland</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional South Australia</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Western Australia</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Tasmania</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Northern Territory</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Recent trends and expected growth

11.1 Recent growth

The occupations in scope for this survey were the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes 4231 Aged and Disabled Carers and 4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers. These are both large occupations, employing 175,400 Aged and Disabled Carers and 97,100 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers in August 2018 (Figure 22). Both occupations experienced an increase in employment over the five years to August 2018. Nursing Support and Personal Care Worker employment levels were variable over the period but increased by 5.6 per cent overall (or 5,100). Aged and Disabled Carers increased strongly, up by 36.2 per cent (or 46,600 workers). This compares with employment growth for all occupations of 10.4 per cent over the same period.\(^13\)

![Figure 22: Employment, personal care worker occupations ('000)](image)

11.2 Future growth

Many factors will influence the employment growth of personal care workers, including the ageing population and the increased funding available for disability care. The Department of Jobs and Small Business projects that employment for personal care workers will increase by 80,600 (or 29.4 per cent) over the five years to May 2023. Aged and Disabled Carers are projected to increase by 69,200 jobs (or 39.3 per cent), while Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers are projected to increase by 11,400 jobs (or 11.6 per cent). This compares with an overall projected growth of 7.1 per cent for all occupations.\(^15\)

\(^{13}\) ABS, Labour Force Survey, August 2018, Department of Jobs and Small Business trend.


\(^{15}\) Department of Jobs and Small Business, Employment Projections, five years to May 2023.
12. Training trends for the personal care sector

12.1 Educational attainment profile

ABS Census data indicate that the personal care workforce is becoming increasingly skilled. Between 2011 and 2016, the proportion of personal care workers with a Certificate III or higher qualification increased by 11 percentage points to 73 per cent. By comparison, the proportion of the workforce with a Certificate III or higher across all industries rose by 5 percentage points, from 59 per cent in 2011 to 64 per cent in 2016. While a Certificate III or Certificate IV is the most common qualification for personal care workers, the proportion with a Bachelor degree or higher also increased, from 12 per cent of the workforce in 2011 to 16 per cent in 2016.

12.2 Personal care worker courses and qualifications

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) collects data on the number of students undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) in specific courses. In 2017, there were 77,100 commencements in personal care worker courses, down from 95,600 in 2014. Total program completions also declined over this period, from 47,800 to 37,600.

Figure 23: VET students in personal care worker courses

Certificate III personal care courses include:
- Certificate III in Aged Care*
- Certificate III in Health Service Assistance
- Certificate III in Disability
- Certificate III in Individual Support (introduced in 2015)*

* The Certificate III in Individual Support and Certificate III in Aged Care are the most common courses undertaken (see Table 3).

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16 ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016
17 NCVER, total VET students and courses, program commencements and completions, 2014-2017 (note: completions data for 2017 is preliminary).
### Table 3: Characteristics of enrolled students and graduate outcomes (in the two most common courses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected student characteristics, 2016</th>
<th>Certificate III Individual Support</th>
<th>Certificate III Aged Care</th>
<th>All VET students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number enrolled</td>
<td>35,180</td>
<td>25,030</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time study</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 years of age and over</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed or attending school</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With disability</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English speaking background</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the most disadvantaged socio-economic status</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Graduate outcomes, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed 6 months after training</th>
<th>Certificate III Individual Support</th>
<th>Certificate III Aged Care</th>
<th>All VET students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

18 NCVER VET participation tool, VET Students and Courses, Comparing high-use training package qualifications, 2016 and Total VET Graduate Outcomes, 2017.
Attachment A: Survey methodology and summary of responses

A.1 Sample

The sample of aged care providers was selected from the Aged Care Service List, Australia (30 June 2016), a list of more than 5,000 aged care services providers managed by the Department of Social Services.29 The sample of 500 providers was chosen randomly with adjustments made for provider stratification across states and territories. No other profile factors, such as business size and type of services provided, were taken into account when compiling the sample.

The sample of disability care employers was obtained from the NDIS Find a Provider site.20 This list was also stratified by state and territory to produce a total of 425 providers.

The sample of disability care providers for Western Australia was supplemented with businesses from the Western Australian Department of Communities Disability Services website.21

A.2 The survey

The survey was predominantly mail-based and was distributed to 900 providers. Following an initial low response, responses were supplemented with an electronic survey and a small number of phone administered surveys. In total, 142 responses were received, representing the employers of approximately 34,500 personal care workers (or 12 per cent of all personal care workers).

Table 4: Number of responses by geographic location of services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single State/Territory:</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Multiple Locations:</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory*</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Multiple states/territories (including NT)**</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Region:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Metropolitan only</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Non-metropolitan only</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Both metropolitan and non-metropolitan</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NSW and ACT responses have been combined in the report
** All Northern Territory businesses are included in the multiple states/territory category as there were no responding businesses operating solely in the Northern Territory.

Table 5: Number of responses by business characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector (multiple responses allowed)</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Provides accommodation support (multiple responses allowed)</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged care</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Residential facility</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability care</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Permanent residential facility</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Respite residential facility</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-home respite</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary sectors</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged care only</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>In-home assistance</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability care only</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both sectors</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Provides Client support (multiple responses allowed)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal support</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant sector</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly in aged care</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Community access</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly in disability care</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Employment and/or education support</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in both sectors equally</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50 or fewer employees</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51 to 100 employees</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/not-for-profit</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>101 to 200 employees</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/private</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>More than 200 employees</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating under NDIS</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attachment B: Profile of respondents

B.1 Respondents

The Department received 142 responses covering metropolitan and regional employers across all states and territories. In the report, NSW and ACT responses are combined and all Northern Territory businesses are included in the multiple states/territories category (as no responses were received from businesses operating solely in the NT). As shown in Figure 24, 8 per cent of respondents operated across multiple states/territories.

In the report, metropolitan refers to those employers operating in the capital cities; regional employers are those that operated in the rest of the state. Figure 25 shows that 28 per cent of employers operated both in metropolitan and regional locations.

Figure 24: Location of respondents

![Pie chart showing distribution of respondents across states/territories]

- NSW/ACT: 8%
- VIC: 22%
- QLD: 20%
- SA: 13%
- WA: 12%
- TAS: 5%
- Multiple states/territories: 20%

Figure 25: Metropolitan and regional respondents

![Pie chart showing distribution of metropolitan and regional respondents]

- Metropolitan only: 29%
- Regional only: 28%
- Operates both in metropolitan and regional: 43%

B.2 Sector and business characteristics

Some 76 per cent of respondents were a community/not-for-profit organisation while a further 20 per cent operated as a commercial/private organisation. The remaining 4 per cent were public providers.

Businesses surveyed employed personal care workers in the following sectors:
- disability care (38 per cent)
- aged care (26 per cent)
- across both sectors (36 per cent).

The 36 per cent of respondents providing services in both aged and disability care were asked what proportion of their personal care staff worked in each sector and of these,
- 61 per cent operated *predominantly* in disability care
- 39 per cent operated *predominantly* in aged care.

Figure 26: Primary sector as a percentage of respondents

![Pie chart showing distribution of primary sectors]

- Aged care only: 38%
- Disability care only: 26%
- Provide services in both aged and disability care: 36%
The predominant sector was based on whether 50 per cent or more of the services were provided in that sector. There is a risk with this approach that if many providers are bunched around the 50 per cent point the results could be misleading. This was not the case and analysis of the responses shows that most (94 per cent in aged care and 90 per cent in disability care) were providing at least 70 per cent of their services in the predominant sector.

Analysis by sector in this report includes these respondents in their predominant sector. Some 13 per cent of respondents were not able to identify their main sector and two respondents said they worked equally in both. These have been excluded from any analysis by sector.

B.2.1 Business size

The surveyed respondents employed more than 34,500 personal care workers, representing around 12 per cent of the personal care workforce. The individual size of the businesses varied significantly from two personal care workers to 2,000 (Figure 27). Businesses surveyed employed an average of 246 personal care workers (185 in disability care compared with 288 in the aged care sector).

Figure 27: Business size

South Australian businesses had the largest average workforce (424 personal care staff per respondent) and Queensland had the smallest (with an average of 100 per respondent). In metropolitan regions, respondents employed 182 personal care workers on average, compared with 88 in regional areas. Those businesses that operated across state borders had the largest personal care workforce employing an average of 673 personal care workers per respondent.

B.2.2 Employment type

More than half of the personal care workers (58 per cent) employed by the respondents were working on a permanent/ongoing basis and 80 per cent were working part-time hours.

According to the survey, personal care staff worked an average of 21.5 hours a week. Of those employed part-time, 43 per cent worked 16 to 20 hours and another 28 per cent worked 21 to 25 hours (Figure 30). The hours varied based on the type of employment. For example, permanent/ongoing personal care staff worked an average of 26.1 hours while casuals worked an average of 18.3 hours.

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23 Part-time hours are defined as working less than 35 hours per week.
Disability care providers (and NDIS providers in particular) had a larger proportion of casual staff, working shorter average hours. Of the part-time personal care staff working under the NDIS, 54 per cent were classified as permanent/ongoing and 45 per cent were casual (an additional 1 per cent were a combination of contract and labour hire workers). By contrast, of those employed by non-NDIS providers, 71 per cent were classified as permanent/ongoing, while 28 per cent were on casual contracts and 1 per cent were contract workers.

Employers in South Australia had the highest proportion of personal care workers in casual employment (59 per cent) followed by Victoria (54 per cent). Queensland had the lowest at 20 per cent. It should be noted that at the time of the survey, the rollout of the NDIS had not been completed in Queensland and Western Australia.

B.3 Service delivery

There were two core delivery settings:

Accommodation support: Almost all respondents (99 per cent) provided some form of accommodation support, the most common being in-home assistance (78 per cent).

Figure 31: Accommodation support provided
Client support: Of surveyed employers, 89 per cent provided some form of client support.

Figure 32: Client support provided

The most common service provided was Personal support, encompassing assistance with physical care needs and other support to arrange and attend appointments and assistance with financial matters, provided by 97 per cent of respondents. This was followed by Community access, including access to life-skill development and recreation and holiday programs, provided by 83 per cent of respondents. Community support, including providing assistance with, and access to, activities like therapy and counselling, was provided by 82 per cent of respondents.
Attachment C: Definition of personal care worker

For this survey, personal care workers include the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes 4231 - Aged and Disability Carers; and 4233 - Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers.

The ANZSCO classification defines 4231 - Aged and Disabled Carers as those who provide general household assistance, emotional support, care and companionship for aged and disabled persons in their own homes. They may be known as aged and disabled care workers, personal carers or personal care workers. Some of their duties include:

- accompanying aged and disabled persons during daily activities
- assisting clients with their mobility
- preparing food for clients
- arranging social activities
- performing housekeeping tasks such as vacuuming and cleaning
- assisting in personal hygiene and dressing
- providing companionship, friendship and emotional support
- shopping and running errands
- may live in with the person.

The ANZSCO code of 4233 - Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers are those who provide assistance, support and direct care to patients in a variety of health, welfare and community settings. This classification includes the sub-groups:

- 423312 Nursing Support Worker
- 423313 Personal Care Assistant
- 423314 Therapy Aide
- 423311 Hospital Orderly.

Therapy Aides (423314) and Hospital Orderlies (423311) are not classified as personal care workers and have been excluded where possible.

The duties of Nursing Support Workers and Personal Care Assistants are:

- assisting patients with their personal care needs such as showering, dressing and eating
- assisting patients with their mobility and communication needs
- participating in planning the care of individuals
- following therapy plans such as interventions to assist those with dementia and behavioural problems
- observing and reporting changes in patients’ conditions, and reporting complaints about care
- assisting with rehabilitation exercises, basic treatment and delivering medications
- providing direct support and assistance to therapists.

There is a large overlap between the two groups. The main distinction is where the services are carried out such as in a hospital, residential or other care facility.
Table 6: Workforce characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Aged and Disabled Carers</th>
<th>Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers</th>
<th>All occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in August 2018</td>
<td>174,700</td>
<td>102,400</td>
<td>12,559,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment growth&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last 12 months (%)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past five years (%)</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past 10 years (%)</td>
<td>106.2</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected employment growth&lt;sup&gt;25&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected employment growth (five years to May 2023) (%)</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment profile&lt;sup&gt;26&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the workforce working part-time (%)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly hours for full-time workers (hours)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly hours for part-time workers (hours)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of workforce who are female (%)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of workforce (years)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of workforce aged 15 to 24 years (%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of workforce aged 45 years and older (%)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly earnings for full-time workers ($)</td>
<td>600-799</td>
<td>600-799</td>
<td>1,000-1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly earnings for part-time workers ($)</td>
<td>400-599</td>
<td>400-599</td>
<td>400-599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education attainment profile&lt;sup&gt;26&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the workforce with a Bachelor degree or higher (%)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the workforce with a Diploma/Advanced Diploma (%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the workforce with a Certificate III/V (%)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the workforce with a Certificate II or lower (including year 12 and below) (%)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>25</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, Employment Projections, five years to May 2023.
<sup>26</sup> ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016.