



Duty of Care – the Aged Care Workforce Challenge

Cassandra Winzar – CEDA Senior Economist
cassandra.winzar@ceda.com.au 0418 606 652



CEDA – the Committee for Economic Development of Australia – is an independent, membership-based think tank.

CEDA's purpose is to improve the lives of Australians by enabling a dynamic economy and vibrant society.

For more than 60 years, CEDA has identified the policy issues that matter for Australia's future and pursued solutions that deliver better economic and social outcomes for the greater good.

Through independent research and frank debate, we influence policy and collaborate to disrupt for good.



*The evidence is clear that the quality of care
and the quality of jobs in aged care are
inextricably linked - Royal Commission Final
Report*



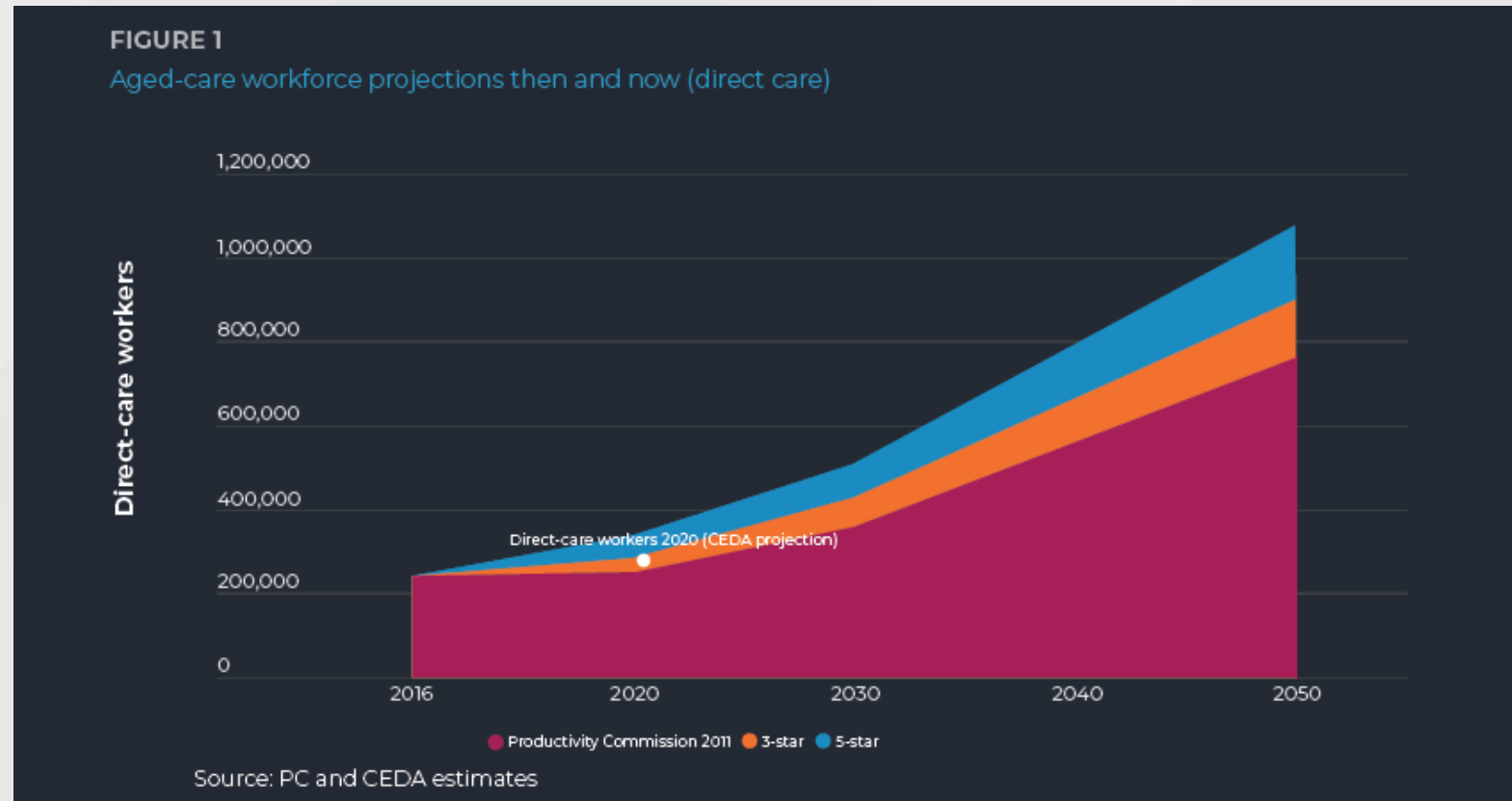
The challenge ahead for aged care workforce

- **Workforce demand drivers**
 - Demographic change
 - Expansion of funding and unmet demand
 - Increased staffing minutes

- **Workforce supply constraints**
 - Wages
 - Working hours
 - Career progression
 - Training and qualifications
 - Perceptions of industry

➤ Workforce projections

- The baseline for our projections is the 2011 PC report projections of direct care workers.
 - We add a 20% uplift in direct residential staff to account for the recommended increase in minimum staff time per resident per day (from 180 to 200 minutes). A bare minimum by global standards.
 - Have included some uplift in home care workers due to expansion of home care packages, but likely still underrepresented.
- We have also looked at what a move to what higher levels of staff time would look like by applying a 50% uplift to direct residential staff projections.

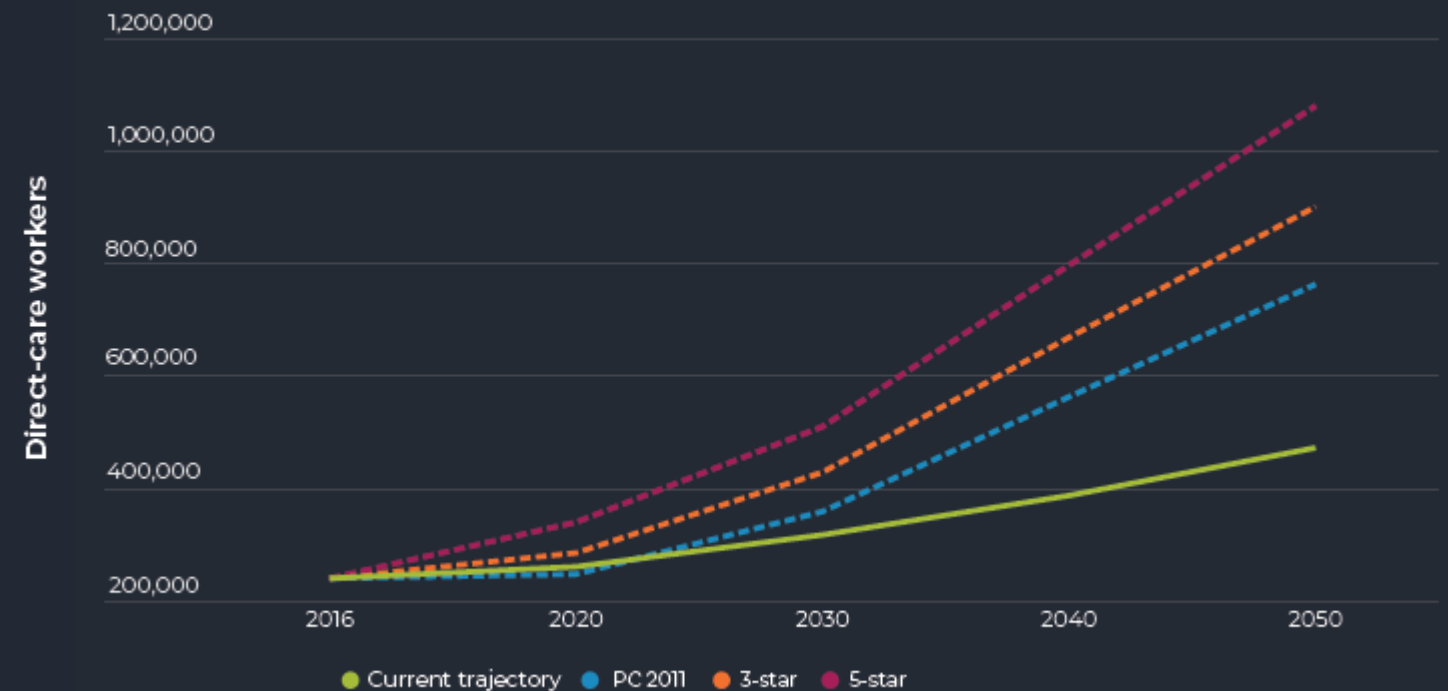


➤ Workforce projections

- These numbers are even starker when considered against an estimated trajectory of aged care workforce growth – around 2% per annum.
- Continuing at this rate would open up a shortfall of over 400,000 workers by 2050 against the Royal Commission’s proposed minimum standard.
- CEDA’s analysis suggests that annual workforce growth would need to double to around 4% per annum to meet the minimum standard.

FIGURE 2

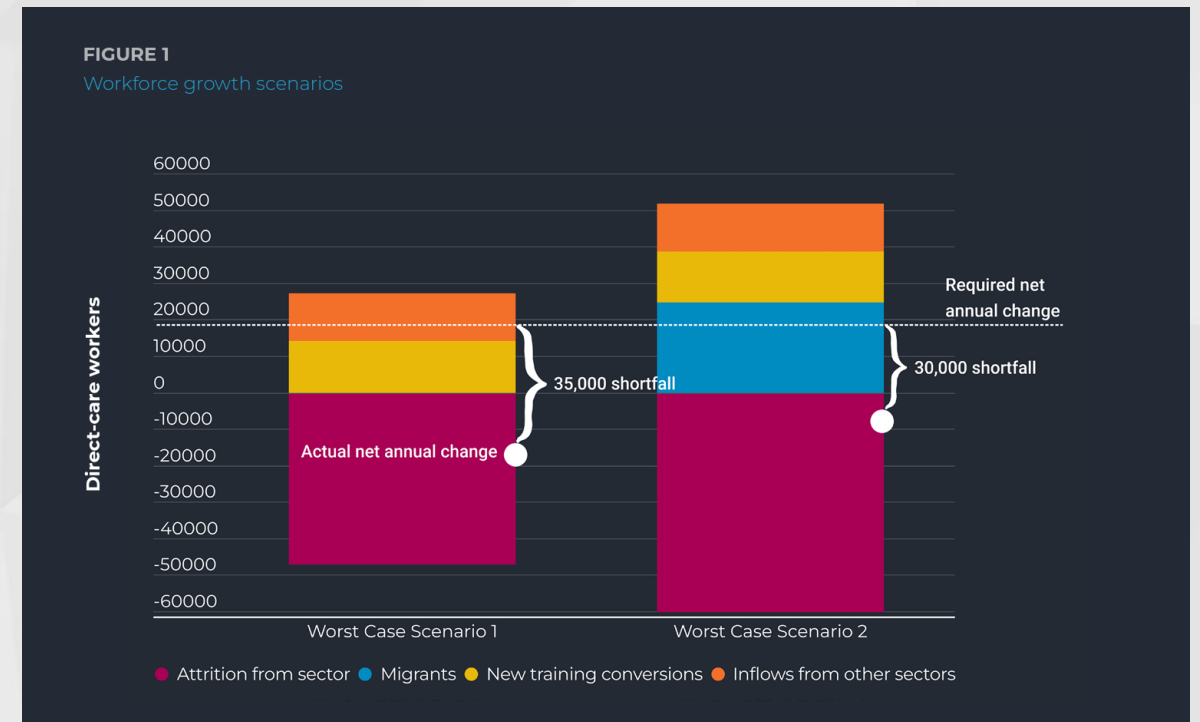
Direct-care workforce projections vs current trajectory



Source: PC, ABS, AIHW & CEDA estimates

➤ Scenario update - 2022

- **Consultation with industry suggested conditions had worsened considerably over 2021-2022.**
- **Increased attrition (bushfires, COVID fatigue, burnout, understaffing).**
- **Limited movement on pay and conditions.**
- **Continued low levels of migration despite borders reopening.**
- **Tracking towards worst case scenarios – shortfall of around 35,000 workers this year.**

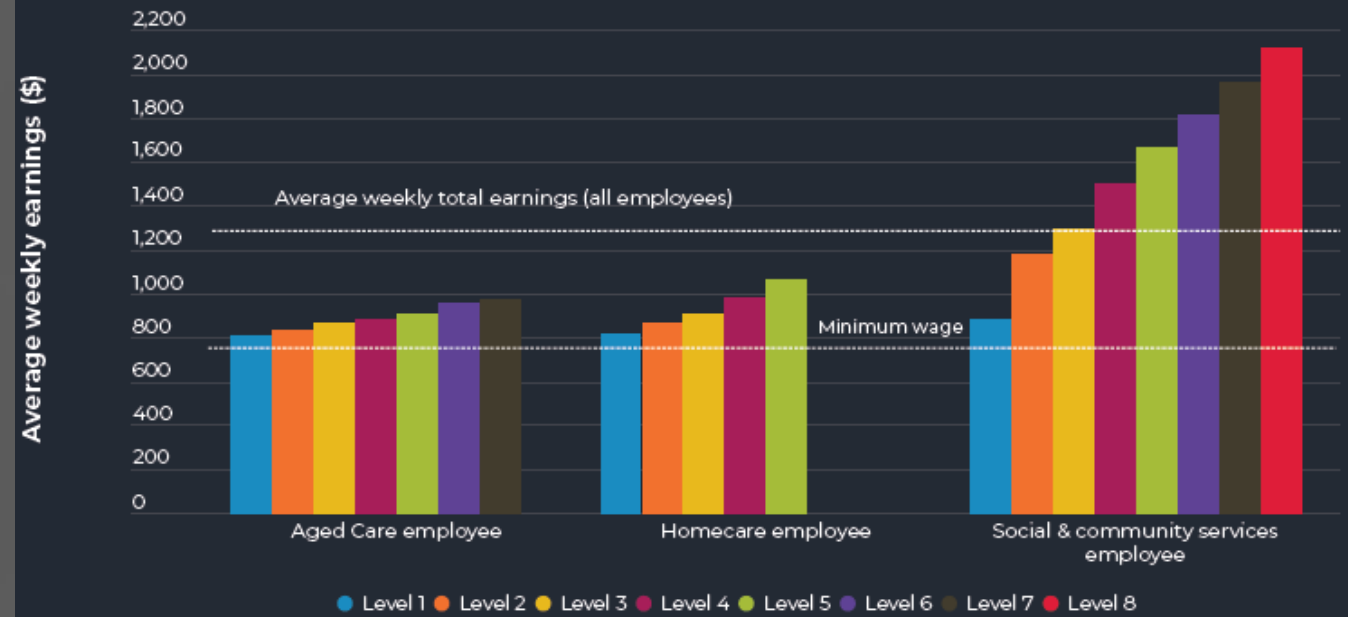


➤ Wages and working conditions

- Addressing underlying working conditions is crucial to all attempts to increase the workforce.

FIGURE 4

Comparing award wages



Working conditions

How can we improve working conditions?

- **Unions, employers and the government should collaborate to increase award wages in the sector as recommended by the Royal Commission. This process should also examine remuneration and award structures that allow for pay increases commensurate with increases in responsibility to better enable long-term career progression in the sector.**
- **Many workers in the sector want more hours. Industry members focus on improving rostering (including using technological solutions) to better utilise the existing workforce.**
- **Industry, unions and government to review and revise conditions around minimum shift lengths, paid travel time and cancellation of shifts under the relevant awards.**

➤ Training and development

How can we improve training?

- **A Certificate III should be made a mandatory minimum qualification for personal care workers, but with transitional arrangements in place to ensure that the approximately 12 to 14 per cent of the existing workforce without these qualifications can continue to work while gaining this qualification.**
- **Extend the 'Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements' scheme for a minimum of 2-3 years for Aged Care traineeships.**
- **State governments to pay back fees for Certificate IIIs after graduates have worked in the state's aged care sector for a two-year period.**
- **Industry and governments to develop low cost retraining options for those returning to the industry to boost skills and attract workers.**

Migration

- **Most migration in the industry (except for nurses) has been indirect – through working holiday, student or family member visas.**
- **Migration is one part of the puzzle – but underlying working conditions need to be addressed rather than over-reliance on migration.**
- **Migrants currently make up around 30% of workers – but this roughly in line with the Australian workforce as a whole, and below that of some industries – such as medicine and IT.**
- **The impact of border closures has substantially curtailed migration in the short-term, reducing available workers in the sector.**

Migration

How can we improve migration settings?

- **Permanently increase the number of hours international students are allowed to work in the aged care sector.**
- **Permanently add aged care to meet the specified work requirements to extend working holiday visas and allow those working in aged care to remain with one employer beyond six months.**
- **Recruit personal care workers directly by adding them to the temporary or permanent skilled migration lists or introduce a new 'essential skills visa'**

➤ Technology and innovation

- **Limited opportunities to decrease demand for workers – technology and innovation are key.**
- **Focus on assistive technology and reducing the burden of administrative work to allow for more face to face care and interaction.**
- **Providers often don't understand benefits of investing in technology.**

How can we expand access to technology in the sector?

- **Expand digital literacy training both for new trainees and existing staff.**
- **Invest in research for new technology with a focus on reducing burdens on workforce. Support the Royal Commission recommendation to introduce an Aged Care Research and Innovation Fund, with workforce a key goal.**
- **Develop an aged care workforce technology cooperative research centre with support from industry and all levels of government.**

HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY HELP?

ROSTERING AND WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Digital workforce platforms such as Emprevo and rostering software Humanforce can improve outcomes for both staff and management.

Emprevo was developed by aged-care providers to deal with the problem of underutilised staff and difficulties filling shifts. It is an online platform that allows managers to post available shifts, and for workers to browse and accept shifts that fit their schedules. Most shifts are filled in minutes, reducing the administrative burden of calling staff and rearranging rosters.

The industry could also look at systems in other sectors, such as Hireup in disability services. Hireup matches workers with care recipients, allowing access and choice. Workers are employed by Hireup, rather than independent contractors, ensuring they receive ongoing training and professional development.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Successful integration of technology relies on improved digital literacy for staff and care recipients. An Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council (ACIITC) survey⁴⁵ found 75 per cent of providers do not assess digital literacy during recruitment. The UK's Skills for Care identifies four core digital-skills domains:⁴⁶

- Managing information
- Sharing data
- Using digital skills in direct care
- Learning and development

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology can improve conditions for care workers, particularly with physical tasks. Mechanical lifting devices can substantially reduce the physical burden and injury rates.⁴⁷ This is especially important with an ageing workforce. Positioning, lifting and turning care recipients is one of the most common tasks for personal-care workers, and is the cause of many work-related injuries.⁴⁸

Voice-activated technology can give care recipients more control over their care and help them better communicate with staff. By using a voice-activated call system, residents can easily say what they need, rather than pressing a call button and waiting for someone to respond. In home care, Feros Care⁴⁹ allows clients to manage their care package and book services through voice-controlled Google Assistant. Only eight per cent of providers are currently using voice-activated technology.

REMOTE MONITORING

Remote monitoring can increase productivity of staff, while also providing more dignity and privacy to care recipients by reducing unnecessary interventions. Remote monitoring may include fall monitors, pressure sensors, motion sensors, alarm systems or video surveillance. They alert staff when assistance is required, rather than relying on manual checks.

The ACIITC survey found 48 per cent of providers were using some form of passive monitoring or sensor-based technology.

Remote monitoring can also help people to stay in their homes longer and ensure they are safe when carers are not around, particularly overnight. As well as safety alerts, wearable technology can provide important health information to care providers and allow recipients to have more control over their care.

DIGITAL CARE MANAGEMENT AND RECORDS

Care staff can spend up to one-third of their time on administrative reporting.⁵⁰ Digital care management, including electronic records and medication management, can reduce this burden. It enables more accurate record-keeping and the ability to share amongst care providers, improving outcomes and communication with care recipients and families. The Federal Government has accepted the royal commission's recommendation that all aged-care providers put a digital care-management system in place.

A survey by the Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council (ACIITC) found only one-third of providers currently have holistic consumer records (including financial, clinical and administrative).⁵¹ Sixty-seven per cent of providers use electronic care plans and 39 per cent use electronic medication-management systems.

➤ Promotion of industry

- Encourage industry and government to actively work to knowledge share on best practice and innovation.
- Promote the benefits of working in aged care and turn it into an attractive industry to work in.
- Reliant on underlying reform and improvement in working conditions taking place.

How can the sector promote itself better?

- Industry to promote best practice workforce practices – including working conditions, training and development programs and technology and innovation.
- Industry to promote positive changes that have taken place (such as improved wages and working conditions), along with high levels of job satisfaction in the industry. This should include promotional campaigns to attract workers back to the industry, and new cohorts – including job switchers, school leavers and men.



Summary of recommendations

- **Much better wages and working conditions in line with comparable sectors, including better rostering and pay rising with increases in responsibility.**
- **Getting more people into training, improving training courses and outcomes and investing in ongoing professional development.**
- **New dedicated migration paths to attract high-quality, motivated migrant workers to the sector, given the size of the worker shortage.**
- **Investment in new technology that reduces administrative and physical burdens on staff, freeing them up for more face-to-face care.**
- **Better knowledge sharing within the industry – given the diversity of the sector, providers must share what works.**

➤ Immediate priorities

- **Many of the recommendations in this report will take some time. We suggest three immediate priorities to expand the workforce in the short term:**
 - **Increase wages – this must be done soon to stop people leaving the sector**
 - **Introduce an ‘essential skills’ visa category with pathway to permanent residency**
 - **Low cost retraining options for people to enter the industry**