

# ISSUES PAPER

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



### COMMUNITY INDUSTRY WORKFORCE

The Health Care and Social Assistance industry is the largest employment sector in southern NSW and is projected to make the largest contribution to employment growth over the next five years.<sup>1</sup> However, service providers are struggling to attract and retain workers. In addition, this industry has an ageing workforce with significant projected retirement levels, meaning there will soon be a greater number of service users in relation to the available healthcare and social assistance workforce. This trend will put increasing pressure on the already strained sector.

### FUTURE WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS

Considering the ageing workforce and the growing need for workers, the southern NSW region needs to attract and retain over 500 new workers into the sector every year in caring roles alone.

Workforce needs for the sector are diverse, providing a multitude of opportunities including administration, managerial, facilities management, caring and clinical roles.

### LOCAL SNAPSHOT

Employment in Health Care and Social Assistance industry:<sup>2</sup>

Local Government Area	# people employed	% of work-force
Bega Valley Shire	1,892	14.4%
Eurobodalla	1,892	14.6%
Kiama	1,362	14.4%
Queanbeyan-Palerang	2,814	9.6%
Shellharbour	4,290	14.5%
Shoalhaven	5,356	14.7%
Snowy-Monaro	805	8.1%
Snowy Valley	578	9.6%
Wollongong	13,077	14.8%
Yass	792	9.8%

The median age of workers in the industry is over 40 years, with more than half the workforce being 45 years+.

Workers have high levels of work-related qualifications. Over 86% hold post secondary qualifications.

In addition to direct service delivery workers, significant numbers of administrative, hospitality, property services and professionals work in the industry.

<sup>1</sup> 2020 Labour Market Information Portal

<sup>2</sup> ABS (2016) Community Profiles

# KEY CHALLENGES

There is growing awareness of the difficulties in attracting new workers to these sectors, particularly in light of the Royal Commissions. Some of the issues include:

- Funding constraints leading to:
  - Relatively low rates of pay for workers, particularly at the support worker level
  - A growth in part-time, casual and zero hour contracts, resulting in greater work and income instability
- Significant changes, inquiries and reforms that the sectors are undergoing have led to a growing need for professional development opportunities and capacity building activities which are affordable and responsive to organisational and individual needs.
- Misconceptions about the sectors including the roles and duties, personal and professional rewards, and the range of careers and career pathways available.
- Additional challenges in rural and remote areas such as increased travel between clients, more isolated or remote workers, and the smaller pool of workers available.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Implement transportability of benefits and police checks across employers. Transportability would allow workers to receive entitlements such as a Long Service Leave even if they change employer.
- Invest in recruitment and retention strategies to attract new workers, particularly young people, to the industry.
- Provide full funding for essential training such as Certificate III in Individual Support.
- Invest in sector capacity building activities to keep workers up to date with new legislative requirements and best practice.