

WORKFORCE TO CARE FOR THE ELDERLY ISSUES PAPER

In 2007, around 175,000 people were employed in residential care and of those around 133,000 were direct care workers:

- RN's 16.8% of workforce
- EN's 12.2% of workforce
- PC's 63.6% of workforce
- Allied Health 7.4% of workforce
- Balance - non-direct care staff – cleaners, catering and administration.

Key future challenges include:

- Ensuring a sufficiently large, skilled workforce
- Responding to the increasing demand for formal care services
- Upgrading the skills base and training opportunities available to workers
- Adapting the aged care sector and its workforce to changes in consumer needs and preferences

In considering workforce reform, productivity and efficiency gains in the sector are also important.

Questions:

- What are the key issues concerning the current formal aged care workforce, including remuneration and retention and the attractiveness of the aged care environment relative to the broader health and community care sector?
- What could be done to secure a larger, appropriately trained and more flexible formal aged care workforce into the future?
- What scope is there for reforms to:
 - models of care;
 - scopes of practice;
 - occupational mix;
 - service delivery;
 - remuneration;
 - education;
 - training;
 - workforce planning; and
 - workforce regulation?
- Are there unexploited productivity or efficiency gains in the aged care sector?
- If they exist, what policy changes are needed to support their realization?
- How might technology be used to enhance the care of older Australians?
- Are there any impediments to technological developments that could ease workforce demands or enable higher levels of support?