



# **A national registration scheme to support personal care workers employed in aged care**

Design and training consultation paper



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# Consultation process

## Aged care national worker registration scheme implementation

The Australian Government is implementing a national worker registration scheme (scheme) to support the aged care sector. The scheme will support the professionalisation of workers and ensure there are appropriate protections for older people receiving aged care services.

A staged approach to implementation, where elements of the scheme are rolled out progressively, has been adopted to support worker and sector readiness.

The Code of Conduct for Aged Care, which commenced in December 2022, and expanded worker screening arrangements, with negotiations with State and Territory governments ongoing, have been the Government's initial focus.

This consultation process will consider the design of the scheme as well as training and skills requirements. New training and skills requirements, linked to a scheme, will support:

- safer and higher-quality care for older people receiving aged care services
- increased opportunities for workers to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence in delivering care and support, and
- greater professionalisation and enhanced opportunities to support the development of a greater diversity of job roles and opportunities for workers to explore career pathways.

An important consideration in the requirements and design of the scheme will be how it could be harmonised across the care and support economy, particularly aged care, disability support and veterans' care. There is significant cross-over in service provision across these sectors. In 2023 around 40 per cent of aged care providers also delivered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and/or veterans' care services and supports.

A harmonised approach will promote greater workforce mobility and career opportunities, reduce regulatory burden on workers and employers who deliver cross-care and support economy supports, and increase safety and quality of care and supports for people using aged care, disability support and veterans' care services.

More information on aged care, and care and support economy, reform can be found in the context and background section at the end of this paper.

## Why are we undertaking this consultation?

The Government has committed to implementing a national worker registration scheme in aged care, with new training and skills requirements, to support personal care workers employed in aged care. While this consultation process focuses on aged care, we are interested in understanding how a national worker registration scheme could be designed to support workers across the care and support economy, particularly disability support and veterans' care.

This consultation process will assist the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) to understand stakeholders' preferences on outstanding implementation questions. This will inform the design of a detailed model for the design of the scheme in aged care, as well as how the approach could be expanded across the care and support economy.

Once the detailed design model has been drafted, further stakeholder consultation will be undertaken in mid-2025 to better understand the preferred approach for implementation.

The model and proposed implementation approach will then be finalised.

### Who are personal care workers?

- Personal care workers are known by a number of job titles including, personal care attendant, assistant in nursing, community care worker, home support worker and home care employee.
- Personal care workers make up the majority of the direct aged care workforce, and work in private and residential aged care homes.
  - The 2023 Aged Care Provider Workforce Survey found that there are around 310,000 personal care workers employed across all aged care service types. They made up 72 per cent of direct care roles in residential aged care, and almost 90 per cent of direct care roles in the Home Care Packages Program.
- Typically, personal care workers deliver day-to-day care and support. This can include personal care (for example, hygiene and showering), emotional and household support (for example, companionship, cooking, cleaning, and shopping), and supports to access recreational activities and appointments.
- Many personal care and disability support workers employed in veterans' care and disability support sectors deliver similar care and support services to personal care workers employed in aged care.
  - The Certificate III in Individual Support is typically the common qualification sought in the aged care, disability support and veterans' care sector for personal care and disability support workers.

There are a range of similar demographics between personal care and disability support workers across care and support sectors, including that they share a predominately female workforce, have a high proportion of workers from migrant backgrounds, and most entry-level roles have no, or low qualification and skill requirements.

## Request for feedback and comments

Interested stakeholders including older people, their friends, family and carers, workers, service and training providers, and consumer and advocacy groups are invited to comment on the issues raised in this consultation paper.

There are two ways to provide feedback to the department:

1. The short online survey, found on the department's Consultation Hub at: <https://consultations.health.gov.au/market-workforce-division/aged-care-national-worker-registration-scheme>, or
2. Through a written submission that may be lodged by email **no later than 17 April 2025** to: [AgedCareWorkforceReform@Health.gov.au](mailto:AgedCareWorkforceReform@Health.gov.au).

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**Closing date for consultation:** 17 April 2025

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### Thank you for taking the time to contribute.

Your experiences, thoughts, and expert advice are valued and will provide a critical and contemporary understanding of sector views and expectations, building on outcomes from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission), while considering opportunities through broader government reform.

Feedback will be shared with other Australian Government agencies to inform further policy design.

Consultation section: 1

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# **National worker registration scheme design**

# National worker registration scheme design

## Section overview

The Government has committed to implementing a national worker registration scheme, with new training and skills requirements.

Alongside other Government commitments, such as the aged care wage increase, this scheme will support the growth of a strengthened and professional personal care workforce, where workers are better valued for the important role they perform, with greater professionalisation opportunities and improved conditions.

The scheme will also form an important part of the government's vision of making aged care a safe place with important protections for older people.

### Consultation approach

In this section the department is seeking feedback on the design and implementation of a national worker registration scheme.

This section poses a range of important considerations to support you in providing feedback on your preferred policy and implementation settings.



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## What types of approaches, or models, should be considered in the implementation of a national registration scheme to support personal care workers?

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1. Should there be a public register where people can see that a personal care worker has met their registration requirements? Why?
2. Should personal care workers be responsible for collecting evidence and providing information to a regulatory/professional body, or should service providers be responsible for collecting and storing information on personal care workers meeting requirements?
  - a. If personal care workers should provide evidence and information to a regulatory/professional body, what should that regulatory/professional body look like?
  - b. If service providers are responsible for collecting evidence, what additional support and regulatory approaches would be required?
3. Are there any other elements that should be considered for inclusion in a national worker registration scheme (beyond the elements raised in this consultation paper)?
  - a. Should there be different requirements for personal care workers employed in different settings, for example in-home care versus residential care settings? If yes, why?
4. Should there be consideration of different registration categories including, full-registration, and provisional registration if mandatory training, skills, or qualifications are required as part of the personal care worker role? This could include for example, where a worker may be undertaking training, or in cases of demonstrated workforce shortages, with a requirement for a worker to attain full-registration within a prescribed timeframe.
5. Should the elements of a national worker registration scheme be the same across aged care, disability support and veterans' care? If no, which elements should differ and why?
6. What approaches would best support the mobility of workers between aged care and/or other care and support economy employers (for example, an electronic passport that could collect and store registration and skills information)?
7. What specific barriers are there for First Nations workers, migrant workers, culturally and linguistically diverse workers, regional, rural or remote workers, workers with disability, and workers from low socioeconomic backgrounds?

- a. If barriers exist, what kinds of additional elements or supports for these workers need to be considered in the implementation of a national worker registration scheme?
- 8. What impacts will a national worker registration scheme have on aged care providers? Other providers of care and support services?

Consultation section: 2

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# Training requirements

# Training requirements

## Section overview

Training is critical in supporting the professionalisation of workers.

Training provides greater opportunity for workers to explore career progression and mobility, and supports workers in having the right skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver safe and high-quality care and support services.

A registration scheme, with an ongoing training or continuing professional development requirement, was also recommended for personal care workers and disability support workers by the Royal Commission and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

### Consultation approach

In this section, ongoing training requirements would relate to continual training that a personal care worker would need to undertake.

This section provides opportunities to provide feedback on policy and implementation settings.

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## Establishing an ongoing training requirement in a national registration scheme to support personal care workers.

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9. Should there be an amount of continuing professional development hours that need to be undertaken and/or should there be a specified skill sets, subjects, or shorter non-accredited training (for example, micro-credentials) to choose from?
  - a. If there are set skill sets, subjects, or other shorter non-accredited training, what specific areas of skills and knowledge should be considered?
  - b. Are there existing training options that would be suitable for meeting ongoing personal care worker training requirements? If so, what are these?
  - c. Should the training expectations be directed by the individual personal care worker reflecting on their own training needs?
    - i. Alternatively, should they be determined by the employer?
10. Should ongoing training requirements be the same or different for workers employed in different aged care settings, for example in home care versus residential aged care settings? Why?
11. Which mode/s of training should be introduced for workers to get the best outcomes (for example, on the job, case studies, instructor-led training)?
12. How can training ensure the worker has the right values and personal attributes to work with older people accessing aged care services, given this is critical to working in aged care services?
13. What types of implementation support should be introduced to aid the introduction of this requirement?
  - a. Are there specific barriers for some groups of personal care workers, including, for example, First Nations workers, migrant workers, culturally and linguistically diverse workers, workers with disability, and workers from low socioeconomic backgrounds?
    - i. What kinds of supports or exemptions should be made for these workers (for example, additional time to meet requirements, materials provided in plain English)?
    - ii. Should these be short-term or longer-term solutions?

- b. Some workers in regional, rural and remote settings may not have a local training provider offering relevant recognised training courses. Workers across the sector may also not have access to appropriate technology.
  - i. What kinds of supports or exemptions should be made for these workers?
  - ii. Should these be short-term or longer-term supports or exemptions? Why?
- 14. What should be considered when thinking of how this requirement could be expanded to other sectors in the care and support economy?
- 15. What transition timeframes, or phasing arrangements, should be considered to support the successful implementation of this requirement?

#### **Additional considerations:**

- 16. Could there be an industry-led product that supports employers and workers to identify and prioritise high-value training opportunities?
  - a. Should the national worker registration scheme be supported by a professional network where workers could develop communities of practice and promote and share training and skills opportunities?
- 17. How should the ongoing training requirement be funded?
  - a. How might funding vary depending on whether this requirement is learning, training and/or continuing professional development?
  - b. What is the government's role in funding and making available high-quality training?
    - i. Are online short-courses, (for example, [the Equip Aged Care Learning Packages](#)) a useful tool to support workforce skills, knowledge and capability to deliver safe and high-quality care?
- 18. What else should be done to support workers to explore and take up training opportunities?
  - a. What dedicated actions, or initiatives, could support this?
  - b. How could this approach be enhanced to also support future job design and career pathway opportunities for workers?
- 19. How could greater flexibility be implemented in this approach to support workers interested in undertaking further training, or broadening their knowledge in other (non-core) areas of aged care service delivery?

Consultation section: 3

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# Skills and qualification requirements

# Skills and qualification requirements

## Section overview

Currently there is no formal industry standard for an entry-level qualification, or required skills, to work as a personal care worker in aged care. This is similar for disability support workers employed in the disability support sector.

A range of veterans' care and support programs already include qualification and skills and training requirements for personal care and nursing support workers. Workers delivering Veteran's Home Care services (except for domestic assistance and home, garden maintenance) and personal care workers delivering personal care under Community Nursing have a requirement to hold a relevant Certificate III.

The Royal Commission recommended that there should be a mandatory minimum qualification for personal care workers performing paid work in aged care, and that this qualification should be a Certificate III. Data from recent aged care workforce collections indicate between 48 and 66 per cent of personal care workers hold a Certificate III, or higher-level qualification, related to their work.

The NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce recommended that a registration scheme to support disability support workers should include a worker training and qualifications framework (including minimum training and qualification requirements).

There are also a range of other important skills, including English language and communication skills that have been recommended through reviews and inquiries in recent years.

Mandatory skills and qualification requirements would provide greater assurance to older people, and the community more broadly, that workers have minimum-level knowledge and skills in the delivery of safe and high-quality care. This would also support having a more professional, confident and valued workforce with the right skills and knowledge to meet the needs and rights of older people.

### Consultation approach

In this section, the skills and qualification requirements would relate to specific skills, or qualifications, that a personal care worker would need to hold, or undertake.

This section provides opportunities to provide feedback on policy and implementation settings. Final policy and implementation settings are subject to government consideration.



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## Establishing skills and qualification requirements in a national worker registration scheme to support personal care workers.

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If the government was to establish mandatory minimum skills and qualification requirements for personal care and/or disability support workers:

20. What minimum skills and qualifications should be considered?
21. Are there any current training offerings (for example, qualifications or skill sets) in the national Vocational Education and Training (VET) system that might be suitable for supporting any personal care mandatory minimum skills and qualification requirements?
22. Should there be different requirements for new workers and workers who already work in aged care/disability support/veterans' care? If so, what should these be?
  - a. For example, the recognition of experience to support the retention of some groups of existing workers with the right attitude and aptitude to provide care, but who do not hold a formal qualification.
23. Should workers be able to undertake study to attain a qualification while they are employed (for example, through a provisional registration category)?
  - a. If workers can undertake study while employed:
    - i. How long should a worker be able to work before starting their qualification, and should there be a minimum expected study load, or expected completion window?
    - ii. Should there be any limitations to the types of job roles that a worker could perform while undertaking study?
24. How might an increase in mandatory skill-based requirements affect the supply of personal care workers in aged care, disability support and/or veterans' care?
25. Minimum English language and communication skills are often recommended for workers, including by the Royal Commission, if a mandatory minimum qualification was introduced, would this sufficiently meet the intent of this?
  - a. If not, what requirements should be introduced to ensure workers are proficient in English and have adequate communication skills?
  - b. What supports and/or exemptions should be put in place to minimise risk of direct and indirect discrimination?

- c. Who should be responsible for the costs associated with developing or demonstrating English language and communication skills?
- 26. What types of implementation support should be considered to aid the introduction of any of the above requirements?
  - a. Are there specific barriers and considerations for some groups of personal care workers, including, for example, First Nations workers, migrant workers, culturally and linguistically diverse workers, workers with disability, and workers from low socioeconomic backgrounds?
    - i. What kinds of supports, flexible arrangements or exemptions should be considered?
  - b. Some workers in regional, rural and remote settings may not have access to a local training provider offering relevant recognised training courses.
    - i. What kinds of supports or exemptions should be considered?
  - c. Should there be different considerations for workers employed in in-home care settings? If so, what should these be?
- 27. What should be considered when thinking of how these requirements could be expanded to other sectors in the care and support economy?
  - a. What are your views on whether the same mandatory minimum skills and qualification requirements should apply for personal care workers across aged care, disability support and veterans' care?
    - i. Should requirements be the same or different for workers across these three areas? Why?

**Additional considerations:**

- 28. What else may need to be considered to address any potential increase in workforce challenges, in thin market settings, where there may not be access to enough workers with minimum qualifications?
- 29. What kinds of investments may be required to ensure there is equitable access to training wherever a worker resides?
- 30. How could workers who need to improve their English language proficiency be best supported?
  - a. Should there be an online short-course that could support workers to communicate effectively in the aged care sector (for example, building on the short-courses available through the [Equip Aged Care Learning Packages program](#))?

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**Thank you for taking the time to contribute.**

Your experiences, thoughts, and expert advice are valued and will provide a critical and up-to-date understanding of sector views and expectations, building on outcomes from the Royal Commission, while considering opportunities through broader government reform.

Feedback will be shared with other Australian Government agencies to inform further policy design.

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# Context and Background

# Context and background

## The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

The final report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission), titled [\*Care, Dignity and Respect\*](#), noted that a highly skilled, well rewarded and valued aged care workforce was vital to the success of any future aged care system.

The final report made important workforce recommendations surrounding strategic leadership and workforce planning, building an aged care profession, educating and training, improving pay, getting staffing right and leadership and culture.

This included Royal Commission Recommendation 77, with a focus on supporting the professionalism of the personal care workforce to improve career opportunities and increase wages and conditions. It also focused on ensuring workers were equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for current and future aged care needs.

### Recommendation 77: National registration scheme

1. By 1 July 2022, the Australian Government should establish a national registration scheme for the personal care workforce with the following key features:
  - a) a mandatory minimum qualification of a Certificate III.
  - b) ongoing training requirements.
  - c) minimum levels of English language proficiency.
  - d) criminal history screening requirements.
  - e) a code of conduct and power for a registering body to investigate complaints into breaches of the Code of Conduct and take appropriate disciplinary action.
2. For existing personal care workers who do not meet the minimum qualification requirements, there should be transitional arrangements that allow them to apply for registration based on experience and prior learning.
3. **Commissioner Briggs:** By 1 July 2021, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency should start a process to examine the feasibility of a registration scheme under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the occupation of 'personal care worker (health)'

or 'assistant in nursing', to inform the National Cabinet Health Council deliberations in Recommendation 77.4

4. By 1 July 2023, the Australian Government should request that the National Cabinet Health Council determine whether to regulate the occupation of 'personal care worker (health)' or 'assistant in nursing' under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, established and governed under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

A range of activities relating to Recommendation 77 are already completed or underway, including:

- A new [Code of Conduct for Aged Care](#) that began on 1 December 2022, to build confidence in the safety and quality of care for older Australians.
  - The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission monitors compliance and has the power to take enforcement action for breaches of the code, including banning or restricting individuals from working in aged care.
- New [screening requirements](#) for the aged care workforce will be based on the existing National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) worker screening model to assess if someone poses a risk of harm in working, or seeking to work, in aged care.
  - The Aged Care Act 2024 provides the legislative framework for national aged care worker screening. Before worker screening can commence, new legislation is needed at state and territory level.
  - The Australian Government is working closely with states and territories on implementing worker screening for the aged care sector. The new screening process for aged care will not start before 2026.

This recommendation aligns closely with Recommendation 78, to introduce a mandatory minimum qualification for personal care workers, and Recommendation 79 to review certificate-based courses for aged care.

### **Recommendation 78: Mandatory minimum qualifications for personal care workers**

1. A Certificate III should be the mandatory minimum qualification required for personal care workers performing paid work in aged care.
2. **Commissioner Briggs:** If a Personal Care Worker National Board is established, it should establish an accreditation authority to:
  - a) develop and review accreditation standards for the mandatory minimum qualification

- b) assess programs of study and education providers against the standards, and
  - c) provide advice to the National Board on accreditation functions.
3. **Commissioner Briggs:** The National Board should approve the accredited program of study and review the need for personal care workers in home care to have specialised skills or competencies.

### **Recommendation 79: Review of certificate-based courses for aged care**

1. By January 2022, the Aged Care Services Industry Reference Committee, working with the Australian Government Human Services Skills Organisation as required, should:
  - a) Review the need for specialist aged care Certificate III and IV courses, and
  - b) Regularly review the content of the Certificate III and IV courses and consider if any additional units of competence should be included.
2. **Commissioner Briggs:** As part of any such review, the Aged Services Industry Reference Committee, working with the Australian Government Human Services Skills Organisation as required, should consider if any of the following additional units of competency should be included as core competencies:
  - a) personal care modules (including trauma-informed care), cultural safety, mental health, physical health status, wound care, oral health, palliative care, falls prevention, first aid, monitoring medication and dysphagia management
  - b) quality of life and wellbeing (including the use of technology), interventions for older people at risk, and recognising and responding to crisis situations.

There have been a range of activities, relating to Recommendation 78, to support and encourage workers to undertake training to increase their skills, knowledge and confidence to provide safe, high-quality care, including:

- [The National Skills Agreement \(NSA\)](#) sets out national skills priorities to deliver a high-quality, responsive and accessible VET system. Sustaining essential care services is a national priority under the NSA, requiring joined-up efforts by all governments to address the workforce and skills needs of the care economy now and into the future.
- Government partnership with state and territory governments to deliver 500,000 VET system places, including [Fee-Free TAFE](#) across Australia from 2023 to 2026 in areas of national priority, including aged care.

- Between January 2023 and September 2024, Fee-Free TAFE supported over 568,400 student enrolments, including over 150,000 enrolments in care and support economy courses.
- The Australian Government has introduced the Free TAFE Bill 2024 to establish ongoing Commonwealth support for 100,000 Fee-Free TAFE places every year from 1 January 2027.

There have also been, and continue to be, a range of activities relating to Recommendation 79, including:

- A review of the [Certificate III in Individual Support](#) has been completed with the updated qualification released in November 2022. This review considered the recommendations from the aged care royal commission, along with requirements of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Workforce Capability Framework.
- The Australian Government has also established Jobs and Skills Councils to provide industry with a stronger voice to ensure Australia's VET sector delivers better outcomes for learners and employers. This includes, [HumanAbility](#), the Jobs and Skills Council for aged care and disability, children's education and care, health, human services, and sport and recreation sectors. HumanAbility is:
  - undertaking a review of the [implementation of the updated CHC33021 Certificate III in Individual Support](#) to identify any issues, challenges and barriers in implementing the updated qualification, and to explore potential measures to broaden and enhance delivery and uptake across Australia.
  - considering the timing of a review of other relevant qualifications, including the Certificate IV in Ageing Support. This will be informed by findings emerging through a broader related project looking at job roles and [career pathways across the care and support sector](#).



## The aged care reform journey so far

In response to the Royal Commission, the government has committed significant investment to improving outcomes for older people, along with enhanced opportunities and conditions for aged care workers.

### For personal care workers, key investments include:

- Delivering on the commitment to fund the outcome of the Fair Work Commission Stage 2 interim decision of the aged care work value case. The government has also provisioned funding to support wage rises for aged care workers that are occurring under Stage 3.
- Free, or low-cost training places through Fee-Free TAFE.
- Subsidised training and supported work placement opportunities for workers through the [Home Care Workforce Support Program](#).
- Opportunities to explore a nursing career through the [Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Program](#).
- Free access to [online short-courses with the University of Tasmania](#), including modules on dementia, palliative and end-of-life care, wound and falls management, mental health and wellbeing, and cross-cultural awareness.

Since mid-2021, the Australian Government and key stakeholders have been working closely to improve aged care, so all older people in Australia can access high-quality aged care, where and when they need it.

### What has been delivered:

- The commencement of the new residential care funding model, the [Australian National Aged Care Classification](#), to ensure residential aged care funding meets the cost of caring for older people.
- The rollout of the [Star Ratings](#) system for residential aged care, for older people, their families, and carers, to make informed care choices.
- The requirement for a [Registered Nurse to be on-site and on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week](#), along with [mandatory care minutes](#) in residential aged care homes.
- The expansion of the [Serious Incident Response Scheme](#) to home care and flexible care.
- The release of the [Professional FrameWork - to build and strengthen the aged care workforce](#) to build a valued, skilled and supported workforce to meet the needs and rights of older people.
- The introduction of the [Code of Conduct for Aged Care](#), to improve safety and wellbeing of people receiving care, while supporting workers to understand what is expected in the delivery of care, supports and services.

# The future reform landscape

## Aged care

While a range of important elements of reform have rolled out, the government is committed to ensuring that practical measures continue to be put in place to create an aged care system that is equitable, sustainable and trusted. This includes measures to ensure older people receive safe and high-quality care, and for workers to be valued and supported, with better wages and conditions.

### Key areas of continuing aged care reform include:

- A [new rights-based Aged Care Act](#).
- A [new Aged Care Regulatory Model](#).
- [Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards](#) (see *training intersections below*).
- New requirements for national worker screening for aged care.
- A [new program for in-home aged care](#) that will deliver a seamless system of care and choice for older people.

### Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and enhanced training requirements for aged care providers

The [strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards \(Quality Standards\)](#) further enhance and clarify provider responsibilities, including requirements relating to workforce needs and ensuring aged care services are delivered by workers who are skilled and competent in their roles.

The strengthened Quality Standards will be implemented in line with the new Aged Care Act and the new proposed regulatory model. Under the new proposed regulatory model, the strengthened Quality Standards will only apply to certain categories of registered providers including clinical and specialised supports, home or community-based respite and residential care (Registration Categories 4 to 6).

Where the strengthened Quality Standards apply, registered providers will be required to demonstrate they conform with the various 'Outcomes'. The more detailed 'Actions' listed below for each Outcome are examples of how registered providers can demonstrate they meet each Outcome.

Outcome 2.9 of the draft strengthened Quality Standards relates to human resource management and outlines specific expectations regarding worker training, including competency-based training in core matters.

### **Expectations regarding training in the draft strengthened Quality Standards:**

- Outcome 2.9: Outcome Statement includes: Workers are provided with training and supervision to effectively perform their role.
- Action 2.9.3: Workers have access to supervision, support, and resources.
- Action 2.9.4: The provider maintains and implements a training system that:
  - a) includes training strategies to ensure that workers have the necessary skills, qualifications, and competencies to effectively perform their role
  - b) draws on the experience of older people to inform training strategies
  - c) is responsive to feedback, complaints, incidents, identified risks and the outcomes of regular worker performance reviews.
- Action 2.9.5: The provider regularly reviews and improves the effectiveness of the training system.
- Action 2.9.6: All workers regularly receive competency-based training in relation to core matters, at a minimum:
  - a) the delivery of person centred, rights-based care
  - b) culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed care
  - c) caring for people living with dementia
  - d) responding to medical emergencies
  - e) the requirements of the Code of Conduct, the Serious Incident Response Scheme, the Quality Standards, and other requirements relevant to the worker's role.

### **Care and support economy**

The care and support economy – the provision of paid care and support across aged care, disability support, veterans' care and early childhood education and care – is one of Australia's biggest industries and largest employers.

Reviews and inquiries in recent years have highlighted challenges to the delivery of high-quality services across the sectors that the government is working to address. The interdependent nature of the service systems means addressing challenges like workforce shortages and appropriate regulatory settings needs to be carefully managed to consider impacts on other care and support sectors.

Taking a holistic, harmonised approach to the implementation of reforms is vital to ensure changes in one sector do not have unintended or negative consequences in another. A core part of this is changing the way we think about our care and support sectors to avoid treating them as silos and to ensure coordination in policy design and implementation.

This is why it is important to consider how a national worker registration scheme for aged care, could be designed to support workers across the care and support economy, particularly disability support and veterans' care.

### **A national registration scheme to support disability support workers**

There have also been relevant recommendations in relation to worker registration, skills and training in other parts of the care and support economy.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission), Independent NDIS Review, and NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce have recommended the establishment of new regulation for the disability support workforce.

The Disability Royal Commission tabled their [Final Report](#) on 29 September 2023.

Through [Volume 10, Disability services](#), the Disability Royal Commission recommended the establishment of a National Disability Support Worker Registration Scheme to provide a framework to professionalise and stabilise the disability sector workforce, while supporting an increase in the quality of disability support services.

#### **Recommendation 10.8 A national disability support worker registration scheme**

- The Australian Government should establish a national disability support worker registration scheme by 1 July 2028.
- The design of the scheme should consider:
  - the definition of 'disability support worker'
  - a code of conduct and minimum standards for registered disability support workers, including support coordinators
  - mandating the NDIS Worker Screening Check for all disability support workers
  - recognition and accreditation of workers' qualifications, experience, capabilities and skills
  - continuing professional development requirements for disability support workers
  - automatic registration for disability support workers who are registered with other relevant professional bodies
  - a First Nations workforce pathway to address barriers to First Nations workers entering the sector
  - an accessible portal to enable people with disability and their supporters to view the profiles and registration status of disability support workers, and
  - portable training and leave entitlements.

The final report of the Independent NDIS Review (the Review), [Working together to deliver the NDIS](#), was tabled on 7 December 2023.

The report includes 26 recommendations and 139 supporting actions to put people with disability back in the centre of the NDIS, restore trust, confidence and pride in the NDIS, and ensure the sustainability of the NDIS for future generations.

To support this, the co-chairs of the Review recommended the development and delivery of a model for the visibility and regulation of all providers and workers.

**Recommendation 17: Develop and deliver a risk-proportionate model for the visibility and regulation of all providers and workers, and strengthen the regulatory response to long-standing and emerging quality and safeguards issues.**

Legislative change required:

- Action 17.1: The Department of Social Services and the new National Disability Supports Quality and Safeguards Commission should design and implement a graduated risk-proportionate regulatory model for the whole provider market.
- Action 17.2: The Department of Social Services and the new National Disability Supports Quality and Safeguards Commission should develop a staged implementation approach to transition to the new graduated risk-proportionate regulatory model.
- Action 17.3: The Australian Government should amend the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 to remove the link between a participant's financial management of their plan and the regulatory status of their support providers.
- Action 17.4: The Department of Social Services, working with the new National Disability Supports Quality and Safeguards Commission and state and territory agencies, should expand the coverage of worker screening requirements.
- Action 17.5: The Department of Finance and the Department of Social Services, working with the new National Disability Supports Quality and Safeguards Commission and state and territory agencies, should improve, streamline and harmonise worker screening processes for care and support workers.
- Action 17.6: The new National Disability Supports Quality and Safeguards Commission should be resourced to strengthen compliance activities and communications to respond to emerging and longstanding quality and safeguards issues and market developments and innovation.

The NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce (Taskforce) published their [advice to Government](#) on 2 August 2024. Chapter 9 of the advice to Government explores regulation of the NDIS workforce, including important aspects to be considered through the design of a worker registration scheme.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Taskforce recommends a Worker Registration Scheme be introduced for all workers. However, the scope of the definition of ‘worker’, like NDIS providers, needs further consideration and co-design with the disability community and sector. A Worker Registration Scheme should include:

- a. a public register to be established of workers registered to provide services under the NDIS
- b. requirements for professional development
- c. a worker training and qualifications framework (including minimum training and qualification requirements) to apply to the disability sector.
- d. worker registration to be automatic, simple and enabled through an online portal (with alternative accessible formats as needed)
- e. registration is to be transparent, not place unreasonable costs on workers or Providers and enable identification verification to be conducted via myGov including the requirement of photo identification
- f. all NDIS providers must provide such instruction, training and supervision to workers as is necessary to enable workers to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to the participant or themselves
- g. NDIS Providers in the Advanced and General Registration Categories who employ or have a job placement arrangement with five or more workers has, as a condition of their ongoing registration, responsibility for ensuring that each worker has an individual training, skills enhancement and accreditation plan which is updated in consultation with the worker at least every 12 months
- h. to maintain registration, registered workers be required to undertake 10 hours per year of ongoing professional development training.



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