



AGED CARE CENSUS 2020: FACTSHEET

The factsheet provides a summary of key statistics from the 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census conducted by the Australian Government Department of Health.¹ It highlights key changes from the previous Aged Care Workforce Census 2016² and the impact of COVID-19 on volunteering across different aged care service industries: Residential Aged Care (RAC), Home Care Packages Program (HCPP), and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

KEY FINDINGS

- Volunteers were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the paid workforce. Volunteer participation in Residential Aged Care (RAC) was impacted greater than in Home Care Packages Program (HCPP) and Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).
- In November 2020, there were 11,980 volunteers in RAC (a decline of 49% from 2016); 8,748 in HCPP; and 10,155 in CHSP.³
- 74% of RAC providers, 16% of HCPP providers, and 57% of CHSP providers reported a decrease in their volunteers.
- Victoria was the hardest hit region in terms of staff attrition (paid and volunteer) and the delivery of HCPP services due to lengthy periods of lockdown.
- Volunteers across the three service industries assist with social activities, social companionship, and transportation. The type and frequency of volunteer roles vary across residential and home care and home support programs
- The 2020 Census contains less data on volunteers than the previous 2016 Census - as elaborated in Annex I.

Workforce Characteristics in Residential Aged Care (RAC): Residential Aged Care is for senior Australians who can no longer live in their own homes. It includes accommodation, personal 24-hour care, access to nursing and other health facilities.

Paid Workforce⁴: The total number of staff in RAC in November 2020 was 277,671, of which 208,903 (75%) are direct care staff, whereas 52,801 of the remaining are in ancillary roles (cleaners, cooks, and

¹ Surveys for the 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census were completed between 7th December 2020 to 23rd January 2021.

² [The 2016 census](#) was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Health and undertaken by the National Institute of Labour Studies (NILS) research team at Flinders University. Previous reports on workforce data were published in 2003, 2007, 2012, and 2016 respectively.

³ Accurate comparisons of the 2020 findings to Aged Care Workforce Census data from previous years is not possible as the 2020 Census treated HCPP and CHSP as separate service care types compared to the 2016 Aged Care Workforce Census which treated and reported on HCPP and home support as one care type.

⁴ Paid staff across all service industries comprise of permanent, casual/contractor and agency/sub-contractor jobs across administration, direct care, and ancillary/pastoral care roles.

laundry assistants), 14,021 in management and administrative roles, and 1,946 in pastoral care and educational roles.

Volunteers: The reported number of volunteers providing support in RAC in November 2020 was 11,980.

Impact of Covid

- There was a 49% reduction in the number of volunteers from 23,537 in 2016 to 11,980 volunteers in November 2020.
- Volunteers were disproportionately affected by the pandemic vis-à-vis paid workforce.
- Overall, 9% of facilities reported a decrease in their total direct care workforce (including volunteers), while 44% reported an increase, and 47% reported no change.
- 74% of facilities responded that COVID-19 decreased their number of volunteers in particular, a greater impact than for paid job roles

Workforce Characteristics in Home Care Packages Program (HCPP): HCPP uses a consumer directed approach to cater to older people with complex needs in their homes. It can include assistance with household tasks, personal care, minor home modifications, and clinical care such as nursing, allied health, and physiotherapy services.

Paid workforce: The total number of staff in HCPP in November 2020 was 80,340, of which 64,019 (or 80%) were direct care workers. Of the remaining, 3,268 were in ancillary roles (cooks, cleaners, gardeners), 13,002 in managerial roles, and 50 in pastoral roles.

Volunteers: The reported number of volunteers providing support in HCPP in November 2020 was 8,748 - equivalent to 454 FTE (full-time equivalent) positions.

Impact of Covid

- 16% of HCCP providers responded that COVID-19 decreased their number of volunteers.
- 81% of HCCP providers reported no change in the number of volunteers. The reported effect of COVID-19 is lower in HCCP service type as compared to RAC and CHSP.

Workforce Characteristics in Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP): The CHSP provides short-term or ongoing services that are classified as basic or low level of need as compared to the 4 tiers of need (basic, low, intermediate or advanced) in the HCPP program. Services include domestic assistance, allied health services, nursing, and respite care.

Paid workforce: The total number of staff in the CHSP service care type in 2020 was 76,096 of which 59,029 (or 78%) were direct care staff. Of the remaining, 2,889 were in ancillary roles (cooks, cleaners, gardeners), 14,132 in managerial roles (administrators and care managers), and 46 worked in pastoral care and educational roles. PCWs (personal care workers) account for 80% of CHSP total direct care roles in 2020.

Volunteers: The reported number of volunteers providing support in CHSP was 10,155 volunteers in November 2020.

Impact of Covid

- Volunteers in HCPP services were impacted greater than the paid workforce.

- 65% of providers reported no change in their total care workforce (including volunteers) because of the COVID-19 pandemic; 20% reported a decrease, while 15% reported an increase.
- Alongside PCWs (personal care workers), the most significant staffing impact was on volunteers. 28% providers reported a decrease in PCWs, whereas 57% providers reported a decrease in volunteers.

ANNEX I: Comparative Notes on the 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census compared to the 2016 Aged Care Workforce Census

The 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census

The 2020 Aged Care Workforce Census measured the number of volunteers across the three service types (Residential Aged Care, Home Care Packages programs, Commonwealth Home Support Program) as well as the impact of COVID on the workforce and the volunteers.

The 2016 Aged Care Workforce Census

In comparison, the 2016 Aged Care Workforce Census collected data on workforce in Residential Care, as well as Home Care & Home Support programs (as a singular category). This means it is difficult to compare data from the two censuses.

The 2016 Census provided additional information, not captured in the 2020 Census. The 2016 Census measured the extent of volunteering with respect to the ownership type of the facility (government, non-profit, for-profit); the distribution of volunteers with respect to location (Major Cities; Inner Regional Australia; Outer Regional Australia; Remote Australia; Very Remote Australia); the roles undertaken by the volunteers across residential, and home care & support services; and the average number of hours across each service type.

“Social Activity Support Assistance” and “Planned Group Activities” were reported as primary volunteer activities across the aged care sector, albeit with greater frequency in residential aged care facilities. Home Care & Home Support providers, on the other hand, reported a more frequent use of volunteers in “transport assistance”, “shopping appointment assistance” and “meal/preparation assistance” as Residential Care service providers.

As of 2016, Residential Care service providers reported an average of 10 volunteers per outlet, with each volunteer contributing an average of 4.9 hours per fortnight. Home Care and Home Support service providers reported an average of 29 volunteers per outlet with each volunteer averaging 4.6 hours for the fortnight. This data is not available for 2020.