

## Longitudinal Study of Student Outcomes – Aged Care

### Wave 1 Insights

#### Introduction

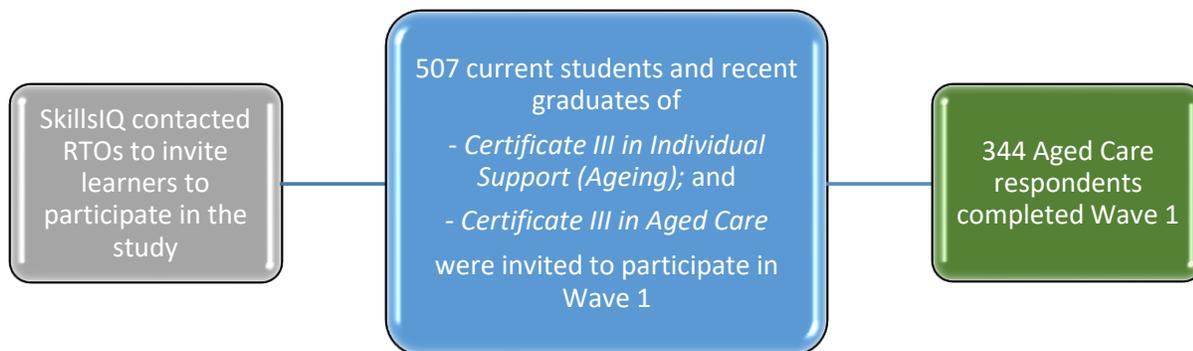
**It is vital the Aged Care sector is supported today, and in the future, by a skilled workforce.**

**Over the last five years, the number of workers in job roles involving caring for the Aged and Disabled grew significantly, reaching 177,200 individuals in 2019.**<sup>1</sup> An additional 91,200 workers were employed in Nursing Support and Personal Care Worker roles which also involved providing assistance, support and direct care to elderly patients in a range of settings (i.e. health, welfare and community).<sup>2</sup>

**Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting Australia’s economy, strong growth was forecast for these job roles**, with an additional 45,100 and 5,500 workers required by the Aged Care and Disability Support sectors respectively by 2024.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian job market is unprecedented and still unknown, it is clear the Aged Care sector and the wider Health and Community Services sector have been playing a vital role in combatting the virus. Strong job growth is therefore expected to continue across the sector.

**To better understand the experience of students entering the Aged Care sector**, students and recent graduates were invited to take part in a longitudinal study which is currently being conducted over a three-year period. Insights from Wave 1<sup>4</sup> (conducted in 2018) are provided in this paper.

*Figure 1:* Longitudinal Study into Student Outcomes – Wave 1 Recruitment



#### Aged Care Student Profile

- Predominantly **female** (79%)
- Aged **26 years and over** (71%)
- Most had **completed the qualification** (82%) at the time of interviewing
- Just **over half had a job** in the Aged Care sector (55%).

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government. Job Outlook. ANZSCO 4231 Aged and Disabled Carers [Available at: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=Career&code=4231>] [Accessed 28 July 2020]

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government. Job Outlook. ANZSCO 4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers [Available at: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=Career&code=4233>] [Accessed 28 July 2020]

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) *2019 Occupational Projections – five years to May 2024*. Available at: <https://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections> [Accessed 28 July 2020]

<sup>4</sup> Wave 1 was conducted online and by telephone between August and November 2018. Data has been weighted by age and gender to reflect the Aged Care student population profile.

### Insight 1 - Motivators for studying for a qualification in Aged Care

Respondents cited the following as driving motivations for entering the sector:

- **Employment-driven** i.e. to get a job (49%) or change careers (37%)
- **Personal passion** – desire to help the elderly / make a difference.

*'I really love to be with aged people - supporting them, helping them, and spending time with them attracted me.'*

*'The Aged and Disability Care industries are growing at a rapid rate, with a heightened awareness of the need to deliver quality care to our vulnerable citizens. I would like to be a part of this exciting industry.'*

### Insight 2 - Student satisfaction with the course

- **A very high proportion were satisfied** with the course overall (91%) and were likely to recommend the course to others (92%)
- Satisfaction with many aspects of the Aged Care course was high, with the following cited as the top five areas from the student's perspectives:



### Insight 3 – Employment outcomes

- **Just over half of Aged Care students had a job in the industry** (55%) at the time of interviewing
- The median number of hours worked was **20–29 hours per week** and the median income per year was **\$30,000 to \$40,000** (pre-tax and excluding superannuation)
- Nine in ten Aged Care students with a job said **both the qualification and training were important** in securing their jobs (92%).

### Insight 4 – Early measures of satisfaction with employment

- **A very high proportion** of respondents working in the Aged Care sector were satisfied with their jobs (95%). Drivers for high satisfaction included:
  - ✓ Building friendships with colleagues
  - ✓ Building emotionally rewarding relationships with clients
  - ✓ Rewarding / making a difference in people's lives.

*'I love my job and have made good friend [with] both staff and residents.'*

- **A small proportion were not satisfied** with their jobs (2%). Drivers for dissatisfaction included:
  - ✗ Poor working environment
  - ✗ Poor pay level
  - ✗ Concerns about the level of care able to be provided to clients.

*'Underpaid and overworked. Cannot give the person-centred care needed as understaffed.'*

**Early intentions indicate that workforce retention is high, as a majority plan to still be working in the Aged Care sector in one year's time (78%)**

**Next Steps:** Wave 2 will recontact respondents to gauge their short- to medium-term outcomes in the Aged Care sector and explore job satisfaction and drivers for leaving the sector.