

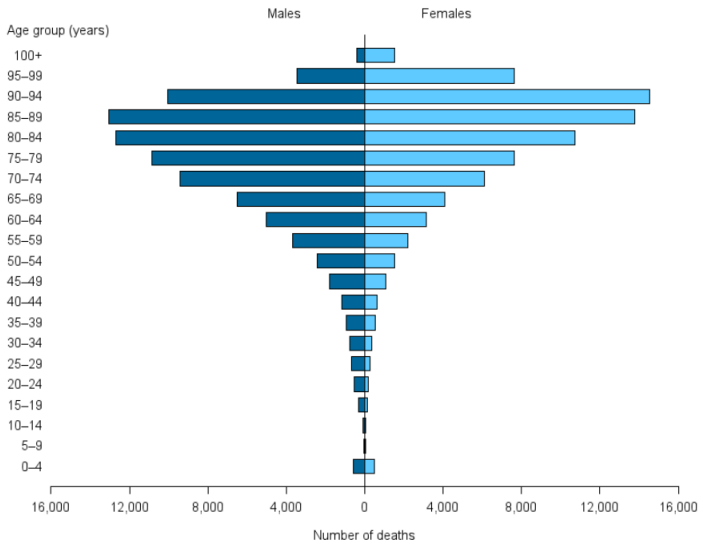
Supporting Aged Care Workforce Capability

Care is provided by people. For aged care, increasing the workforce to meet the anticipated demand for care is a high priority. Ensuring that the workforce has the skills, knowledge, and capabilities to provide care for older people across the last months and days of life is also critical.

An ageing population

Australians are living longer and dying older. And many will have used aged care services in the eight years before their death.

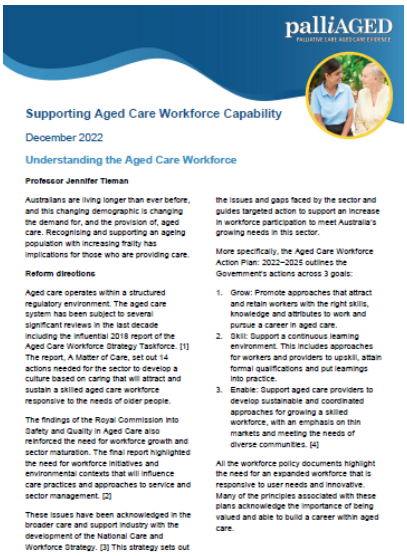
In 2020, there were 161,300 deaths registered in Australia. Sixty-six per cent of deaths registered in Australia in 2020 were among people aged 75 or over (60% for males and 73% for females). The median age at death was 79 years for males and 85 years for females (AIHW, 2022).



Source: AIHW National Mortality Database (Table S2.1)

Understanding the Aged Care Workforce

The aged care workforce plays a significant role in supporting older people with palliative care needs in residential aged care settings as well for those living at home and in receipt of a home care package. Aged care workers, nurses, allied health professionals, and GPs need access to relevant resources and programs to support their palliative care knowledge and practice in meeting client needs and the expectations of recent reform agendas.


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Supporting Aged Care Workforce Capability

December 2022

Understanding the Aged Care Workforce

Professor Jennifer Tieman

Australians are living longer than ever before, and this changing demographic is changing the demand for, and the provision of, aged care. Recognising and supporting an ageing population with increasing frailty has implications for those who are providing care.

Reform directions

Aged care operates within a structured regulatory environment. The aged care system has been subject to several significant reviews in the last decade including the influential 2018 report of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce. [1] The report, A Matter of Care, set out 14 actions needed for the sector to develop a culture based on caring that will attract and sustain a skilled aged care workforce responsive to the needs of older people.

The findings of the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality in Aged Care also reinforced the need for workforce growth and sector maturation. The final report highlighted the need for workforce initiatives and environmental contexts that will influence care practices and approaches to service and sector management. [2]

These issues have been acknowledged in the broader care and support industry with the development of the National Care and Workforce Strategy. [3] This strategy sets out the issues and gaps faced by the sector and guides targeted action to support an increase in workforce participation to meet Australia's growing needs in this sector.

More specifically, the Aged Care Workforce Action Plan: 2022–2025 outlines the Government's actions across 3 goals:

1. Grow: Promote approaches that attract and retain workers with the right skills, knowledge and attributes to work and pursue a career in aged care.
2. Skill: Support a continuous learning environment. This includes approaches for workers and providers to upskill, attain formal qualifications and put learnings into practice.
3. Enable: Support aged care providers to develop sustainable and coordinated approaches for growing a skilled workforce, with an emphasis on thin markets and meeting the needs of diverse communities. [4]

All the workforce policy documents highlight the need for an expanded workforce that is responsive to user needs and innovative. Many of the principles associated with these plans acknowledge the importance of being valued and able to build a career within aged care.

Download the Aged care evidence brief (203kb pdf)

Supporting aged care staff and services

palliAGED has created a range of evidence-based resources to support Australia's aged care workforce to learn, plan, and provide palliative care. They include online modules, Practice Tips booklets for Nurse and for Careworkers, and forms that can be used by staff and services. You can also embed the palliAGED modules in your own Learning Management System.

Check out the Getting Started page to find out how palliAGED resources can support your workforce and your service.

Services can also order resource packs for there teams. The following packs are available:

From palliAGED:

- Resource pack for home care
- Resource pack for residential care

Order form

From CareSearch

- Primary Care Pack
- Palliative Care Guides for GPs

Order form


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Aged care resources to support care at the end of life

palliAGED has been funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care to provide palliative care and end of life care resources for the Australian aged care sector.

Older Australians rely on the skills, knowledge, and compassion of the aged care workforce to provide them with quality and compassionate care. This includes care as they approach the end of their life.

However, building knowledge and skills is challenging given the many demands and pressures on the aged care workforce.

Practical resources are therefore critical if we are to make a difference.

These evidence-based resources are free to use, download and order.

Available now for your service.

Get to know palliAGED and how we can help:

Explore these resources today by ordering copies for your staff, recommending palliAGED Community to clients, or contacting us to discuss your needs.

www.palliaged.com.au palliaged@flinders.edu.au Flinders University

Download the Aged care resources factsheet (752kb pdf)

Each pack contain forms and checklists to support and guide best practice when providing palliative care and care at the end of life. Build staff capability by introducing them as part of training in association with the Practice Tip Sheets and the Introduction modules manual. How you use the packs will depend on your care context and needs, but the validated SPICT tools for recognising change and deterioration are a great way to start discussions about planning care that is person-centred.

For more experienced staff developing local policy and guidance to align with the aged care standards, remember the palliAGED Evidence Centre is there to provide you with summaries of what we know with what certainty across 38 topics relevant to the care of older people.

Our Evidence Brief, Understanding the Aged Care Workforce, outlines some of these issues.

Page created 28 November 2022