

Senate Select Committee on Job Security
Aged Care Industry Association
Answers to written question on notice provided 3 May 2021

- 1. Could you share with the Committee the following data:**
- a. The proportion of your members' workers who are employed on a permanent full-time basis;**
 - b. The proportion of your members' workers who are employed on a permanent part-time basis;**
 - c. The proportion of your members' workers who are employed on a casual basis;**
 - d. The proportion of your members' workers who are engaged on a fixed-term contract basis;**
 - e. The proportion of your members' workers who are engaged as an independent contractor;**
 - f. The proportion of your members' workers who are engaged through labour hire firms;**
 - g. The proportion of your members' workers who are engaged through 'gig platforms';**
 - h. The proportion of your members' workers who work more than one job, whether their other role is in aged care or in another sector.**
 - i. The average contractual minimum hours of your members' workers who are engaged on part-time contracts, and the average actual hours worked by those workers;**
 - j. The average hours allocated to a casual worker by your members per week.**
 - k. The average tenure of your members' workers on both a per-employer basis, and within the sector overall;**
 - l. The average wage of your members' workers, including how this varies between the different forms of employment arrangement referred to above;**
 - m. The average staffing to client ratio in your members' residential aged care homes;**
 - n. The average number of hours of training your members' personal care workers are provided with by their employer;**
 - o. The average number of different facilities your members' workers work in on a weekly or monthly basis;**
 - p. The proportion of Federal Government funding which is spent on workers' wages and entitlements, and what the other major categories of expenditure are for your members, and their respective allocation of Federal Government funding.**

ACIA does not collect this data from our members.

ACIA would refer the Committee to the Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey¹ produced by the Department of Health for information regarding the make-up of the aged care workforce, and to the reports of the Aged Care Financing Authority² for information regarding aged care providers' financial situation.

¹ [The aged care workforce, 2016 - AIHW Gen \(gen-agedcaredata.gov.au\)](https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/)

² [Aged Care Financing Authority \(ACFA\) | Australian Government Department of Health](https://www.acfa.gov.au/)

- 2. For the data requested in Question One, could you also provide any data available showing how these figures have changed overtime, or how they vary between facilities in major cities compared to regional areas?**

ACIA would refer the Committee to the reports noted under Question One.

- 3. Does ACIA provide any advice or guidance to its members on preferred or possible ways to engage staff?**
a. If yes, could this advice be provided?

ACIA does not provide such advice.

- 4. Does ACIA provide any advice or guidance to its members on the use of labour hire and/or gig platforms to engage workers?**
a. If yes, could this advice be provided?

ACIA does not provide such advice.

- 5. Does ACIA support the full implementation of Recommendation 87 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which stated the Australian Government should require as a condition of holding an approval to provide aged care services, that approved providers or other contracted entities have policies and procedures that preference the direct employment of workers, and that quality reviews conducted by the Quality Regulator must record the extent of use of independent contractors?**

ACIA is of the view that an outcome-focused quality and regulatory regime is likely to provide the most scope for aligning care models and provision to individual needs and preferences.

As noted under Questions Three and Four above, ACIA does not provide advice to members on preferred or possible ways to engage staff.

- 6. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 211 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report: *"We both consider that Australia's aged care is understaffed and the workforce underpaid and undertrained"*. Can you elaborate on your reasons for answering yes or no?**

ACIA acknowledges the Commissioners' statement as the view to which the Commissioners came after reviewing the evidence presented to the Commission. Not being privy to all the evidence available to the Commissioners, ACIA is not in a position to express an opinion regarding the Commissioners' opinion.

- 7. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 211 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report: *"Inadequate staffing levels, skill mix and training are principal causes of substandard care in the current system."* Can you elaborate on your reasons for answering yes or no?**

Given the importance of staff in providing aged care, ACIA agrees that episodes of substandard care may be contributed to by inadequate staffing levels, skill mix or training. As noted under Question 6

above, ACIA is not privy to all the information available to the Commissioners in arriving at their opinion, and therefore is not in a position to express an opinion regarding the Commissioners' opinion.

- 8. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 211 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report:**
"Many aged care providers contain their labour costs by reducing their overall direct care staffing or replacing more expensive nurses with lower paid personal care workers."

ACIA notes the requirements of s54-1(b) of the *Aged Care Act 1997* that approved providers have the responsibility:

to maintain an adequate number of appropriately skilled staff to ensure that the care needs of care recipients are met.

Approved providers operate within the funding and regulatory structure established by successive Commonwealth Governments, deploying available resourcing to meet their regulatory obligations and the needs and preferences of care recipients.

- 9. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 214 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report:**
"Both the Australian Government and providers have a responsibility to lift the employment conditions and the status of aged care workers. We cannot rely on the commitment and goodwill of workers to build the aged care workforce. The sector needs to work harder to be attractive to a broad range of people. It needs to attract people with aptitude for aged care work and ensure that they have adequate training."

As noted by Professor John Pollaers in the report of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce, aged care providers indicated support for increased remuneration for staff if funding were provided.

- 10. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 214 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report:**
"The bulk of the aged care workforce does not receive wages and enjoy terms and conditions of employment that adequately reflect the important caring role they play."

ACIA believes that a skilled and valued aged care workforce is an essential ingredient in a system that provides high-quality care.

As noted under Question Nine above, Prof. Pollaers found support from providers for increased remuneration if this were accompanied by increased funding³.

- 11. Does ACIA agree with this statement from page 216 of Volume 2 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's Final Report:**
"The message we have heard is clear: aged care quality and safety is directly dependent on the number and quality of the people who provide it. It is clear to us that the quality of care that older people receive has

³ [A matter of care \(health.gov.au\)](https://www.health.gov.au)

been compromised because, all too often and despite best intentions, those people who work in aged care simply do not have the requisite time, knowledge, skill and support.”

As noted under Questions Seven and 10, ACIA agrees that staffing is an essential contributor to care outcomes. ACIA supports measures to ensure availability of a skilled, high-quality workforce to support ongoing care provision to older Australians.

12. Could you provide the Committee with a complete list of your current members?

ACIA is not able to provide this information to the Committee.