



# Anglicare Sydney Submission for the Work Value Case

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1 November 2023

Authors

## THIS SUBMISSION

This submission is in response to Stage 3 - Issues 17 and 18 - Aged Care Award, Create separate classification structure for PCW's. It relates to Question 49 in Background paper 10:

*Question 49 for all parties: does any party wish to file additional submissions and/or evidence in addition to the evidence and submissions already before the Full Bench in Stage 1 in relation to indirect care employees?*

## ABOUT ANGLICARE SYDNEY

Anglicare Sydney is a significant provider of both residential aged care and community aged care services across Greater Sydney and the Illawarra. This is reflected in our long history of such service provision and a strong commitment to supporting over 2,100 residents, in 23 facilities who experience frailty and the need for ongoing and sometimes intensive care. Our facilities range in size from small homes with 40 bed capacity to our largest with 238 beds giving us a helpful perspective of the workforce issues. We also provide services to more than 4,200 members of the community through a range of CHSP and Home Care packages.

In more than 70 years of providing aged care services Anglicare Sydney has been guided by a commitment to quality service provision both clinically and holistically, underpinned by principles of dignity and choice, hope and compassion supported by highly trained and caring staff.

## ANGLICARE'S EXPERIENCE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

Anglicare Sydney fully endorsed and implemented the 15% pay rise for direct care workers in residential care. It came at a time when we, along with most providers, were struggling with labour supply and workforce issues - particularly after the prolonged COVID outbreaks. The aged care sector was not seen as a good place to work and we were struggling with recruitment of new staff.

After the 30 June 15% Aged Care award rate increase was implemented we had a marked improvement in several areas:

### a) Improved recruitment and retention

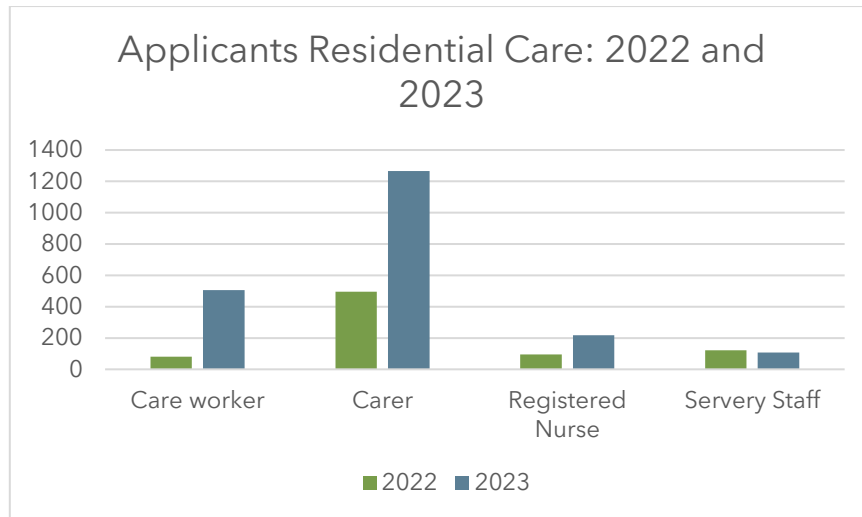
The table and chart below indicate the dramatic improvement in the number of applicants applying for direct care roles since the implementation of the 15% pay rise. However it also indicates that for non care workers, such as servery staff, who were not included in the pay rise, recruitment difficulties have remained and, in fact, there has been a falling trend.

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**Table 1: Applicants 2022 and 2023**

	(Sept) 2022	(Sept) 2023	Variance
Care worker	81	506	525%
Carer	496	1265	155%
Registered Nurse	95	217	128%
Servery Staff	121	107	-12%

**Chart 1**



Our voluntary turnover data indicates a fall from 20.1% in 2022 to 16.05% in 2023 for carers.

**b) Improved quality of candidature**

To test the quality of hires for carers Sapia Ai screens candidates providing assessment scores out of 100. In October 2022 the average screening score was 27.7. In September 2023 this has almost doubled to 50.4.

**c) Talent and management feedback**

There has been an increase in RN applications from the acute hospital setting many of whom are unhappy with the rotating rosters employed by hospitals. There has been a particular focus on new nursing graduates who are keen to take on more responsibility and upskill in terms of leadership. There are also rising numbers of applicants for carer roles with little experience, often coming from overseas.

On the other hand Lifestyle candidates remain hard to source especially those with Cert IV qualifications and it is now very difficult to recruit for servery staff particularly in Castle Hill. The emergence of a thin market for labour in this region may well reflect the issues relating to accommodation and housing and readily available public transport. Most of our care workers live in the more affordable western or southwestern parts of Sydney and are not keen to travel to areas such as Castle Hill, the Eastern Suburbs or the Northern Beaches.

For Aged Care Support workers this ranged from between 5%-7% for those on levels 2 and 3. For level 4 Anglicare paid between 5% and 16%. For more qualified and experienced workers on Levels 5-7 the above award rates ranged from 16% to 23%.

For Nursing staff, it was imperative that we offered above award rates in order to recruit. For Enrolled Nurses this was generally between 15%-17%. However, for Registered Nurses where there has been a significant shortage, particularly with the care minutes requirements and the need to have an RN on every shift the above award rates ranged from 15% to a high of 40%.

## Conclusion

The issues with workforce supply and recruitment in aged care generally reflect an historical position where such work has been undervalued. The improved pay situation for direct care workers has generated greater incentives for recruitment, improved retention and improved quality of applicants. At the same time the lack of a similar pay rise for indirect care workers has led to pay inequity, ongoing shortages and problems with recruitment.

## RATIONALE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE

**Anglicare strongly supports funded pay increases for all staff providing non-direct care in a residential aged care setting. This includes a 25% increase for indirect care workers and a further 10% for direct care workers.**

This position is based on the following rationale.

### a) A One Team approach

All staff contribute to a quality care platform in a residential facility and indirect care workers cannot be siloed out of our One Team person centred relational approach to care.

The narrow application of the 15% pay rise to personal care workers has created issues of unfairness and inequity in the workplace which negatively impacts productivity and workplace morale.

Delivery of high-quality care in a residential setting is the result of a complementary mix of skills and capabilities which includes the ability to provide nutritious high-quality food, a clean environment, linen and laundry and activation of lifestyle and community activities with pastoral care and support. While the direct care work of care workers and Registered Nurses is essential so too is maintaining the whole platform for holistic care.

This team approach needs to be reflected in parity in pay which enables greater recruitment, retention and engagement of all staff working in a residential facility. The effectiveness of improved pay has been clearly demonstrated in the earlier section of this submission.

### b) All staff are impacted by rising cost of living

Government funding increases have not kept pace with the cost of living which has had a significant impact on **all** workers but particularly those on low incomes -the majority of indirect care workers such as servery staff, administrative employees, maintenance and landscape staff, cleaners and those working in the laundry.

### c) Exclusion of some staff adversely impacts workforce supply

All staff contribute to the quality of care and excluding some staff from pay rises is divisive and inequitable. In turn this inequity impacts recruitment into a sector where workforce shortages have a critical impact on capacity to deliver care and meet the needs of older, frail Australians.

### d) Work life for indirect care workers has become more complex

This growing complexity has been generated by the increasing acuity of aged care residents and their increasing frailty, the significant proportion of residents now experiencing dementia, the

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greater regulatory and compliance burden on facilities, expectation of adoption of new technology and an increased emphasis on the importance of diet and nutrition. Currently 96% of Anglicare residents are at a risk of a fall, 91% have a diagnosis that causes pain, 85% of residents are incontinent, 85% have a cognitive impairment and 78% have been formally diagnosed with dementia.

Consequently, there has been some upskilling required to meet the person-centred care approach and especially the needs of vulnerable groups such as those who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Generally, all these factors create a more challenging work environment on every level and the necessary creation of new skills and competencies.

COVID-19 has brought its own challenges where all staff now need to have a good understanding of the use and disposal of PPE, change communication methods and infection control protocols. This should not be considered a temporary issue as our aged care homes continue to experience COVID outbreaks on a regular basis.

While the working environment has become more complex, so too has the nature of work for many staff. Administrative workers for example increasingly need to be more multiskilled across such areas as payroll, staff onboarding and training, liaising with external contractors, maintaining resident records, reception and supporting compliance audits.

While indirect care workers may not be delivering directly the care minutes needed to residents they do bring different and specialised skills into the home and such work is performed in the same workplace as the direct care worker. Their contribution is essential to keep the home functioning.

#### **e) Indirect care workers have substantial interactions with residents**

There is an inference in the current pay inequity that indirect care workers have very little interaction with residents. It is our observation that cleaners, laundry staff and those preparing and serving meals have a great deal of interaction with residents on a daily and shift by shift basis. In Anglicare they too are trained to be sensitive to the needs of individuals, respect their preferences and provide an engaging and positive approach ensuring the resident feels comfortable and at home.

This is particularly true of Lifestyle staff whose main focus is on creating a thriving community through a range of activities and events. For administrative workers contact with both residents and families is a constant and they are generally considered to be part of the care team. Maintenance staff need to ensure they fit into the rhythm of the resident's life, ensuring they address any onsite issues while being as minimally disruptive as possible.

Generally, Anglicare has noted that as part of the One Team approach indirect care workers require much the same interpersonal, relational and emotional skills as direct care workers.

## RECOMMENDATION

Anglicare recommends that all indirect care workers in residential aged care receive a 25% increase in conjunction with a further 10% increase for direct care workers. Such increases need to be fully funded by government. This wage increase needs to be fully funded by Government and not be a burden on already financially stretched providers.

SEE HSU and further increases for Aged Care Employee general and a residential care employee or community care employee

## CLOSING STATEMENT

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and feedback and look forward to further consultation.

Yours sincerely



Simon Miller - Chief Executive Officer