

Fact Sheet: The benefits of having a culturally and linguistically diverse aged care workforce



Ageing
Australia



Fronthitha Care
Foundation
ADVANCING WELLBEING



Why a culturally diverse workforce matters



Australia's ageing and multicultural population is growing rapidly.



By 2056, 8.5 million Australians will be aged over 65, which is ~20% of the total population [1].



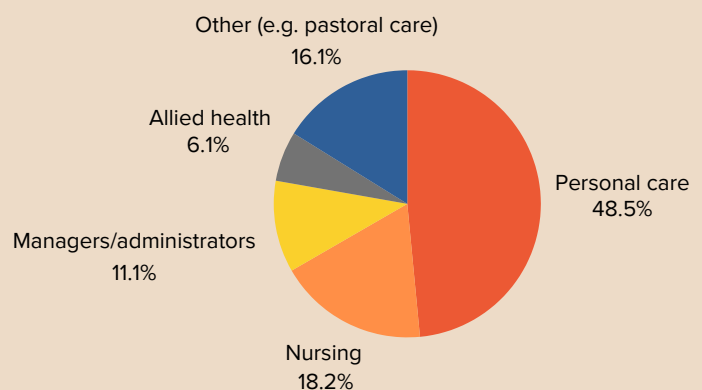
Older Australians will be more ethnically diverse, with significant increases in those born in Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa [1].

A culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) workforce is essential to meet the current and future needs of older Australians.

The aged care workforce: key facts

- 51% of residential aged care staff were born overseas, mainly from Nepal, India, Philippines, England, and New Zealand [2].
- 83% of staff are women, with most aged over 45. In residential aged care, most staff are personal care workers (48%) [2].

Job roles in residential aged care



The role of boundary crossers

Who are boundary crossers?

Professionals who connect two social fields: their local community and a formal system (e.g. aged care) are boundary crossers [3]. These professionals usually have:

- Dual roles combining professional expertise and cultural knowledge.
- A deep understanding of their community needs.
- An ability to broker partnerships and engage communities.
- A commitment to drive long-term improvements in community well-being.

Many staff from a CALD background can function as 'boundary crossers' to facilitate access to aged care services in their communities.



The hearts and hands of care

START WHERE THE CLIENT IS CALD aged care staff often take a **client-first** approach, working with their communities to:

- Raise awareness about aged care and other issues.
- Broker access to services through civic engagement.

BUILD TRUST By understanding clients' histories, life experiences, and emotional states, and maintaining confidentiality, trust is developed over time. Trust enables better outcomes, such as:

- Helping clients navigate community, respite, and residential care services.
- Helping family carers find support.

REDUCING BURDENS These staff assist families by managing care tasks, service navigation, and advocacy across complex systems [4].

Benefits for clients and families

- ✓ Relieve family carers of time-consuming or sensitive care tasks (e.g., intimate care).
- ✓ Deliver care in a culturally respectful and appropriate manner.
- ✓ Build trust and rapport without attempting to replicate familial roles [4].



Why boundary crossers are crucial

- Their shared identity, beliefs, and values strengthen trust and rapport.
- They become leaders and changemakers, driving positive change in their communities.
- They are more likely to remain within their communities and in the aged care sector, enhancing continuity of care and reducing turnover [4].



By valuing diversity and fostering inclusivity, Australia's aged care sector can better meet the needs of its ageing population.

Harnessing this talent



Recognise their contributions and the moral value of their work.



Create a family-friendly workplace.



Provide flexibility with working hours to balance personal and professional responsibilities [5].



**Celebrating diversity
in aged care**



**Ageing
Australia**



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[1] Wilson, T., McDonald, P., Temple, J. et al. Past and projected growth of Australia's older migrant populations. Genus 76, 20 (2020). Provide flexibility with working hours to balance personal and professional responsibilities.

[2] AIHW (2024) Aged Care Workforce. GEN Aged Care Data. Retrieved from Provide flexibility with working hours to balance personal and professional responsibilities, on 24/01/2025

[3] Kilpatrick, S., Cheers, B., Gilles, M., & Taylor, J. (2009). Boundary crossers, communities, and health: Exploring the role of rural health professionals. Health & Place, 15(1), 284–290. doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2008.05.008.

[4] Brijnath B et al. Boundary Crossers: How Providers Facilitate Ethnic Minority Families' Access to Dementia Services. J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci. 2022 Feb 3;77(2):396-406. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbab073.

[5] Adebayo, B., Nichols, P., Heslop, K., & Brijnath, B. (2023). Migrant Care Workers' Perceptions of Their Working Conditions in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities. Journal of Transcultural, 34(3), 229–237. Provide flexibility with working hours to balance personal and professional responsibilities.