



Queensland Care Consortium Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum

November 2023

Forum findings report

QCC | Queensland
Care
Consortium



Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Jobs Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





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Executive summary

Queensland's health and community services workforce is amongst Queensland's largest and fastest growing sector with substantial growth expected. Despite this, workforce shortages, industry and workplace attraction and retention challenges continue to disrupt employers.

Through the Queensland Care Consortium (QCC), Jobs Queensland identified three crucial areas where immediate industry attention could assist with strategies to enhance reputation, professional development, and psychosocial safety and wellbeing.

On 23rd November 2023, the QCC Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum brought together representatives from across these sectors and the state to collaboratively design and develop government-enabled, industry-led solutions to these workforce challenges.

The forum focused on developing actionable outcomes; facilitating connections at an industry-level; and providing advice from industry to Jobs Queensland and other government agencies to consider how they can continue to support the health and community services sectors.

Forum attendees heard from industry experts, QCC peak bodies CheckUP, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), Queensland Community of Social Service (QCOS) and The Services Union. Attendees also heard from government representatives and participated in a series of interactive workshops. The workshops engaged attendees in solution-oriented conversations about the three industry and workplace challenges.

This forum findings report provides a comprehensive overview of the discussions and outcomes from the forum on the day, including the strategies and solutions that were discussed. The findings of this report are not an indication of available programs or projects, but a snapshot of what was discussed on the day.

The forum represents a significant achievement of the action under the Queensland Workforce Strategy, which recognises the importance of workforce attraction, retention and development in the health and community services sectors, as Queensland's largest and fastest-growing sectors. Jobs Queensland is committed to continuing to support industry to meet these needs.

As well as monitoring and reporting back to industry on the outcomes of the seven projects awarded over \$1million in funding in round 1. These findings will go on to inform the QCC and Jobs Queensland approach to the design of a final funding round in 2024.

The report serves as a valuable resource for guiding workforce development strategies that have been developed through government enabled strategies with industry, for industry.



About Jobs Queensland

Jobs Queensland provides strategic advice to government on future skills needs, workforce planning and development, and the apprenticeships and traineeship system by bringing together industry, industry associations and peak bodies, regions, communities, employers, and unions to:

- provide strategic advice on future skills needs, helping government to prioritise its investment in vocational education and training
- offer strategic advice on apprenticeships and traineeships to build on their role as a key pathway to employment and a skilled workforce
- undertake workforce planning and development initiatives to advise on actions to achieve future skills and workforce needs
- be a source of quality, reliable data that can be used by all stakeholders
- be accessible to regions and communities and be responsive to critical concerns and opportunities
- proactively work across all levels of government to shape advice and priorities that will facilitate a cohesive and capable workforce for the future
- commission research into future industry needs to ensure Queensland's workforce is skilled to meet the challenges ahead.





About the Queensland Care Consortium

A key focus of the Queensland Government’s *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* is partnering with the health and community services sectors to develop workforce development, attraction, and retention strategies. This recognises the combined health care, social assistance, and community services sectors as Queensland’s largest and fastest growing workforce.

Jobs Queensland is leading the Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Development project, which has established the QCC, a partnership between Jobs Queensland, Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOS), Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), CheckUP Australia and The Services Union.

The QCC offers direction and support for government enabled, industry-led workforce development, attraction, and retention strategies. A key achievement of the QCC so far has been delivering an initial round of funding to support industry-led solutions — over \$1 million in funding for seven projects commencing in 2023.

A total of 46 proposals were submitted for round 1 funding seeking almost \$10 million, indicating the level of need and interest amongst industry in leading workforce initiatives. Analysis of round 1 funding submissions for funding together with strategic input from members of the QCC Project Champions Group has identified three key industry and workplace problems:

- reputation
- professional development
- psychosocial safety and wellbeing.

Round 1 successful applicants

<https://www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/qcc>

		PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
Aged Care Workforce Alliance	\$165,000	Digital Skills and Mobility Passport - APP	Digital HR integration through a workforce APP
Multicultural Australia	\$141,427	Mentoring Program	Inclusive aged care workforce mentoring
Central Qld Indigenous Development	\$58,000	Workforce Development	Upskilling community facing indigenous people
Qld Alliance for Mental Health	\$164,970	Mental Health Industry Connector	Employ a connector to facilitate relationships
True Relationships & Reproductive Health	\$150,000	Workforce Analysis and Bilingual Educators	Bi-Lingual Educators career pathways. Workforce analysis
Mater Misericordiae Ltd	\$109,200	Model Refugee Doctors and Nurses	Create internship/observer model for hospitals
Apunipimas Cape York Health Council	\$258,934	Workforce Strategy and Coordinator	Employing a coordinator to activate the workforce plan

Why host a Health and Community Services Sector Workforce Forum?

The QCC and Jobs Queensland brought together representatives from across the health and community services sectors together to collaboratively design government enabled, industry-led solutions to these problems.

The industry workforce forum provided an opportunity to hear insights and ideas from industry experts and government agencies, inform and potential solutions to the three problems for industry-wide and workplace-level strategies.

In preparation for the Health and Community Services Sector Workforce Forum, Jobs Queensland developed a pre-reading document to provide attendees with an industry specific data-driven snapshot of current and future workforce trends. These key findings identified that:

- anticipated workforce growth is projected to be significant in almost all areas of the health and community services sectors
- workforce shortages and recruitment challenges experienced by industry are making it difficult to fill vacant roles at present
- the workforce generally comprises skilled roles requiring formal education and training for new industry entrants
- the current workforce is predominantly female, has relatively high levels of part-time employment, has relatively fewer young workers (aged under 25 years) and higher proportions of First Nations people and people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- addressing the three problems of reputation, professional development, and psychosocial and wellbeing is needed to attract and retain the future workforce in the health and community services sectors in Queensland.

This report shared the outcomes from the forum to assist attendees and the wider industry to build workforce development strategies to support these sectors to grow and thrive, and ensure all Queenslanders have access to high-quality services.



Snapshot of the forum

The QCC Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum was held on Thursday 23 November 2023.

Over the course of the day, 88 attendees heard from industry experts and government representatives, and participated in a series of interactive workshops. An overview of the Forum's proceedings is provided below.

- ▶ Opening address by the The Honourable Di Farmer, Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice.
- ▶ Panel discussion featuring members of the QCC Project Champions Group sharing their experiences of the three key industry problems.
- ▶ Three interactive workshops that engaged forum attendees in design-oriented conversations about reputation, professional development, and psychosocial and wellbeing. Each workshop started with rapid brainstorming of ideas based on what's working well (to keep doing), what's not happening (to start doing) and what's not working (to stop doing), followed by designing one of those solutions in more detail.
- ▶ Updates from government agencies on their workforce development and industry engagement strategies — including the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (DYJESBT), the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts (DTATSIPCA), and Queensland Health.



88

attendees from across the health and social services sectors



53

organisations represented



10

speakers representing the QCC Project Champions Group and relevant government agencies



3

interactive workshops to explore the key industry problems of reputation, professional development and wellbeing



What we heard from the expert panel

The Project Champions Group panel shared experiences of the three industry problems and explored these questions:

- how does reputational damage affect the industry as a whole?
- what are the easiest professional development opportunities open to the health and community services sectors today?
- who might organisations turn to for support identifying psychosocial hazards?

The expert panel involved members of the QCC Project Champions Group, including:

- Aimee McVeigh, CEO of Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS)
- Cheryl Schmidt, CEO of Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)
- Justine Moran, Development Coordinator at The Services Union (TSU)
- Vicky Meyer, Industry Workforce Advisor at CheckUP Australia

Some of the important insights shared by the expert panel are captured below.

- ▶ The gendered perception of ‘care work’ has meant workers in the health and community services sectors, particularly women have been undervalued and underpaid.
- ▶ Many people are drawn to working in these sectors out of a desire to do meaningful work. While this connection to impact is an important factor for workforce attraction and retention, it can also be a factor in exploitation.
- ▶ There is a need for a paradigm shift to better recognise the immense value of care work in the community and acknowledge the rich skills and experience the workforce possess. Through a positive and proactive strengths-based approach, because these sectors often only get attention when something goes wrong.
- ▶ Many skilled and experienced workers have, or are considering, leaving the industry because of the demanding and unsupportive environments in which they work — there is a need for more workplaces to create environments where people feel valued, listened to, and treated with respect.
- ▶ Traditional HR-focused support structures may not adequately meet the unique needs of people working in these sectors — a more holistic approach to offering psychosocial wellbeing support across all levels, teams and roles of an organisation is what’s needed.
- ▶ There can be considerable inequity in the professional development opportunities for someone doing the same role in different workplaces, exploring industry-level training initiatives with portability may help to address inequity.
- ▶ Recognising that availability of professional development opportunities for new industry entrants or existing workers is just one factor in professional development; the accessibility of education and training is also crucial to address barriers such as cost, transport, scheduling, digital literacy, language, and location.

What we heard from the workshops

Attendees participated in three consecutive workshops to discuss solutions and strategies to address the three key industry and workplace problems.

Each session generated a long list of ideas that were collated, and thematically analysed. A summary of key findings is presented in the section below.

At a glance - solutions and strategies



Support employees across their career stages through induction, supervision and mentoring.

Reputation



Promote the industry and its impact in a positive way.



Improve workplace conditions to offer secure, meaningful and rewarding jobs.



Attract the right values and skills into the industry to reduce barriers to workforce participation from people from diverse and under-represented backgrounds.

Professional development



Continue to normalise conversations about psychosocial safety and wellbeing to eliminate stigma.



Design roles and work environments that sustain people's wellbeing.



Create more supportive and reflective workplace environments.

Psychosocial safety and wellbeing



Overcome common barriers that workers face when accessing professional development.



Strengthen the professional development available to workers to better meet their learning needs and career stage.



Better recognition of transferable skills, qualifications, and experience.

A key solution across all three challenges

This section reports on individual solutions to the three problems, but overall forum feedback was that there was one overarching issue that is experienced across all three challenges.

Support employees across career stages and sectors, through appropriate induction, supervision, and mentoring.

- ▶ Develop an industry-wide mentoring and coaching program that enables new industry entrants to get connected with industry leaders and experts — including upskilling mentors
- ▶ Ensure staff promoted into management and supervisory roles are provided with the leadership skills and professional support.
- ▶ Establish and implement a comprehensive induction process that networks across the individual workplaces, organisations, local community and the wider sector.
- ▶ Develop collaborative mechanisms, 'partnering spaces' and networking opportunities for collaboration within and across sectors — breaking down siloes and building relationships across all parts of the sector will be better for worker wellbeing.

Reputation

What is industry and workplace reputation?

The reputation of an industry, a workplace and certain jobs influences the attraction and retention of a strong and diverse workforce. Reputation influences the perceptions, expectations and behaviours of both prospective job seekers and current workers.

Attendees experiences of reputational challenges

- ▶ Negative media coverage detracts from the positive social impact of the sector
- ▶ Limited exposure to the industry also limits perceptions of the work
- ▶ Support structures and workplace conditions, including job security are key drivers of poor retention

What solutions were identified to address reputation?

Attract the right values and skills into the industry and reduce barriers to workforce participation from people from diverse and under-represented backgrounds.

- ▶ Create more supported pathways upon completion of a qualification into an entry-level role in the workforce.
- ▶ Value people's lived experience by supporting workers at all levels to safely disclose and draw on their own lived experience in their work.
- ▶ Be proactive in addressing racism to genuinely welcome diversity.
- ▶ Adopt values-based recruitment and attraction strategies to select people/contractors for roles based on their core values, passion, and drive to make a difference, and/or lived experience.
- ▶ Develop talent pipelines through structured and purposeful work experience opportunities. Develop appropriate supervision and mentorship opportunities that provide prospective industry entrants with an understanding of what they can expect from various roles.

Improve workplace conditions to offer secure, meaningful, and rewarding jobs.

- ▶ Reduce barriers to employee bargaining for entitlements (e.g. wages, leave, allowances, breaks) and job security.
- ▶ Introduce appropriate staff-to-client ratios to prevent employee burnout and ensure service quality.
- ▶ Implementing appropriate safeguards and advocacy for vulnerable employee groups to enable them to speak up and be heard.
- ▶ Ensure government funding is appropriate and sufficient for contracted providers to offer competitive workplace conditions.

Promote the industry and its impact in a positive way.

- ▶ Develop an industry-wide marketing and communications strategy to promote the positive aspects of working in the sector such as a consistent value proposition.
- ▶ Use data, information and stories to inform messaging and highlight the value and impact of working in the health and community services sectors.
- ▶ Establish connections between the local industry and local communities through community information sessions and events.
- ▶ Ensure workplaces and employers are meeting standards and community expectations relating to corporate social responsibility.
- ▶ Revise government funding and reporting indicators to focus on service delivery outcomes rather than short-term outputs.

Featured solution: reputation



“Levelling up your workforce with a community induction program”

An employer provides an in-depth onboarding process for new workers that provides them with resources that help to embed them in the local community they'll be working in, and supporting them to be more than just 'text book' trained in delivering community support. This extends them to be trained in knowing what local services and supports are available, and how they can refer people to these services when they need to.

Professional development

What is industry and workplace professional development?

The availability of quality education, skilling and training activities contributes to pathways into the workforce and the ongoing development of workforce capability. Professional development opportunities encompass all types of education, skilling, and training — both formal and on-the-job, and at an industry-level and in individual workplaces.

What were attendees' current experiences of professional development?

Attendees recognised professional development as an integral part of maintaining a skilled workforce for the health and community services sectors. While the availability and choice of professional development opportunities is seen as relatively strong and helped by government-subsidised training initiatives, the appropriateness and accessibility of professional development opportunities doesn't always match the needs of people based on their career stage, learning preferences, abilities, practical barriers, and cultural backgrounds.

What solutions were identified to address professional development?

Overcome common barriers that workers face to access professional development.

- ▶ Continue to prioritise the health and community services sectors for government-funded training initiatives that focus on new industry entrants.
- ▶ Remove complex eligibility requirements for entry into training programs.
- ▶ Create industry-supported scholarships and bursary opportunities to support funded training placements.
- ▶ Provide adequate support from employers to enable workers to engage in professional development during ordinary work time through protected and paid 'professional development' leave.
- ▶ Provide paid placements with adequate supervision and support for those completing a qualification and required to undertake structured work experience.
- ▶ Ensure adequate funding is allocated for workforce professional development in government-funded health and community services.

Strengthen the professional development available to workers to better meet their learning needs and career stage.

- ▶ Develop a sector-wide capability framework that outlines the common foundational areas of learning and training, mapped back to different roles and levels.
- ▶ Develop an industry-recognised and evidence-based suite of short courses, certifications or micro-credentials that are bite-sized, stackable and that people can acquire over time — example areas identified included self-care, leadership, lateral violence, prevention and early intervention, and professional boundaries.
- ▶ Use evidence-based approaches to the design and delivery of online training based on what's most appropriate to be delivered virtually versus face-to-face.
- ▶ Broaden the definition of professional development activities beyond formal 'one off' training to incorporate mentorship, practical/experiential learning opportunities, ongoing reflection and structured programs.
- ▶ Offer professional learning placements for workers at different stages of their career to experience different work settings and situations — ideally through partnerships between organisations and across the industry.
- ▶ Provide dedicated support for people within the industry to navigate professional development opportunities aligned to career progress pathways.
- ▶ Ensure providers of professional development activities and resources are developing these through input from the workforce about their needs.

Better recognition of transferable skills, qualifications, and experience.

- ▶ Create more flexible approaches to recognise the transferable skills and experience of mature industry entrants who wish to start working and may not be able or willing to complete a certificate III qualification.
- ▶ Provide tailored support for people from different backgrounds, such as those previously working in other sectors or recently settling in Australia, to receive 'bridging' courses to enter the workforce sooner.
- ▶ Advocate on behalf of industry for improvements to government policies and programs, training standards for entry into NDIS market (workers and providers).

Featured solution: professional development



“Workforce without borders, compliance without complication”

An industry-led program that aims to support migrants settled in Queensland to enter Queensland’s health and community services sector. The program would involve working with the person to understand and recognise their prior skills and experience, providing quality and appropriate training that meets the person’s needs and the sector’s standards, and broader assistance for them to gain employment and enter the workforce upon gaining a recognised entry-level qualification.

Psychosocial safety and wellbeing

What is industry and workplace psychosocial safety and wellbeing?

The wellbeing of workers and the support for wellbeing provided by industry and workplaces contributes to workforce attraction and retention. Psychosocial safety and wellbeing are influenced by the leadership and culture of organisations and teams, work design (e.g. hours, shifts), resourcing and staffing levels, and availability of support.

What were attendees’ current experiences of psychosocial safety and wellbeing?

Attendees shared how the often complex and challenging work environments that workers experience in the health and community services sectors can impact on staff wellbeing and work-life balance. There is a perceived shortage of training and resources focused on ensuring psychosocial safety and wellbeing of workers, and a need for more emphasis on the importance of wellbeing being a critical part of industry and workplace culture.

What solutions were identified to address psychosocial safety and wellbeing?

Continue to normalise conversations about psychosocial safety and wellbeing to eliminate stigma.

- ▶ Encourage more conversations about mental health and wellbeing within teams, organisations and at an industry-level that help to share others' experiences of challenges, create psychological safety and encourage others to speak up.
- ▶ Create mechanisms within organisations that normalise conversations, such as safety circles, yarning circles and informal spaces for staff to connect.
- ▶ Create dedicated 'peer connector' or similar role within workplaces or the wider industry who can offer a supportive conversation to someone experiencing challenges.
- ▶ Promote and encouraging use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or similar services, as a positive resource for staff whenever they might need it, and periodically review the appropriateness of the EAP provider to ensure they are best placed to meet the workforce's needs.

Design roles and work environments that sustain people's wellbeing.

- ▶ Ensure position descriptions provide sufficient role clarity and outline reasonable expectations of staff relating to direct service delivery and indirect work tasks.
- ▶ Ensure workers are able to complete their roles within their contracted hours, and any overtime worked is remunerated.
- ▶ Improve the knowledge and understanding of how to practically implement the legislation and standards relating to psychosocial safety and wellbeing, workplace bullying and reasonable management action.
- ▶ Prioritise flexible work arrangements as an important workplace entitlement.
- ▶ Develop individualised employee wellbeing plans supported by consistent guidance and templates.
- ▶ Create wellbeing indices to monitor workforce wellbeing and sentiment over time.
- ▶ Monitor workplace policies, procedures and codes of conduct to ensure they are being translated into practice.

Create more supportive and reflective workplace environments.

- ▶ Provide frontline workers with a voice through direct consultation about their challenges, helpful support strategies and what would be helpful for them.
- ▶ Develop sector-specific information resources, materials and training relating to cultural safety, self-care, resilience, interpersonal skills, trauma-informed practice, professional boundaries and preventing vicarious trauma.
- ▶ Reward workers and supporting them to proactively maintain their own psychosocial wellbeing.
- ▶ Develop an anti-racism strategy that encourages bystanders to speak out against racism and provides guidance in how to respond.
- ▶ Develop workforce support programs tailored for staff working in remote communities, including building relationships and supporting each other.
- ▶ Encourage open and healthy communication within teams and organisations to raise issues, acknowledge different perspectives and have difficult conversations while maintaining safety and not creating conflict.
- ▶ Provide more training and professional development with a focus on leadership and culture.
- ▶ Provide formal and structured debriefing for staff who may benefit from additional support and expertise following a traumatic or challenging experience.
- ▶ Develop reward and recognition strategies at different levels to celebrate success and share achievements with others.
- ▶ Invest back into community wellbeing through education and training of local stakeholders to be connectors, listeners and contributing to their community's wellbeing.

Featured solution: psychosocial safety and wellbeing



“Impact from the ground up”

A whole-of-workplace strategy informed from the ground up (i.e. frontline staff) that focuses on all areas of wellbeing, based on evidence that company culture of kindness and compassion leads to better employee wellbeing and performance. A comprehensive strategy is not just having an EAP for when things are challenging. It involves a range of proactive support options and activities in place for all staff, underpinned by good working conditions and work/life balance to minimise the risk of burnout. Dedicated activities such as guest speakers, social activities, training, and induction programs that focus on wellbeing, individual wellbeing plans and a better understanding and use of the EAP are all part of the mix of strategies.

Snapshot of the workforce

This snapshot shares data relevant to the Health Care and Social Assistance industry, an industry classification used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, it includes jobs within hospitals, medical and other care services (including allied health, ambulances, and pathology), residential care services and social assistance services, such as aged care and disability support.

Anticipating Future Skills Series

Jobs Queensland's Anticipating Future Skills (AFS) Series 4 provides employment projections for regions, industries, occupations, and qualifications to help understand what Queensland's future labour market might look like, including region and industry profiles.

The AFS Series data is accessible via an online interactive data portal and data explorer that combines economic modelling and scenario planning to identify Queensland's future skills needs. It can be used in a range of ways, including supporting policy advice, industry and regional workforce planning or career guidance.

Access the Anticipating Future Skills Series data portal at www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs.

[Anticipating Future Skills \(AFS\) series 4](#) shows this is Queensland's largest industry by workforce, with almost 450,000 workers in 2022-23, which makes up about 16.1% of all jobs in Queensland. [1]



1 in every 6 jobs in Queensland was in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry in 2022-23.

A more targeted analysis of the workforce segments that are most relevant to users of this report is provided below and is referred to as the 'health and community services sectors' — this analysis includes all occupations within the selected health and community services sectors, including frontline service delivery roles as well as administration, management and support services roles (e.g. catering, maintenance), but excludes the industry groups of Hospitals, Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging Services, and Child Care Services.







[1] Jobs Queensland, 2023, Anticipating Future Skills Series 4 Data Portal, www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal/

Future workforce growth

The health and community services sectors are anticipating significant growth by 2025-26 through additional new jobs and workforce turnover.

By 2025-26, employment in the health and community services sectors is projected to have faster growth than other industries in Queensland.^[2]

Workforce growth by sub-sector:

-  **30.0%** Other Social Assistance Services
-  **15.3%** Other Health Care Services
-  **11.5%** Medical Services
-  **8.6%** Residential Care Services
-  **7.6%** Rate of growth for all industries in QLD
-  **6.9%** Allied Health Services



Workforce growth is projected to be high in regional areas.

- ↑ 24.2% in Wide Bay
- ↑ 23.4% in Central Queensland
- ↑ 20.3% in Townsville

Job openings won't be limited to growth from new jobs alone.

18.2%

workforce growth by 2025-26, compared to 7.6% for all industries

290,000

estimated health and community services sectors workforce by 2025-26

41,593

new jobs in these sectors by 2025-26

15,000

people will enter these sectors by 2025-26 through usual workforce turnover and replacement

[2] Jobs Queensland, 2023, Anticipating Future Skills Series 4 Data Portal, www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal/

At an occupation level, several types of jobs in these sectors are projected to experience above average growth. The top 15 jobs based on the number of people employed in Queensland's health and community services sectors by 2025-26 is shown below. ^[3]

Projected growth in workforce in health and community services sectors by 2025-26 by occupation

	Occupation	People employed in 2025-26	% change from 2021-22 workforce levels
1	Aged and Disabled Carers	66,106	↑ 27.2 (+14,121 people)
2	Registered Nurses	20,026	↑ 9.0 (+1,661 people)
3	Receptionists	17,745	↑ 5.0 (+843 people)
4	Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	13,418	↑ 4.5 (+574 people)
5	Welfare Support Workers	12,952	↑ 24.5 (+2,546 people)
6	General Practitioners and Resident Medical Officers	12,025	↑ 21.4 (+2,116 people)
7	Dental Assistants	6,337	↑ 3.7 (+229 people)
8	General Clerks	5,985	↑ 23.6 (+1,142 people)
9	Psychologists	5,961	↑ 17.9 (+904 people)
10	Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers	5,625	↑ 26.5 (+1,177 people)
11	Social Workers	5,555	↑ 27.1 (+1,184 people)
12	Physiotherapists	5,255	↑ 13.8 (+639 people)
13	Practice Managers	4,904	↑ 4.0 (+186 people)
14	Health and Welfare Services Managers	4,878	↑ 31.2 (+1,161 people)
15	Ambulance Officers and Paramedics	4,169	↑ 12.3 (+457 people)

[3] Jobs Queensland, 2023, Anticipating Future Skills Series 4 Data Portal, www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal/

Workforce shortages and recruitment challenges

With a significant increase in workforce vacancies since the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and community services sectors are already experiencing challenges recruiting workers to these roles.

Job vacancies as measured by online job advertisements, have increased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic. [4]

Despite the growth in vacancies, fewer employers in the health and community services sectors nationally are actively recruiting and many are reporting challenges with recruiting workers. [5]

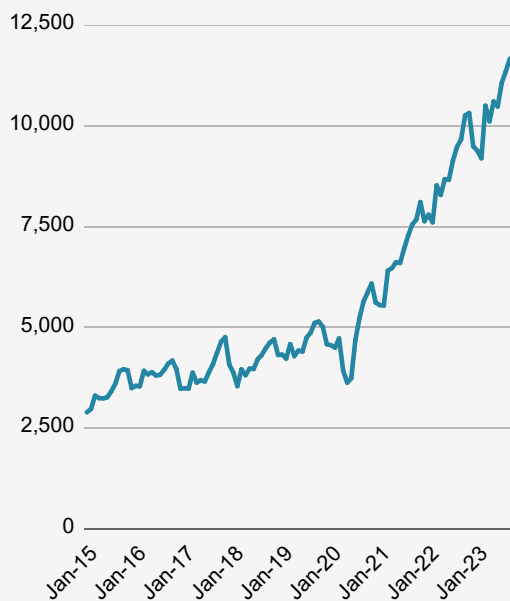
17.5%

of all jobs advertised in QLD in 2023 were for the health and community services sectors

~70%

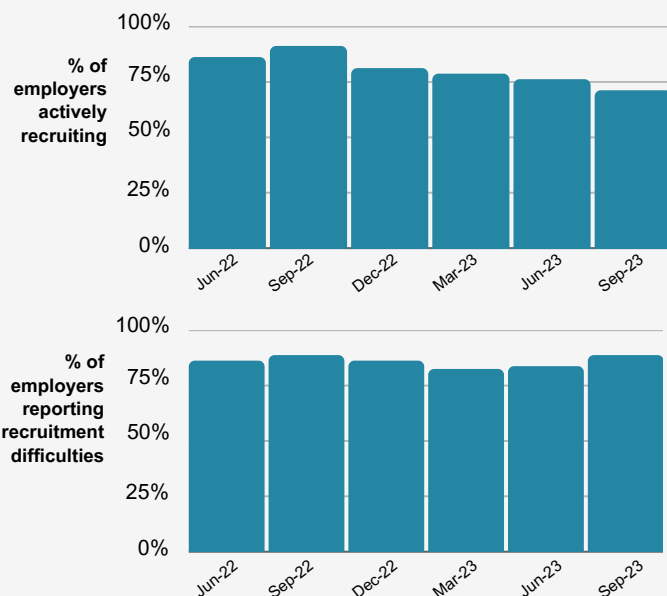
of employers in health and community services nationally report recruitment difficulties

Vacancies for selected health and community services jobs, 2015-23



Data source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, Sourced from www.jobsandskills.gov.au

Recruitment insights, Health Care & Social Assistance industry, nationally, quarterly from Jun-22 to Sep-23



Data source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Recruitment Insights Report, Sourced from www.jobsandskills.gov.au

It is possible that the decline in employers recruiting is due to unrealised vacancies, where employers stop recruiting for a position because of excessive recruitment difficulties. This means current vacancy rates for the health and community services sectors could be underrepresented.

[4] Jobs and Skills Australia. (2023). Internet Vacancy Index ANZSCO2 Occupations, States and Territories - August 2023, www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data

[5] Jobs and Skills Australia. (2023). Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey - September 2023, www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data

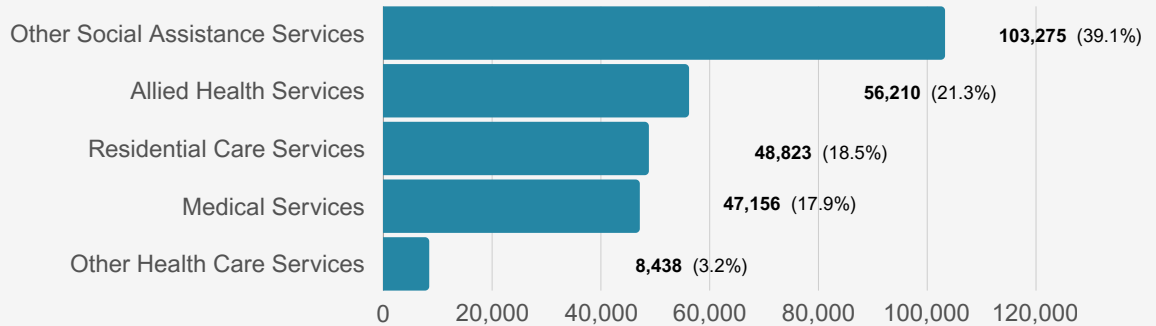


Understanding the workforce now

To prepare to meet future workforce demands, it is important to understand Queensland's current health and community services workforce.

The selected industry groups that collectively make up the health and community services sectors had an estimated workforce of 263,903 employees across Queensland in 2022-23. A breakdown of the workforce size by specific industry groups is shown below: ^[6]

Workforce size by Industry Group, health and community services sectors, 2022-23



Data note: Industry Group is derived from ABS Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)

Data source: Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills data portal, from www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs

A skilled, diverse, experienced and regional workforce

The health and community services sectors typically comprise professional and practitioner roles requiring formal education and training.

Most jobs within Queensland's health and community services sectors attract skilled new entrants into the workforce, with roles generally requiring a minimum Bachelor Degree or Certificate III or IV level qualification respectively for new industry entrants. ^[6]

71.4%

of all roles are for Professionals or Community and Personal Services Workers

Workforce size by Occupation in health and community services sectors, 2022-23



Data note: Occupation is derived from ABS Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)

Data source: Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills data portal, from www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs

[6] Jobs Queensland, 2023, Anticipating Future Skills Series 4 Data Portal, www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal/

Queensland's health and community services workforce is characterised by high levels of part time employment. Part-time jobs in Queensland's health and community services sectors have been consistently more common over time.^[7]

Rates of full-time employment in health and community services are typically only higher than those in the hospitality, arts and recreation services, and retail industries.

56.5%

of jobs are full-time in QLD's health and community services sectors, with 43.5% part-time

69.7%

comparison rate of full-time jobs across all industries in QLD

73.8%

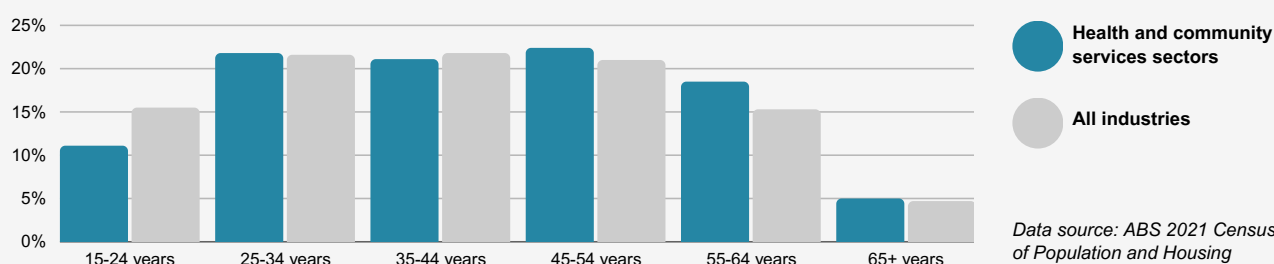
of the workforce is female in QLD's health and community services sectors, compared to 48.2% in all industries

The health and community services sectors are predominantly a female workforce. Female workers were employed in almost 3 in 4 of all jobs in the health and community services sectors. In some parts of these sectors, this is even higher — up to 82.5% in Residential Care Services and 79.0% in Allied Health Services.

Females are also more likely to work part-time, with only about half (51.6%) of females working in full-time employment in the health and community services sectors with closer to three-quarters (70.2%) of males employed full-time.

Queensland's health and community services workforce has a relatively older age profile. Compared to the wider workforce in Queensland, the health and community services sectors have fewer younger workers aged 15-24 years and a higher proportion of older workers across each age group from 25-29 years up to 65+ years.^[8]

Employment by age range, health and community services and all industries, QLD, 2021



The age profile may be due to a range of factors — such as skilled workers being retained within these sectors or demand for more skilled and experienced candidates resulting in fewer young workers and a more mature workforce overall.

[7] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, Detailed. EQ06 - Employed persons by Industry group of main job (ANZSIC), Sex, State and Territory, November 1984 onwards (Pivot Table)

[8] Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021 Census of Population and Housing [TableBuilder], www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder

The health and community services sectors have a strong workforce representation of First Nations people and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

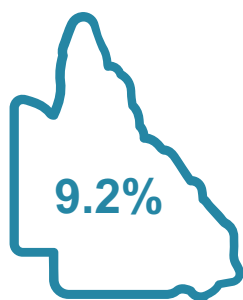
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are more likely to work in Queensland's health and community services sectors than other industries in Queensland.^[9]

3.8%

of workers in health and community services are First Nations people — compared to 2.7% for all industries in QLD

15.3%

of workers were born outside of Australia and speak another language other than English — 13.8% for all industries



of all of QLD's workforce located outside of SEQ work in health and community services

The health and community services sectors workforce is distributed right across Queensland and makes a considerable contribution to employment in the regions.

While almost 3 in 4 of Queensland's health and community services sectors' workforce is in South-East Queensland, these sectors make up almost 1 in 10 of all of the workforce located outside of South-East Queensland.^[10]

The workforce in the health and community services sectors is particularly strong in the regional centres of:

Wide Bay: 13.4% of workforce

Toowoomba: 12.4% of workforce

Townsville: 10.6% of workforce

Cairns: 9.9% of workforce

Future workforce needs

With the health and community services sectors workforce anticipated to grow by over 40,000 new jobs by 2025-26, combined with high demand for qualified and experienced workers, the attraction and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce will become increasingly important with new workers entering these sectors.

Strategic workplace planning and development is required to support Queensland workplaces to overcome challenges in attracting and retaining the workforce they require to deliver on their mission of caring for the people of Queensland.

[9] Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021 Census of Population and Housing [TableBuilder], www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder

[10] Jobs Queensland, 2023, Anticipating Future Skills Series 4 Data Portal, www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal/

Resources

Workforce planning tools

Jobs Queensland developed Workforce Planning Connect, a suite of workforce planning tools at the regional and industry level to promote [Workforce planning and development](#).

As part of the Jobs Queensland-funded NDIS Workforce project, the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) adapted Workforce Planning Connect resources for NDIS service providers and organisations that deliver NDIS-type services, you can access here [Workforce Planning Connect Toolkit for the Disability Sector](#).

The resources are used to help develop a workforce plan to address current and future workforce challenges. They can also be used in other health care and community services organisations.

Support programs

Back to Work Program

The [Back to Work](#) (BTW) program offers a suite of programs and services, including an Incentive Payment, that provide businesses with the confidence they need to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment and help workers facing disadvantage in the labour market. The program is available for employers who operate in the healthcare and social assistance industry and is available in regional Queensland and eligible local government areas in SEQ.

The BTW program has supported 28,435 jobseekers with over \$318 million in funding provided to 13,148 businesses. Since 2016, in the healthcare and social assistance industry, there have been 1237 employees supported with over \$13.6 million in funding provided to 613 employers (as at 30 June 2023).

Gateway to Industry Schools Program for Health

The [Gateway to Industry Schools Program](#) - Health links schools with industry partners to introduce students to the many career pathways and job options available to them within the health industry. The program also helps to facilitate learning opportunities and experiences for both students and teaching staff.

Community Door

Find out how to start, manage and expand your organisation with resources to support you in the operation of your health, care, community services or social assistance organisation. Visit communitydoor.org.au

Industry Advisors

Industry Workforce Advisors


The Industry Workforce Advisor program aims to provide workforce planning assistance to employers in small and medium sized businesses, enabling them to address workforce challenges, diversify their workforces, and support workforce growth. This may include identifying recruitment strategies to expand applicant pools and considering underrepresented groups (e.g. migrants, young people, those who identify as women, First Nations or as having a disability).



Community Services
Natalie Palelei
Community Services Industry Alliance Ltd
Email: npalelei@csialtd.com.au
Mobile: 0439 044 070



First Nations health care and social assistance
Andy Legg
CheckUP Australia
Email: alegg@checkup.org.au
Mobile: 0498 801 004



Health
Vicky Meyer
CheckUP Australia
Email: vmeyer@checkup.org.au
Mobile: 0436 814 501



Health
Mario Gupta
CheckUP Australia
Email: mgupta@checkup.org.au
Mobile: 0425 030 372

Industry Skills Advisors

Industry Skills Advisors (ISA's) engage with employers, small business and industry stakeholders to provide high quality, evidence-based industry advice and intelligence about current and emerging industry direction, regional skills needs and training solutions, jobs growth and employment opportunities.



Community Services
Jamie Brown
Community Services Industry Alliance Ltd
Email: jbrown@csialtd.com.au
Mobile: 07 3184 6891



Health
Amanda Griffiths
CheckUP Australia
Email: alegg@checkup.org.au
Mobile: 0498 801 004

Supports

Small Business Advisory Services

Queensland Small
Business Commissioner

<https://qsbq.qld.gov.au/get-help/>

The commission provides free and confidential advice, assistance, and advocacy services to small business owners. The QSBC offers a range of education and training programs to help small business owners improve their skills and knowledge.

Small Business Information

Business Connect
Newsletter

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/support/small-business/connect>

The newsletter provides practical information and resources to help businesses navigate the challenges of running a small business. It includes business planning, marketing, finance, legal and regulatory compliance, and human resources and grant notification advice.

Small Business Mentoring

Mentoring for Growth
Program

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/growing-business/business-mentoring/mentoring-growth>

The program offers tailored, one-on-one mentoring sessions that focus on specific business issues, including human resources. The mentors are volunteers who have a wealth of experience and expertise in running successful businesses.

Small Business Grant Information

Grants and programs
finder

<https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs?resultsNum=10>

This guided search will help businesses find grants, funding and support programs from across government.

Small Business Health Check

Business Health Check

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/support-assistance/tools/health-check>

The Business Health Check tool is an online resource that helps small business owners assess the health and performance of their business.

Funding
Opportunity

HR Connect Fund

[Workforce Connect Fund | Department of Employment, Small Business and Training \(desbt.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/workforce-connect-fund)

Small businesses who identify, through Industry Workforce Advisors, an immediate need for HR solutions to support their business operations may be eligible to receive up to \$5000 in funding to address this need.

For more information about the Queensland Workforce Strategy visit www.desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/support-employers/workforce-strategy.

Queensland Health

The Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 consultation paper, which was released on 31 October 2023, identifies three focus areas:

1. Supporting and retaining our current workforce
2. Building new pipelines of talent
3. Adapting and innovating new ways to deliver

Proposed actions for each focus area include:

1. Supporting and retaining our current workforce

- implement a positive workplace culture to support flexible work opportunities, well-designed work, the physical and psychological safety of the workforce, and balanced workloads
- explore career pathways which create seamless opportunities across the health and social system
- develop and grow leadership capability in the First Nations workforce
- increase permanent employment opportunities for our existing temporary and casual workforces
- consider staffing and skill mix requirements across all streams to meet projected growth and demand.

2. Building new pipelines of talent

- overhaul recruitment processes
- build sustainable workforce supply pipelines
- prioritise growth and retention of our:
 - First Nations workforce
 - mental health workforce
 - rural and remote workforce
- enhance attraction and retention incentives offered to support and attract our health workforce
- enhance scholarships and education support to increase uptake of health courses.

3. Adapting and innovating new ways to deliver

- develop workforce models and arrangements that enable:
 - staff to work across community, mental health, primary and acute care settings
 - the improvement of preventative healthcare measures
- staff to work to full scope of practice
- fully embed digital capability
- embed the integrated workforce planning framework
- develop and implement processes to identify, analyse and share enhanced workforce planning data to support the health system.

Health Worker Incentives

Through the [Healthy Careers - Queensland Health](#) is offering incentives for health workers to move to Queensland from overseas or interstate, including nursing, allied health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers. As well as competitive salary packages, health workers are supported with variety in their work and specialised training to accelerate their career progression.

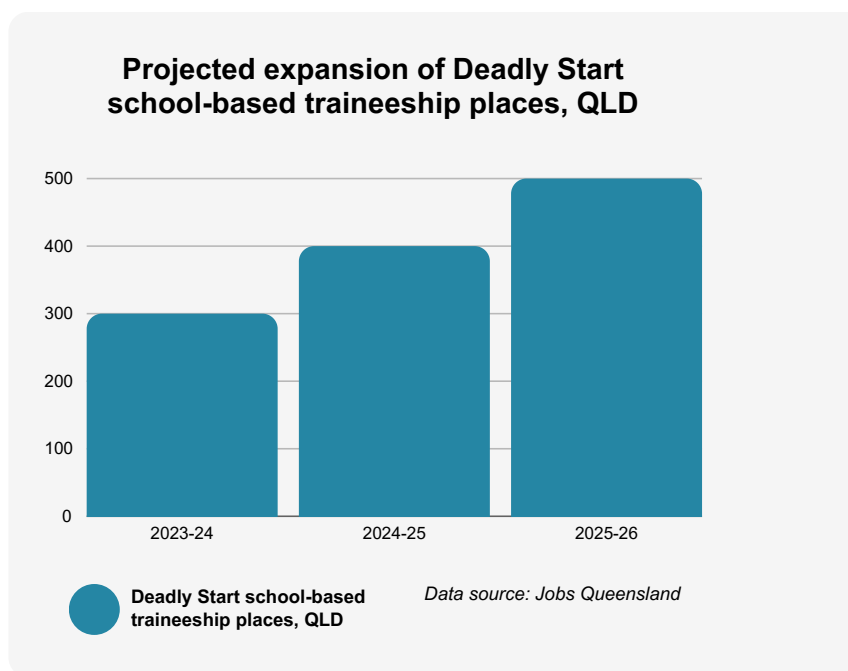
In addition to health worker incentives, nursing and midwifery final year students will also be eligible to receive a one off cost of living allowance of \$5000 for placements undertaken in rural and remote areas (i.e. Modified Monash Model 4-7).

School based traineeships

Queensland Health has committed to increasing school-based traineeships over the next three financial years in health support services to ease pressures on the public health system. Traineeships are available in nursing and patient support services, allied health assistance, dental assistance, health administration, pharmacy assistance, pathology assistance and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander primary health care.

Queensland Health has committed to the following numbers, with up to 235 places allocated annually for First Nations students through the upscale and expansion of the Deadly Start school-based traineeship program.

There are many examples of VET in Schools, including School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. One example is the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service's Deadly Start School Based Traineeship Program in Ipswich which aims to reach school students who are keen on a career in the health service. Students are exposed to a range of occupations in the health field and the [World of possibilities for high school health trainees](#).



Queensland Health Rural and Remote Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027

The Queensland Health [Rural and Remote Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2027](#) sets the goal of developing a 'Sustainable, Skilled and Supported Workforce':

Creating a long-term, sustainable workforce requires the system to provide both opportunities for immersion in rural and remote clinical practice and the right conditions from career choice through to retirement. Investing in training and development that delivers more care locally and prioritising wellbeing are critical to a sustainable person-centred workforce.

Queensland Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts

Under the Communities 2032 strategy, Action 47 recognises the importance of a stable and capable workforce:

Promote stability in the community and social services sector and build workforce capability and capacity to address growing demand and complexity by:

- providing greater funding certainty through longer-term (5 year) contracts where possible
- supporting community-controlled organisations to strengthen services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
- strengthening the community services workforce through Queensland's Workforce Strategy.

Three key themes have emerged from sector engagement around Action 47:

1. Sustainability
2. Community Building
3. Workforce

Characteristics of the community services sector workforce are identified as:

- **community services specific challenges** – pay disparity (compared to health, disability etc.), limited (or perceived limitation) in career progression opportunities, heavy reliance on volunteers and an ageing workforce.
- **workforce is a structural and systemic issue**, there is only so much the sector can do to maximise recruitment and retention. Solutions lay in better government planning, earlier in the commissioning cycle, and improved integration across agencies.
- example of what's working – **longer term contracts (e.g. 5 year)** deliver sustainability for organisations, they also support workforce retention, therefore building a sense of community. The sector is keen to see longer contracts across all agencies.

Under the Queensland [Multicultural Action Plan 2022-2024](#), Queensland Government agencies including Queensland Health, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs will establish internships and pathways to employment to better utilise the skills and experiences of people with overseas qualifications.

In closing

The Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum was an opportunity for representatives from across the health and community services sectors to come together and design government enabled, industry-led solutions to the three key industry and workplace problems of reputation, professional development, and psychosocial safety and wellbeing.

The forum represents a significant achievement of the Queensland Workforce Strategy, which recognises the importance of workforce attraction, retention and development in the health and community services sectors, as Queensland's largest and fastest growing sectors.

The number, quality and diversity of the solutions presented in this report highlight the value of the event, and the knowledge and willingness within industry to meet, retain and grow the future workforce needs of Queensland's health and community services sectors.

Jobs Queensland, in partnership with the QCC, is committed to continuing to support industry to meet these needs. As well as monitoring and reporting back to industry on the outcomes of the projects awarded funding in round 1, Jobs Queensland is planning to release a second round of funding in 2024 which may be highly competitive. The selection criteria for round 2 funding will be informed by the outcomes of Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum and outlined in this report.

We encourage you to leverage the knowledge and expertise already within your organisation and industry, and to make use of all the resources and information in this report, to act on the many activities and changes you can make.

On behalf of Jobs Queensland and the members of the QCC, thank you to all who attended the Health and Community Services Sectors Workforce Forum — your expertise and insights have helped to shape this report that we hope will be a helpful resource to guide workforce development strategies that have been developed by industry, for industry.

Yours sincerely

Joshua Rayner
Executive Director, Jobs Queensland

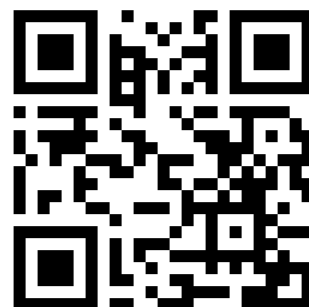


For more information about the Queensland Care Consortium

www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/qcc

  @jobsqueensland

or email QCCadmin@jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au



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The Services Union	https://www.theservicesunion.com.au/

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