

# Markets, Migration & the Work of Care



## FACT SHEET 4: Personal Care Assistants

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This fact sheet draws on data from the 2016 Census. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of personal care assistants in Australia increased from 27,511 to 28,245. Personal care assistants are much more likely to be female and are typically older than the average worker. They are more likely to have been born overseas and to have arrived within the ten years prior to the 2016 Census. Personal care assistants work fewer hours and have a lower income than the average worker.

### Demographics

#### Gender

Personal care assistance is a feminised occupation. 85.4% of Australia's personal care assistants are female, whereas women make up 47.5% of the total Australian workforce.

#### Age

Personal care assistants are typically older than the rest of Australia's workforce (Figure 1). The median age group for personal care assistants is between 45-49 years compared to 40-44 years for the total workforce.

#### Indigenous Workers

The same proportion of personal care assistants identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) as the total workforce (1.7%).

#### Overseas Born

50.2% of personal care assistants were born overseas, compared to 30.6% within the total Australian workforce (Figure 2). 41.9% were born in non-main English-speaking countries, compared to 20.1% across the total workforce. The top ten countries of birth for those born overseas are: India, the Philippines, England, Nepal, New Zealand, China, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Vietnam and South Africa.

### Who are Australia's Personal Care Assistants?

#### ABS Occupational Definitions (ABS 2018)

Personal care assistants provide routine personal care services to people in a range of health care facilities or in a person's home.

Tasks include:

- Assisting patients with their personal care needs such as showering, dressing and eating
- Assisting patients with their mobility and communication needs
- Participating in planning the care of individuals
- Following therapy plans such as interventions to assist those with dementia and behavioural problems
- Observing and reporting changes in patients' condition, and reporting complaints about care
- Assisting with rehabilitation exercises, basic treatment and delivering medications
- Providing direct support and assistance to therapists.

Figure 1: Age of Personal Care Assistants and Total Workforce, 2016

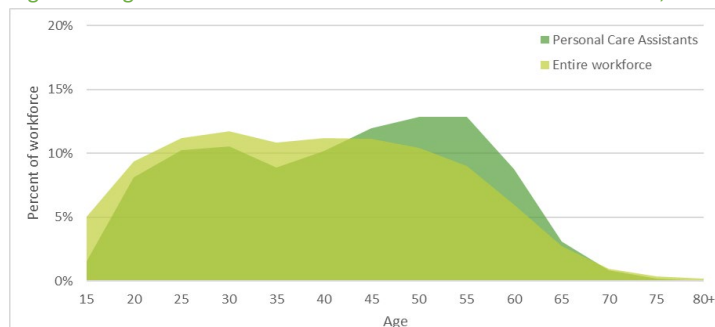
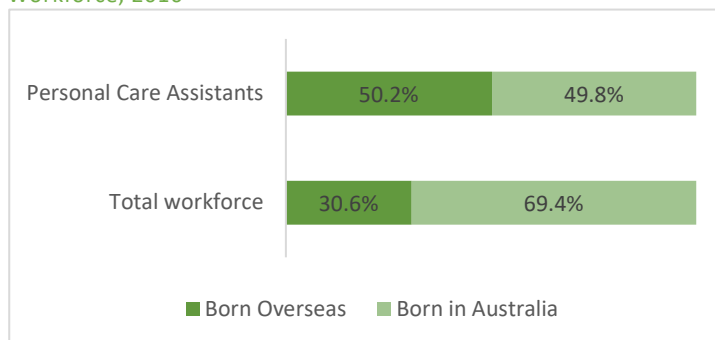


Figure 2: Location of Birth, Personal Care Assistants and Total Workforce, 2016

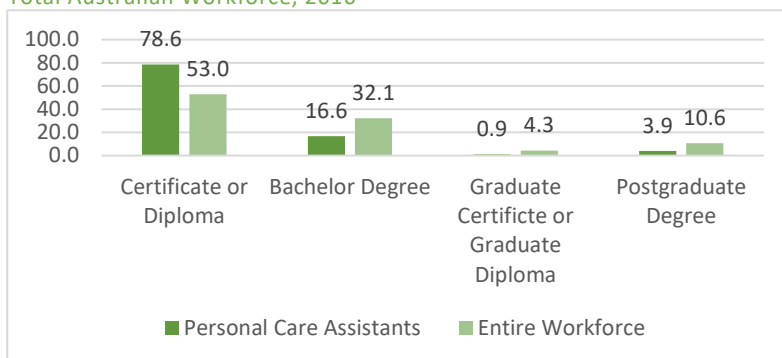


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### Education

Personal care assistants are more likely than other Australian workers to hold a certificate or diploma, but are less likely to hold a bachelor degree, graduate certificate or diploma, or postgraduate degree (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Post-School Qualifications of Personal Care Assistants vs the Total Australian Workforce, 2016

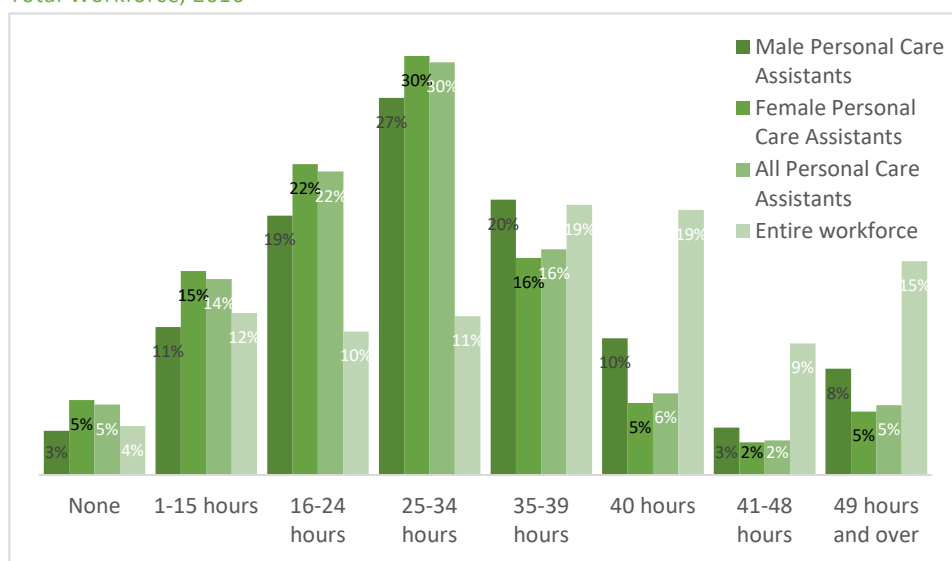


### Employment and Income Characteristics

#### Part-Time Work

Two thirds of personal care assistants work part-time (68.9%); almost double that of the total workforce (34.5%). More female personal care assistants (70.8%) are part-time than males (58.1%). Personal care assistants are most likely to be working between 25-34 hours a week.

Figure 4: Hours Worked in All Jobs during Previous Week, Personal Care Assistants and Total Workforce, 2016



#### Working Hours

Figure 4 shows hours worked by male and female personal care assistants relative to the total workforce. A slightly higher proportion of personal care assistants work very short part-time weekly hours (1-15 hours) compared to the total workforce (14% vs 12%). Female personal care assistants are more likely than male personal care assistants to work very short part-time hours (15% vs 11%). Personal care assistants are also much more likely to work short part-time hours (16-24 hours) than is the case for the total workforce (22% vs 10%).

#### Income

Personal care assistants report a lower median income than the total workforce (Figure 5), with a median income of \$650-799 per week (\$33,800-\$41,599 annually) compared to a median income of \$1,000-\$1,249 per week (\$52,000-\$64,000 annually) for the total workforce. Both male and female personal care assistants report similar incomes, with both groups reporting a median income of \$650-\$799 per week (\$33,800-\$41,599 annually).

Figure 5: Weekly Income, Personal Care Assistants and Total Workforce, 2016

