



WORKING IN AGED CARE



The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is the overarching identity for the Australian Government's Pacific labour mobility programs.

Through the PALM scheme, job seekers from 9 Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste can work in the Australian aged care sector for a minimum period of one year and up to 4 years.

Aged care in Australia

Aged care services in Australia provide support to older people to help them with everyday living and other needs. This includes in-home care (care at home), residential care (in aged care homes), and short-term care such as respite care.

Through the PALM scheme, workers may be placed in residential aged care facilities, known as aged care homes, or multi-purpose centres.

Types of facilities

Aged care homes provide different levels of care depending on the needs of residents. This can range from independent living and basic care, through to intermediate and high levels of care, such as caring for residents with dementia or during end of life care.

In addition to medical care, aged care homes provide social, physical and spiritual activities for residents. Personal care workers are an integral part of this and for workers, that could mean participating in art, dance, singing, church services, cooking and gardening.

Aged care facilities are located all over Australia and can vary in size, looking after as few as 10 or as many as several hundred residents.



AGED CARE

Aged care facilities in Australia aim to create a home and community environment that nurtures the mental and physical wellbeing of their residents. They provide a comfortable, happy and secure environment so residents can continue to live in their own communities, without having to move to a new town or the city.

Roles in aged care

There are a range of low-skilled and semi-skilled roles available in aged care, including:

Personal care worker

Personal care assistant (PCA)

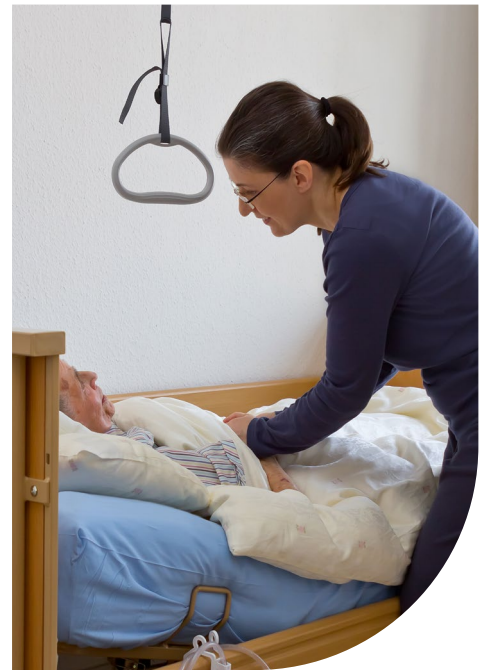
Assistant in nursing (AIN)

Service jobs including kitchen hands, cooks, laundry workers, maintenance and grounds keeping workers

Worker responsibilities

Worker responsibilities may include some or all of the below, depending on the role:

- assist residents with showering, toileting, dressing and other personal care and hygiene needs
- provide companionship and conversation
- domestic duties such as preparing food and cleaning
- comply with workplace health, safety and hygiene standards
- ensure the residents' spaces are clean and free of hazards
- use computers to document and report on residents' care needs
- help residents get to appointments and stay socially engaged, for example taking them to shops or outings
- help residents with techniques to maintain their independence
- liaise with residents' families and other health professionals in their healthcare team
- provide culturally appropriate care.



Personal skills and attributes

Working in aged care is about more than just physical job responsibilities. It is important to care for residents' mental and emotional wellbeing through providing compassionate and respectful care and companionship.

Workers should have the following personal qualities:

- empathy and understanding of people who are aged, have medical conditions, dementia or challenging behaviours
- respect for the resident's environment and their other carers including family and significant others
- a positive attitude to work, a willingness to learn and commit to the employer's values.



Qualifications and skills

Personal care workers: Certificate III in Individual Support/Aged Care and a good standard of English language and communication skills

Kitchen, hospitality roles may require Certificate II, III, IV in hospitality related courses

Australian Department of Health's COVID-19 infection control (or willing to obtain)

Current first aid certificate and cardiopulmonary resuscitation certificate or willingness to obtain these

Kitchen and cleaning staff should have a working level of English language skills

CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS



Wages

All PALM scheme workers have the same rights and protections as Australian workers. There are in-built systems to protect the welfare and wellbeing of PALM scheme workers.

Workers are employed under Australian legislation, this may be under a modern award or an enterprise agreement. Both of these outline minimum payments that must be made to all workers. This will be detailed in a worker's offer of employment.

Costs to work in Australia – deductions

The employer will pay most upfront costs for a worker, such as airfares, visa, pre-employment costs (e.g., vaccinations) and cash advances. These costs will need to be repaid to the employer through deductions from a worker's pay over a minimum of 12 weeks.

After these initial costs have been repaid, there will be some ongoing expenses that the employer will deduct from every pay for each worker. These may differ across

Australia, between employers and perhaps even among members of the same team, depending on the situation. Examples of ongoing deductions are: accommodation, health insurance, transport and household bills.



Working hours

Aged care facilities operate 24 hours, 7 days a week, so worker shifts may include day or night shifts.

Workers will work a minimum 30 hours per week, and generally, shifts will be up to 8 hours per day. For some roles such as kitchen work, 'split' shifts may be required, e.g., 4 hours in the morning and 4 hours in the afternoon or evening.



Leave & entitlements

Paid annual leave

Full-time workers: 4 weeks per year (20 working days).

Part-time workers: 4 weeks per year (adjusted to part-time hours per week).

Casual workers: none.

Paid sick leave

Full-time and part-time workers: 10 days per year.

Casual workers: none.



Accommodation

The employer will find suitable accommodation. This may include share housing, on-site accommodation or other housing near the facility.

Workers will pay rent for their accommodation as a pay deduction each pay period. Alternatively, workers can find their own rental accommodation.



Aged care locations

Workers may be located in a remote or regional part of Australia. This may be a small town far from a major city, with low population levels and only basic community services.

Depending on the location the weather may be very hot or very cold. Some examples of towns PALM scheme workers are living in are shown below.



▲ Bundanoon, located in the Southern Highlands of NSW, has a population of approximately 3000 people. In winter the weather can drop to an overnight low of 2°C, while summer can reach 32°C.



▲ Alice Springs in central Australia has a population of approximately 27,000 people. It is located 1200km from the nearest sea and 1500km from the nearest city. In the wet season the temperature can reach 40°C, while in the dry season it can drop to zero at night.

Where can I find more information?

To find out more about the PALM scheme, please visit the website: www.palmscheme.gov.au

You can find contact details for each country's labour sending unit at: www.palmscheme.gov.au/how-apply