

# Aged Care Expansion program

The Aged Care Expansion (ACE) program provides Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers the opportunity to gain their Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) alongside experience working in Australia's aged care sector. It also helps Australian aged care homes in rural and regional Australia address their workforce shortages.

## Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing)

The Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) consists of 15 units of competency and 120 hours of supervised work placement.

The 2018 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended the certificate as an employment requirement for aged care personal assistants in Australia.

Participating PALM scheme employers collaborate with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to create a comprehensive training program that supports the learning, working, and welfare needs of PALM scheme workers throughout their qualification period.

The program aims to demonstrate scalable approaches to certificate-level training that work well for PALM scheme employers, PALM scheme participating countries, and PALM scheme workers employed as aged care personal assistants.

There are currently 3 training arrangements used to deliver the program:

1. **In-Australia arrangement:** following induction (usually 2 weeks in length), the PALM scheme worker moves straight into work and study at the host placement location in Australia.
2. **In-country arrangement:** the entire qualification (including the supervised work placement) is delivered in the PALM scheme participating country.
3. **blended arrangement:** this arrangement involves a combination of in-country and in-Australia training.

## Development of the ACE program

Australia's ageing population has increased the demand for aged care workers. The PALM scheme provides an opportunity to help meet Australia's growing workforce needs in the aged care sector while also offering skills development opportunities to PALM scheme workers that will strengthen local labour markets and economies when they return home. It also increases opportunities for women in the PALM scheme.

The ACE program is built on aged care pilots conducted in 2021 and 2022 that trained approximately 100 Samoan and Fijian PALM scheme workers. A [summary of insights from the evaluations of these pilots](#) is available on the PALM scheme website.

The pilots demonstrated that there was interest from PALM scheme participating countries to participate in future aged care programs. PALM scheme employers provided positive feedback about the carers, noting their good integration into Australian workplaces and suitability for their role while residents appreciated the carers' gentle and caring manner.

Overall, the pilots had a 90 per cent completion rate, an excellent result compared to the national completion rate of 47 per cent for training package qualifications (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, statistical report, 30 August 2022).