

August 29, 2016

REPORT FINDS AGED CARE CRISIS LOOMING IN REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

VERTO and the Western Research Institute (WRI) today released a research report investigating the aged care sector and the projected skills needs for this industry in New South Wales (NSW).

The report, *NSW Aged Care Hot Spots Snapshot Report - August 2016*, was released to coincide with 2016 National Skills Week.

Significantly, it highlights that future aged care sector skills shortages are likely to be experienced most acutely in regional NSW.

As part of the analysis, the 2031 projected over 65 population data was compared with information relating to the number of individuals employed in aged care related jobs as at the last Census.

The report found that the top five local government area hotspots with the highest ratio of aged population to carers in the future are likely to be (in order of highest to lowest) Conargo, Palerang, Wollondilly, Snowy River and Murray.

It is estimated that each aged care worker in these areas will be expected to support upwards of 50 patients, with Conargo disproportionately projected to have a ratio of over 400 patients per worker.

Importantly, whilst metropolitan local government areas will account for 40 per cent of aged care hot spots, shorter distances and greater labour mobility will mean that the impacts are likely to be less acute.

VERTO chief executive, Ron Maxwell, said the report emphasised the importance of governments continuing to heavily invest in funding for training specifically for the aged care sector.

“These findings would be unsurprising to many people given a number of previously released reports have highlighted the unprecedented workforce shortage being faced in the Australian aged care sector.

“It is concerning to see that regional communities may be further disadvantaged and governments should be aware of this looming crisis when making major policy decisions.

“The release of today’s report is a timely reminder of the importance of vocational education and training in terms of supporting future labour market needs, particularly in the aged care industry.

“VERTO is proud to offer a range of aged care qualifications right across NSW, and we will continue to do so in order to support the economic viability and social wellbeing of all communities in regional and metropolitan NSW,” Mr Maxwell said.

WRI General Manager, Wendy Mason, said it was concerning that the future aged care population in regional NSW is likely to face a lack of adequate service provision, including transport and worker support.

“Aged care sector stakeholders need to identify and address now the challenges that these hot spot regions will face in the future,” Ms Mason said.

“If this process is managed correctly, the rewards will be appropriate care for our aged populations, a viable industry and reliable jobs for our regional communities.

“We believe our WRI research can assist to identify major societal issues such as this earlier, which will support the creation of sound, evidence based policy making,” Ms Mason concluded.

** ENDS**

ABOUT VERTO

VERTO is a community owned, not-for-profit organisation delivering a range of community support, employment and training services to assist individuals, employers and industries in communities across New South Wales. VERTO was named the 2015 NSW and Australian Large Training Provider of the Year. We can be found in 26 locations across the State. For more information, visit verto.org.au.

ABOUT WESTERN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Western Research Institute (WRI) is a not-for-profit think-tank based in regional Australia which conducts social and economic research to support better decision-making and stronger investment in sustainable regional development. WRI provides social and economic research consultancy services to support sound infrastructure investments, successful grant applications, business case development, cost-benefit analysis, economic impact analysis and program evaluations.