



SECTOR
PROFILE

Aged Care and Disability Support



HumanAbility





Industry sector overview

Aged Care and Disability Support enhance the quality of life for older people and people with disabilities. Care and Support Staff, Nurses, and Allied Health workers form the core workforce in this sector, providing direct care in a range of settings: in the community, private homes, supported living environments, and aged care facilities.

Their roles encompass a wide range of services, from essential personal support to specialised clinical care, aimed at improving participation, health, welfare, comfort, and quality of life. They assist with daily activities, deliver medical treatments, implement rehabilitation programs, and provide emotional support. Their collective efforts are crucial in promoting independence, ensuring safety, and enhancing the overall well-being of older people and people with disabilities.

The top three occupations groups (based on ANZSCO codes) are:

- Registered Nurse (Aged Care ANZSCO 254412, Developmental Disability 254416, Disability Rehabilitation 254417)
- Health and Welfare Support Workers:
 - Enrolled Nurse (ANZSCO 411411)
 - Community Care Worker (ANZSCO 411711),
- Carers and Aides:
 - Nursing Support Worker (ANZSCO 423312),
 - Aged or Disabled Carer (ANZSCO 423111)
 - Personal Care Assistant (ANZSCO 423313),
 - Personal Care Worker (ANZSCO 423111)
 - Therapy Aide (ANZSCO 423314).

“The main data gap is that the ABS doesn’t collect any data on the actual Disability Workforce (aged and disability care is far too broad)”.



SECTOR DEMOGRAPHICS⁽⁷⁾

1,019,000

people engaged in aged care and disability support sector



80%
are female

42 years
average age

3%
are First Nations

55%
are part-time

33%
Bachelors Degree or above

Residential Care Services

10 year projected workforce growth⁽²⁾

30.9%



While they represent a smaller portion of the Aged and Disability sector, other essential occupations include: Welfare Support Workers, Health and Welfare Services Managers, Indigenous Health Workers, Social Workers, and Welfare, Recreation, and Community Arts Workers. These professionals play a crucial role in delivering, planning, organising, and coordinating care and support services.

Supply, Demand and Gap insights

Across the HumanAbility sectors, it is projected that an additional 20.9%⁽²⁾ increase in the workforce in the ten years to May 2033 will be needed to meet future demands driven by growth in an ageing and increasingly diverse population, a transition from informal to formal care, and increased citizens' expectations of government. This projection includes the aged care and disability sectors, which are particularly significant. Given the strong drivers of demand in these areas the actual workforce needs may potentially exceed this estimate.

Drivers of demand in Aged Care

Increasing Demand



As the population continues to age, there has been an almost **300% increase** in home care supports, and the number of people entering residential aged care^{(4) (58)}

Population Ageing

16.3%⁽⁵⁹⁾ of the population is over 65. Projections indicate an increase to

21–23%

by 2066⁽⁶⁰⁾. Some states are already nearing these proportions, with **Tasmania at 20.4%** and **South Australia at 19.6%** according to the last census⁽⁶⁾

“In short, burnout. Beneath that, there are a whole lot of factors. High turnover rates caused by workers' stress. Workers exit, which then puts more pressure on workers that are left”.

Access to Care Programs (2022)

818,000

people accessed the Commonwealth-funded Home Support Program

216,000

people used Home Care Packages

188,000

people were in residential aged care⁽⁶⁰⁾

Age Distribution in Aged Care

59%

of people in aged care are over the age of 85⁽⁶⁰⁾



Low retention of staff



“Retention is a major issue. Of course, we need to increase supply, but there is no point pouring more people without fixing the holes in the system. Because it's like a sieve”.

Drivers of demand in Disability Support

610,500

NDIS participants in 2023

43%

under 14 years of age⁽⁶¹⁾

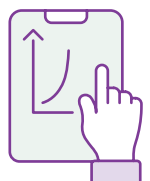
40%

of people with a disability (1.7 million) need assistance from a formal provider⁽⁶¹⁾



“The need for training is significant, and there is a need for consistent training. NDIS quality and safeguards will require staff to be trained in the right way”.

The number of people with a disability requiring NDIS support is **expected to continue to increase**, further driving demand for support services⁽⁴⁰⁾



Decrease in availability of informal care⁽⁶²⁾



“Port Pirie is 60% above national average of people requiring daily care and twice as many people on Disability Support Pension than in Port Augusta”.

We need to “debunk myths that the only career pathway is a Registered Nurse” and make people “aware of the possibilities”.



Current workforce initiatives

This is an evolving and non-exhaustive list of key government-led workforce strategies or initiatives that will inform or be informed by HumanAbility in some way. For overarching or cross-cutting list of key government-led workforce strategies, see the HumanAbility Workforce Plan.

Initiative	Key areas	Challenges
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability	<p>The Government has committed to progressing Royal Commission recommendations relating to workforce and training, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 10.8: A national disability support worker registration scheme. The Australian Government should establish a national disability support worker registration scheme by 1 July 2028. (see more on this further down). • Recommendation 6.25: Expand the scope of health workforce capability development to include all forms of cognitive disability at all stages of education and training. • Recommendation 6.26: Expand the role of the Health Ministers Meeting to monitor health workforce capability development. • Recommendation 10.8: A national disability support worker registration scheme • Recommendation 10.9: The Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award. <p>The Australian Government has released its initial response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, accepting 13 of the 222 recommendations (the Australian Government has primary or shared responsibility for 172) in full and 117 in principle. Considering this response, HumanAbility is committed to integrating the training and workforce issues identified by the Royal Commission into our core operations. We will focus on developing qualifications to enhance the skills of disability support workers and collaborate with industry and government related to the establishment of a workforce registration scheme along with supporting workforce growth to meet the increasing demand for services.</p>	
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031	<p>HumanAbility is focused on integrating the key priorities of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 into our core work. Training programs developed will consider the education and training needs along with the skills of educators and support staff to effectively deliver inclusive education.</p>	



Labour force shortages



Skills gaps



Training and qualification issues



Limited career pathways






Lack of diversity and inclusion



Data deficiencies



Policy and regulatory settings

Initiative	Key areas	Challenges
<p>Closing the gap – Disability sector strengthening plan</p> <p><i>Sector strengthening plan – Action updates 2023 annual report – Disability</i></p>	<p>HumanAbility will collaborate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector in implementing the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan, which supports Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.</p> <p>As the Jobs and Skills Council for the disability sector, HumanAbility is committed to partnering with community-controlled organisations on initiatives within the plan’s Workforce stream. This stream includes key sub-actions focused on growing and supporting the First Nations disability workforce, such as mapping workforce strengths, challenges and gaps; developing attractive and accessible pathways; and strengthening culturally safe and inclusive capabilities.</p> <p>HumanAbility will work with these organisations to develop training packages that foster the growth, training, and retention of a skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability workforce, while also addressing workforce challenges through initiatives like improved career pathways and increased employment security.</p>	 
<p>NDIS Review – Working together to deliver the NDIS</p>	<p>Recommendation 15: Attract, retain and train a workforce that is responsive to participant needs and delivers quality supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 15.1: The Australian Government should design and trial workforce attraction and retention initiatives • Action 15.2: The Australian Government should develop targeted and flexible migration pathways for care and support workers • Action 15.3: The Australian Government should develop an integrated approach to workforce development for the care and support sector <p>Recommendation 17: Develop and deliver a risk-proportionate model for the visibility and regulation of all providers and workers, and strengthen the regulatory response to long-standing and emerging quality and safeguards issues.</p> <p>The NDIS Review – Working together to deliver the NDIS, emphasises the need to attract, retain, and train a skilled workforce that meets the diverse needs of NDIS participants, highlighting initiatives such as targeted workforce attraction programs, flexible migration pathways for care workers, and an integrated approach to workforce development.</p> <p>HumanAbility is committed to aligning our training and workforce development programs with these objectives to help build a responsive and sustainable NDIS workforce capable of delivering high-quality supports.</p>	



Labour force shortages



Skills gaps



Training and qualification issues



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Data deficiencies



Policy and regulatory settings

Initiative	Key areas	Challenges
<p>NDIS Review: Building a More Responsive and Supportive Workforce</p>	<p>The NDIS Review: Building a More Responsive and Supportive Workforce has identified key recommendations to strengthen the disability support workforce.</p> <p>Recommendation 1 emphasises the need to design and trial workforce attraction and retention initiatives, addressing the critical challenge of building a stable and skilled workforce.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 calls for an integrated approach to workforce development across the care and support sector, recognising the importance of coordinated efforts to enhance workforce capabilities.</p> <p>HumanAbility acknowledges the significance of these recommendations and is committed to implementing training and workforce development programs that support the growth of a more responsive and sustainable NDIS workforce.</p>	    
<p>NDIS Provider and Registration Taskforce Advice</p>	<p>The NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce’s recommendations include the development of a Provider Risk Framework, which may have significant implications for workforce training needs, particularly in areas identified as higher risk.</p> <p>Recommendation 10 specifically calls for the establishment of a Worker Registration Scheme for all workers, including a public register, professional development requirements, and a worker training and qualifications framework.</p> <p>The Taskforce explicitly identifies training providers as key stakeholders to be engaged in the development of this framework, which will underpin the new registration scheme.</p> <p>The Taskforce’s proposed arrangements for platform providers and situations where participants directly employ workers could lead to new or modified training requirements for these specific segments of the NDIS workforce. HumanAbility will closely monitor these developments to ensure our training programs remain aligned with and support evolving regulatory standards and workforce needs.</p>	



Labour force shortages



Skills gaps



Training and qualification issues



Limited career pathways







Lack of diversity and inclusion



Data deficiencies



Policy and regulatory settings

Initiative	Key areas	Challenges
<p>Aged Care Royal Commission</p>	<p>Recommendation 51: Employment and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care</p> <p>Recommendation 75: Aged care workforce planning</p> <p>Recommendation 76: Aged Care Workforce Industry Council Limited</p> <p>Recommendation 77: National registration scheme</p> <p>Recommendation 78: Mandatory minimum qualification for personal care workers</p> <p>Recommendation 79: Review of certificate-based courses for aged care</p> <p>Recommendation 80: Dementia and palliative care training for workers</p> <p>Recommendation 81: Ongoing professional development of the aged care workforce.</p> <p>HumanAbility recognises the importance of the Aged Care Royal Commission’s recommendations focusing on workforce development and training.</p> <p>HumanAbility is committed to developing and delivering specialised training programs that address the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care workers, support the implementation of a national registration scheme, and enhance the skills of personal care workers in areas such as dementia and palliative care.</p> <p>Our ongoing training and workforce initiatives will align with and support the implementation of these recommendations to contribute to building a more skilled, diverse, and culturally competent aged care workforce, supporting the broader goals of improving care quality and outcomes for older Australians.</p>	    
<p>Aged Care Act</p>	<p>The new Aged Care Act will be instructive for the delivery of aged care services with implications for the skilling and upskilling of care workers. HumanAbility is committed to adapting our training package development to align with the Act’s requirements. Focus may need to be on developing specialised training that addresses the needs of a skilled workforce, particularly in areas such as dementia and palliative care, while ensuring qualifications meet the new requirements.</p>	 



Labour force shortages



Skills gaps



Training and qualification issues



Limited career pathways



Lack of diversity and inclusion



Data deficiencies



Policy and regulatory settings

Initiative	Key areas	Challenges
Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) Workforce Initiatives	<p>HumanAbility is committed to engaging with the Department of Health and Aged Care’s (DoHAC) workforce initiatives to address critical needs in the aged care sector. We are committed to aligning training and workforce development programs with key initiatives, including the Regional, Rural and Remote Home Care Workforce Support Program, Aged Care Transition to Practice Program, Aged Care Clinical Placements Nursing Program and the Aged Care Skills Development Program.</p>	
The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards – Final draft (November 2023)	<p>The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, outlined in the final draft released in November 2023, emphasise the necessity for the workforce to receive regular competency-based training in cultural safety to support the diverse cultural needs of older individuals.</p> <p>HumanAbility is committed to developing qualifications that enhance cultural competence among aged care workers, ensuring they are equipped to provide respectful and culturally appropriate care.</p>	

	Labour force shortages		Skills gaps		Training and qualification issues		Limited career pathways
	Lack of diversity and inclusion		Data deficiencies		Policy and regulatory settings		



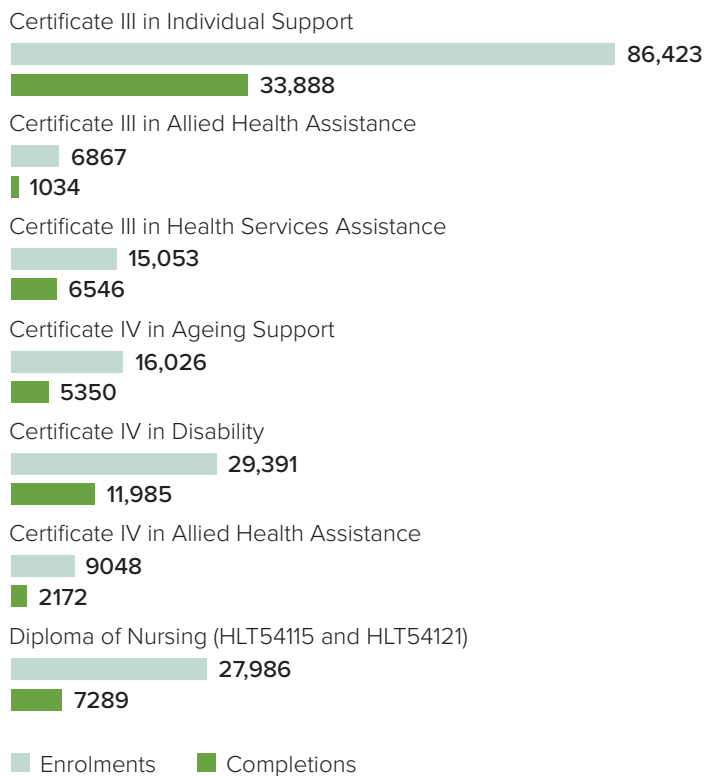
Enrolments and completions

Since 2015, the Aged Care and Disability Support sector has experienced consistent growth in both enrolments and completions, reflecting the increasing demand for skilled professionals. While completions have risen alongside enrolments, they still represent only a fraction of the total enrolments, indicating a need for strategies to boost graduation rates and meet the sector’s demands.

Between 2021 and 2022 enrolments remained relatively stable (declining approximately 0.4%), and completions have continued to rise (+10.7%).

Demographic trends show that a higher number of women are enrolling and completing across the sector. The 30–39 age group represents the largest share of enrolments and completions. However, the sector has room for growth in terms of supporting First Nations learners and students with disabilities, who are underrepresented in both enrolments and completions.

Enrolments and completions by qualification



Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.

Need “NDIS psychosocial disability workers gaining a relevant skill set such as Course In Mental Health Recovery Work to ensure people are trained to deliver the service on day one”.

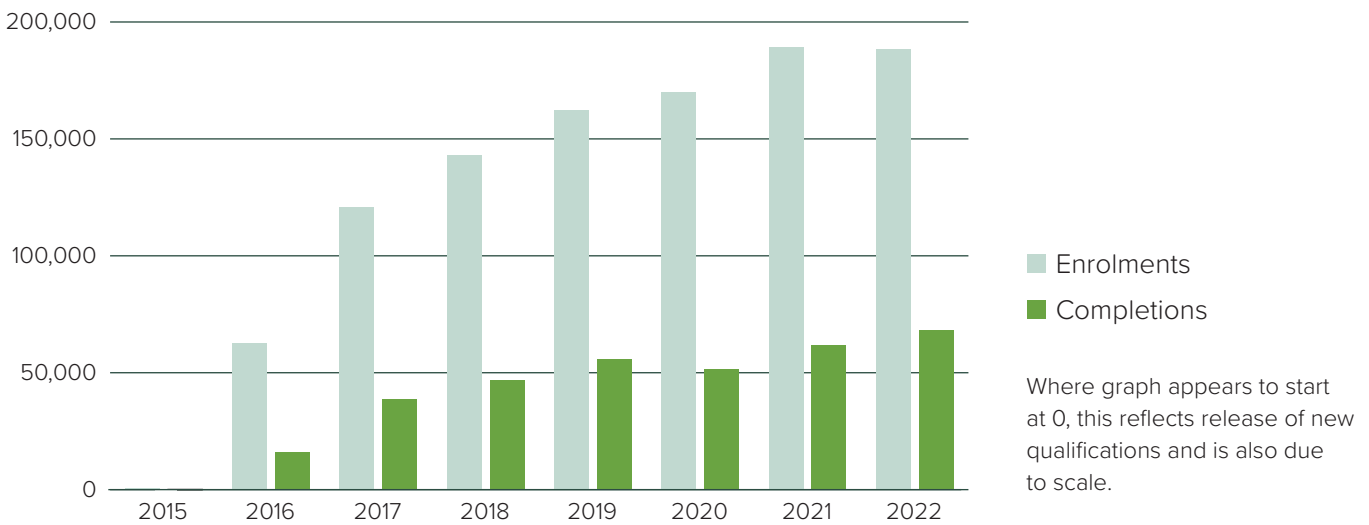
“People need to understand the role before they start.”

“If they last 1 year they are likely to stay.”



Since 2015, enrolments in aged care and disability qualifications have seen an upward trend, starting with just 531 enrolments and rising sharply to 188,571 in 2022. Completions have followed a similar growth pattern, increasing from 66 in 2015 to 68,264 in 2022. **Despite this rise, the gap between enrolments and completions has persisted, highlighting the need to continue improving completion rates to meet the growing demand for qualified professionals in these sectors.**

Total enrolments and completions for aged care and disability qualifications^{(9) (10)}



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enrolments	531	62,623	120,920	143,005	162,161	169,897	189,376	188,571
Completions	66	16,030	38,615	47,009	55,820	51,325	61,624	68,264

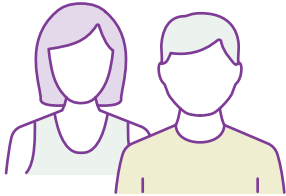
Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.

“Relevant short courses and micro credentials. Intensive short training would be helpful.”

“Hire the person and train the skills.”

Gender⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾

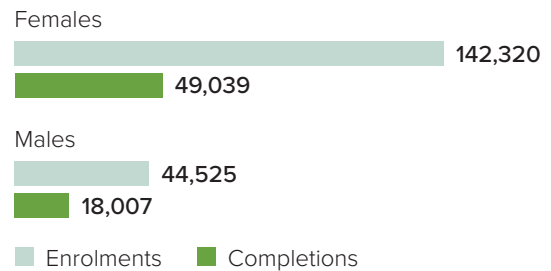
Females accounted for **75.5%** of enrolments and **71.8%** of completions



Males represented **23.6%** of enrolments and **26.4%** of completions

People who identified as 'Other' made up **0.1%** of completions

Enrolments and completions by gender



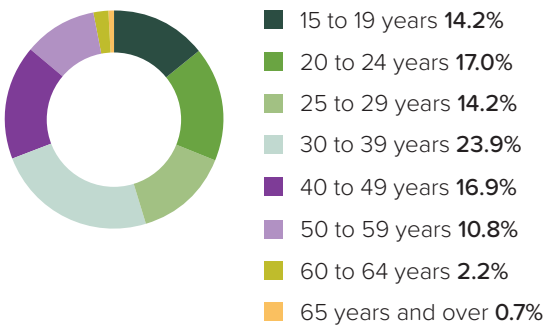
* Other: 115 Enrolments; 37 Completions
Not known: 1610 Enrolments; 1202 Completions

Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.

The gender distribution in aged care and disability qualifications shows a female majority. This gender imbalance underscores a potential need for strategies to encourage greater male participation and diversity in these fields.

Age⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾

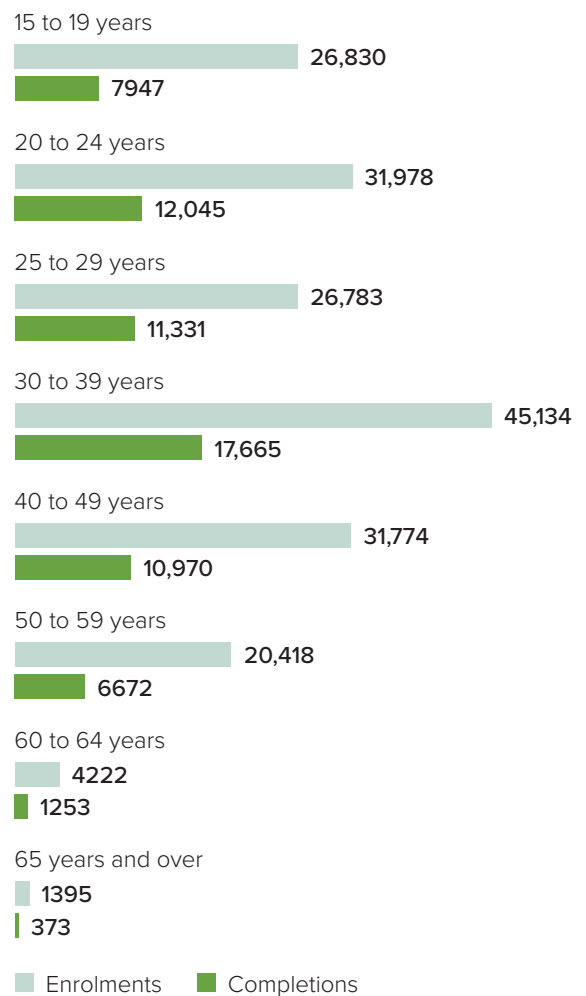
% of overall enrolments by age



The **30 to 39 years** age group accounted for the largest proportion of enrolments, with **23.9%**, and the highest percentage of completions at **25.9%**.

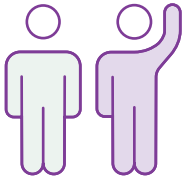
The figures for the **30 to 39 years** age group are higher than the overall VET program trend, where enrolments are more evenly distributed across younger age groups (**20%** for enrolments and completions for this group).

Enrolments and completions by age



Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.

First Nations students⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners represented **3.9%** of enrolments and **2.2%** of completions

Non-Indigenous learners accounted for **84.7%** of enrolments and **76.7%** of completions

Not known status comprised **11.4%** of enrolments and **21.1%** of completions

Compared to overall VET program data, where **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** learners typically represent a slightly higher proportion of enrolments (**5.0%**), the aged care and disability sector has a smaller share of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. This may indicate a need for targeted support and strategies to improve participation and completion rates for this group. The gap between enrolments and completions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners suggests that barriers may affect their ability to complete these qualifications.

Students with disability⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾



Learners with a disability made up **6.4%** of enrolments and **4.4%** of completions in the Aged Care and Disability Support sector*

* 3009 students

What is working?
“Community based support program [in Tasmania] that focuses on training people with a disability to work in the industry”.

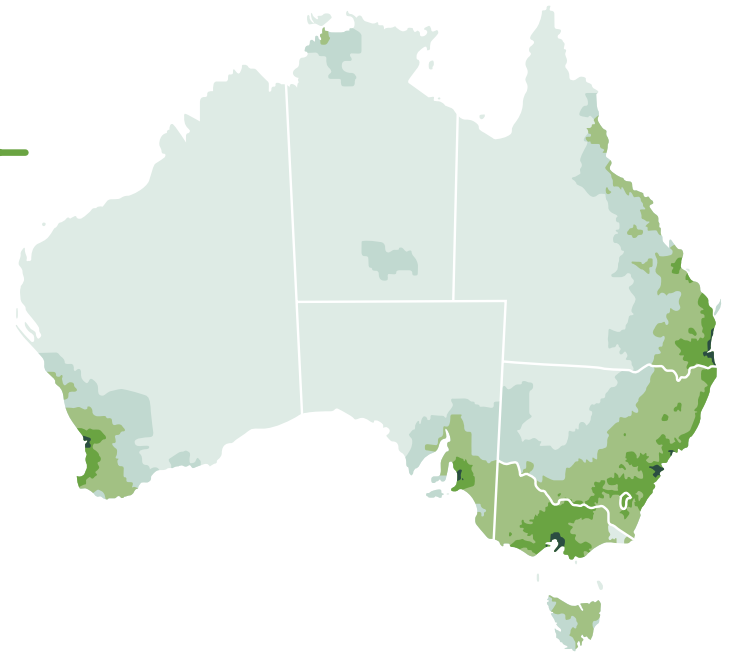
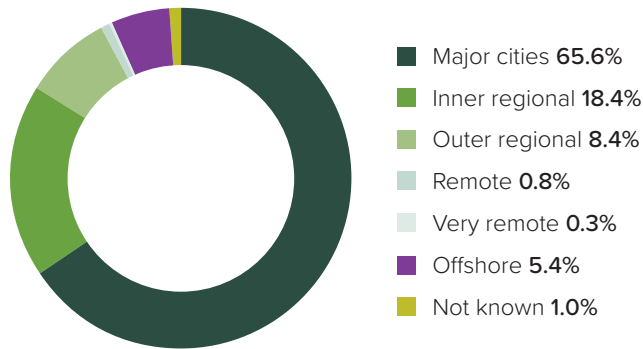
The aged care and disability sector reflects comparable trends for enrolments and completions of learners with disabilities to overall VET trends. Still, there may be room for improvement in supporting these learners to achieve higher completion rates.

Geographic location⁽⁹⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾

Remoteness

Remoteness Index of Australia

% of overall enrolments by remoteness



Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.



Major cities had the highest enrolments (65.6%) and completions (71%).

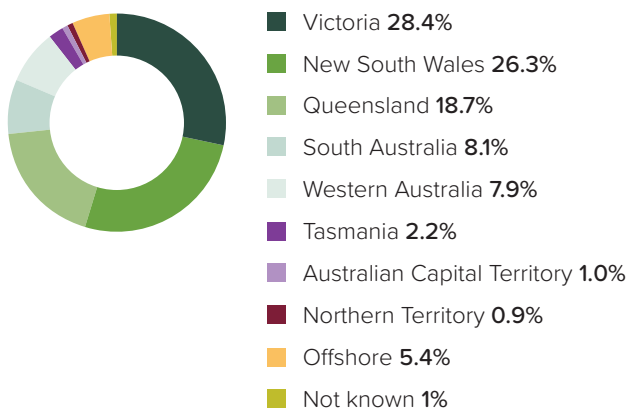
Students in **Very remote** and **Remote** areas comprise approximately 1% of **overall enrolments and completions.**



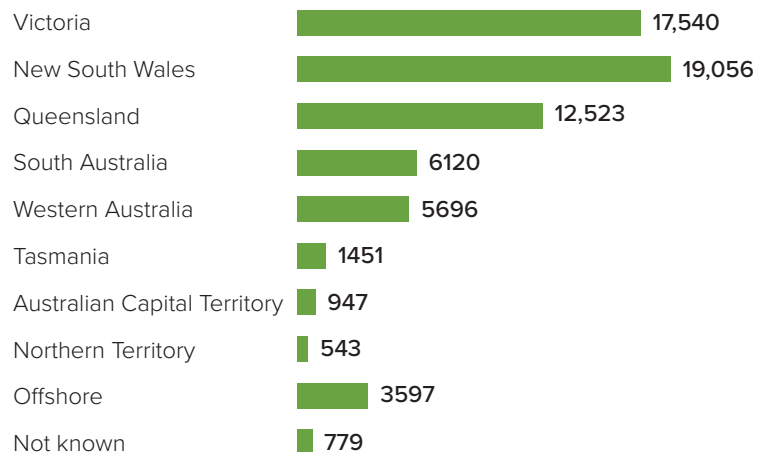
Compared to overall VET program data, major cities have a larger share of participation and remote and very remote areas have fewer in aged care and disability enrolments and completions.

State/territory

% of overall enrolments by state/territory



Number of completion of qualifications by state/territory



Victoria and New South Wales led enrolments and completions in aged care and disability qualifications.

Victoria accounted for **28.4%** of enrolments and **25.7%** of completions, while **New South Wales** followed closely with **26.3%** of enrolments but had the highest completion rate at **27.9%**.

Source: Total VET Students and Courses 2022 program enrolments and completions.

“We need huge numbers of people, more than we have ever needed. Partly because the number of people needing care is going up, partly because the staffing ratio is going up.”



Actions



Consultation and review of the implementation of the 2021 Certificate III in Individual Support and Certificate IV in Disability. Including:

- Considering any further updates required.
- Developing learning and assessment resources for RTOs.
- Professional development for RTO teachers and trainers.
- Increasing access to training.



Career pathway analysis for care and support sector. Including:

- Articulate job role and career pathways.
 - Identification of new approaches to workforce development and training matched with opportunities for career progression.
 - Increased alignment of career progression opportunities across aged, disability and veterans' care.
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Note: For all references in this sector profile, please refer to the HumanAbility 2024 Workforce Plan.

HumanAbility

ABN 36 665 836 608

Suite 4, 109 Union Road, Surrey Hills VIC 3127 | 1800 486 262

humanability.com.au



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