

THE VOICE of Pensioners and Superannuants online

13 October 2021

Aged care staffing crisis is not taken seriously



THERE is something very weird about the *CompliSpace Aged Care Workforce Report*. The pictures in this report are of nursing home residents who look happy and relaxed and of nursing home staff who look happy and relaxed.

Yet the subtitle is, *A Perfect Storm: What's Driving Australia's Aged Care Staffing Crisis*.

This report harks back to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which found that 57 per cent of residents live in homes that have “unacceptable” levels of staffing and therefore unacceptable quality of care. Australia needs at least 41,000 more direct-care workers right now just to achieve acceptable levels of staffing, the report says.

To reach best-practice, a 49 per cent increase in staffing is needed. That's at least 101,000 more workers.

However, this report reveals that the industry is about to go backwards, rather than forwards. An impending crisis of staff turn-over is emerging with 180,000 workers planning to leave the industry in the next five years. This includes 110,000 workers planning to leave the industry in the next three years and 47,000 within the next twelve months.

The report notes that residential aged care workers continue to receive lower pay than comparable workers in other industries.

What's been the Australian Government's response so far to these findings?

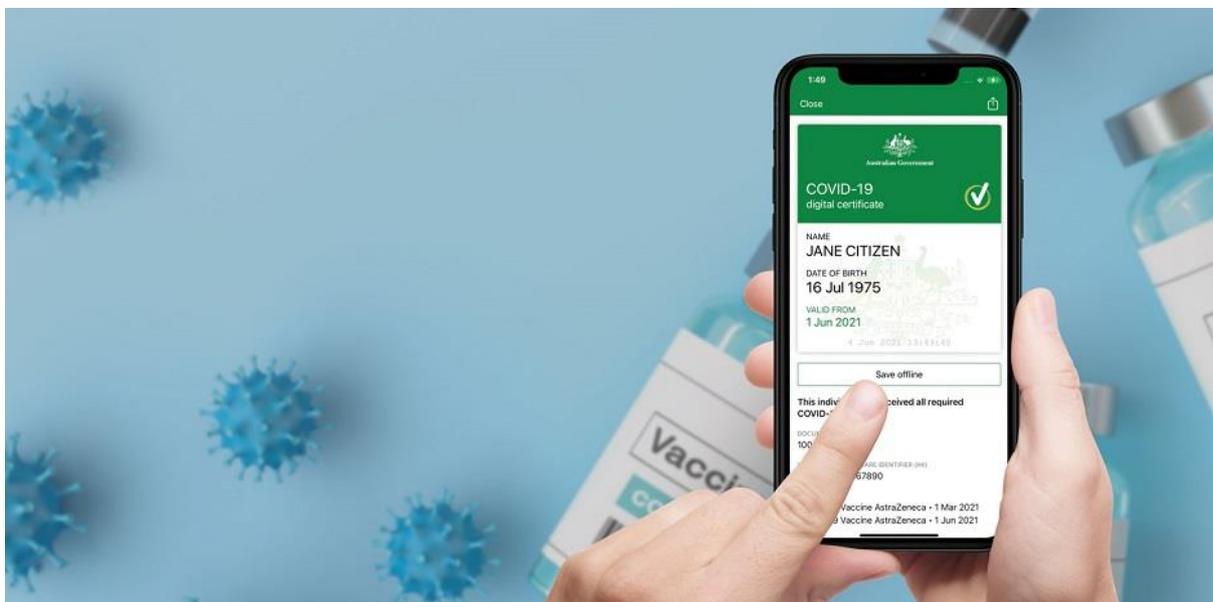
It is going to spend \$135.6 million to reward nurses who take on additional training. Full-time registered nurses can receive a payment of \$3,700 for each year and part-time and casual registered nurses can receive payment on a pro-rata basis, averaging \$2,700 each year.

In other words, to get a few thousand dollars extra for two years, registered nurses will have to (1) stay where they are and (2) work harder than they already do.

What a plan!

Other than that, the Government has accepted recommendation 75 of the Royal Commission to establish an Aged Care Workforce Planning Division in the Department of Health by 1 January 2022.

How to prove your COVID-19 vaccination status



With NSW lockdown restrictions officially eased on Monday 11 October it's important to know how you can show your vaccination status to enter reopened businesses.

According to [NSW](#) and [Australian](#) Government websites there are two ways to show proof of your vaccinations. These are either through the use of an immunisation history statement or by showing a COVID-19 digital certificate.

An immunisation history statement appears on a sheet of paper, with your name, date of birth, and a list of all the vaccinations you have received, so long as they are recorded with the Australian Immunisation Register.

These statements have existed for some time before COVID-19 as they were used for childcare and school enrolment and for employment at certain workplaces.

This is the only way of proving your vaccination status without using a smartphone, computer, or any other digital device.

Your vaccination provider can print your statement for you, or you can call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 from Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm. Please note the Australian Immunisation Register is experiencing longer than usual phone wait times and statements can take up to 14 days to arrive in the post.

The other way to show proof of vaccination is through the [COVID-19 digital certificate](#). Once you have had both doses of a COVID-19 vaccination an email or text will be sent to your myGov inbox to notify the arrival of your certificate. This certificate can be added to smartphone 'wallets'. Click [here](#) for detailed instructions on how to do so. If you share a phone with someone it is possible to add multiple certificates to the one smartphone 'wallet'.

The digital certificate can also be printed out and presented to businesses in paper form.

The Service NSW app, that is used to scan QR codes to check into businesses, will also be updated soon to display your vaccination status when you check in to a non-essential business. This will mean people will only have to use one app to check in and prove vaccination status.

If you have a medical reason for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, reopened businesses must accept either an NSW Health medical contraindication form completed by a registered medical practitioner, or a medical clearance notice issued by NSW Health.

You must see your doctor to enquire as to how to obtain these forms.

Although it is disappointing that there are not many practical offline methods of proving vaccination status, at the time of writing, the NSW Government has said that restrictions should ease by 1 December, and this may mean that some businesses may not ask people to provide proof of vaccination.

Here's hoping that the paper forms of vaccination proof last until December.

Digital Divide: are you being left to your own devices?



IT'S called the digital divide and even if you are reading this article online, it's possible, even likely, that you are affected by it.

The digital divide was a term coined at the time personal computers became mainstream. There were those who could operate a computer and there were those who couldn't. That was the digital divide.

The digital divide is no longer that simple because every TV is now digital and every home phone is now digital courtesy of the NBN.

Many have moved on from a home phone to a mobile phone.

You may not have every digital device available (a mobile phone, a desktop computer, a laptop, an iPad or a smart TV), but you more than likely have one or two.

So, slowly but surely everyone is crossing the digital divide, like it or not.

The problem is that the digital divide is not stationary. It's moving.

As we saw with the COVID-19 tracking app, certain types of mobile phones have very quickly become obsolete. If you don't have the latest one, you can have a hard time even getting into a supermarket.

Hands up anyone who still records TV-programs! You don't need a video recorder anymore, but you do need a smart TV.

It's hard to keep up.

And it's hard to keep up for everyone, not just for those who are older but also for younger people.

There are three problems with the digital divide.

Obviously, learning how to operate the various gadgets – I beg your pardon, devices – can be frustrating. But take heart, even the young get frustrated sometimes.

Another is the cost of keeping up with the digital divide.

With some mobile phones now retailing for well over \$1,000 (some closer to \$2,000 than \$1,000), a full rate pensioner wouldn't stand a chance of keeping up, but there are cheaper alternatives. However, a national grocery retailer is offering mobile plans that cost far less.

The other problem is acceptance of digital innovations.

Whereas affordability is a real obstacle, learning and acceptance are a matter people can think about.

At the same time, the digitalisation of everything does not relieve businesses and Governments of the obligation to make sure that everyone can take part in society through alternative arrangements.