

Health care and social assistance

...covers hospitals, medical, pathology and allied health services, aged and other residential care, child care and some forms of social assistance services such as community health centres.

This suite of Industry Snapshots complements *Future Focus*, the 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy. These snapshots provide additional information and analysis on each industry to assist stakeholders in planning for the future of their industry or sector. It should be noted that the longer term data contained in this publication is based on AWP's four scenarios for Australia to 2025 and is not intended to be compared to other data sources or projections.

Key points

- ▶ Health care and social assistance is Australia's largest employing industry, with 1.4 million workers accounting for around 12 per cent of the total Australian workforce.
- ▶ Nearly two-fifths of the industry workforce is employed within large-sized enterprises (i.e. those that employ 200 workers or more), with 26 per cent in medium-sized enterprises (i.e. those that employ between 20 and 199 workers) and 34 per cent in small-sized enterprises (i.e. those that employ less than 20 workers).¹
- ▶ 37 per cent of workers in the industry are employed in regional and remote areas, which is the same as the all-industry average.²
- ▶ The health care and social assistance industry has a large proportion of older workers, with nearly half of its workforce aged 45 years or older.
- ▶ The workforce is around 79 per cent female.
- ▶ 43 per cent of workers are employed part-time compared with 30 per cent for all industries.
- ▶ Health care and social assistance has one of the most highly educated workforces among Australian industries, with more than three-quarters (77 per cent) of workers holding a post-school qualification compared to 61 per cent for the Australian workforce as a whole.
- ▶ A detailed employment profile for health care and social assistance (including information on its workforce, industry and occupational characteristics) can be found at www.skillsinfo.gov.au.

Industry outlook

Health care and social assistance is an important industry within the Australian economy, particularly given Australia's ageing population and increasing demand for health services, aged care and disability support. In terms of industry value added, health care and social assistance contributed 6.3 per cent (\$87.1b) to the national economy in 2011–12.³

¹ Business size data refers only to private enterprises and excludes employment in the public sector.

² Regional and remote areas are defined as those outside state capital cities.

³ 'Industry value added' is the measure of the contribution by industry to gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices. ABS (2012) *Australian System of National Accounts*, cat. no. 5204.0, Table 11.

Short-term growth

Over the last five years, employment growth in health care and social assistance has been more than three times that of the workforce as a whole. The Medical and Other Health Care Services and Residential Care Services workforces have increased by nearly half during this period, while employment in Social Assistance Services has grown by more than a quarter. The Hospitals subsector has also experienced recent growth, at 2.7 per cent over the past five years. However this has been below the growth rate for all industries, at 7.4 per cent.

Table 1 Current and past employment in health care and social assistance

Industry	Current employment		Past growth: five years	
	'000	% of total	'000	%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1388.5	12.0	280.8	25.4
Hospitals	364.2	3.2	9.6	2.7
Medical and Other Health Care Services	451.0	4.0	131.8	41.3
Residential Care Services	224.4	2.0	72.6	47.9
Social Assistance Services	353.0	3.1	76.2	27.5
All industries	11,588.7	100.0	798.1	7.4

Note: Data for industry subsectors may not sum to the industry total because data for each subsector have been separately seasonally adjusted and trended and at the higher levels include 'not further defined' categories. Source: ABS (2013) *Labour Force Australia*, February, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003 (DEEWR trend).

Long-term growth

Australia needs to position itself in a world where work is changing rapidly. Technological innovation, globalisation, the Asian century and new patterns of work are impacting on the demand for skills and the speed of change is making it hard to predict and plan for the future.

To deal with this uncertainty, AWPA has adopted a scenario planning approach to help us overcome these limitations in making projections about the future. Scenarios are alternative visions of potential futures, and provide a means to make decisions that take account of uncertainty.

AWPA developed four possible, plausible scenarios for Australia to 2025.

- ▶ In the **Long Boom** scenario, the high demand for resources traded with China and other countries continues. Industries challenged by the high terms of trade undertake structural adjustment. This results in a scenario of sustained prosperity and a restructured economy.
- ▶ In **Smart Recovery**, the challenges facing Europe and the United States affect financial markets. This means low growth for Australia to 2014–15. Growth then improves and Australia benefits from industry and government strategies to implement a knowledge economy.
- ▶ In **Terms of Trade Shock**, resource prices fall mainly due to increased supply from other countries, the Australian dollar falls and we move to a broader-based economy.
- ▶ **Ring of Fire** is a risky world with multiple economic and environmental shocks resulting in ongoing lower growth.

Economic modelling against each of these four scenarios was undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics (DAE) to determine the skills demand for the economy into the future.⁴

Deloitte Access Economics' modelling to 2025 shows that the health care and social assistance industry is expected to grow relatively rapidly whichever of the four scenarios eventuates. Average employment growth per annum is expected to be higher than the Australian average in the years to 2018 and 2025 across all scenarios.

The modelling also finds that Medical and Other Health Care Services will grow at more than double the average for all industries in the three high growth scenarios, and more than triple the average under the Ring of Fire scenario.

Table 2 Average annual industry employment growth in four scenarios, 2011–18 and 2011–25 (% per annum)

Industry	Long Boom		Smart Recovery		Terms of Trade Shock		Ring of Fire	
	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025
Health Care and Social Assistance	3.6	3.5	2.9	2.9	4.2	3.4	2.3	1.7
Hospitals	2.4	2.4	1.7	1.9	3.0	2.3	1.1	0.6
Medical and Other Health Care Services	5.1	4.6	4.4	4.0	5.7	4.5	3.7	2.8
Residential Care Services	3.0	3.0	2.3	2.5	3.6	2.9	1.6	1.2
Social Assistance Services	3.7	3.6	3.0	3.0	4.3	3.5	2.3	1.8
All industries	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	0.8	0.7

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2012) *Economic modelling of skills demand and supply*, Scenario output—detailed employment results.

Occupation outlook

Key occupations

The top ten health care and social assistance occupations account for just over half of employment in the industry as a whole, with Registered Nurses the largest occupation with 221,300 workers. Care workers such as Aged and Disabled Carers; Child Carers; and Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers are also large occupations, together making up around 20 per cent of the health care and social assistance workforce.

⁴ A description of the scenarios and the Deloitte Access Economics modeling of employment in each, with state and territory breakdowns, is available at the AWPA website www.awpa.gov.au.

Table 3 Top ten health care and social assistance occupations

Occupation	People employed	Industry employment
	'000	% of total
2544 Registered Nurses	221.3	16.3
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	108.2	8.0
4211 Child Carers	86.1	6.3
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	86.0	6.3
5421 Receptionists	81.1	6.0
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	49.2	3.6
4117 Welfare Support Workers	33.3	2.4
8513 Kitchenhands	25.6	1.9
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	25.5	1.9
5311 General Clerks	23.5	1.7
Total rental, hiring and real estate	1360.5	54.4

Source: ABS (2013) *Labour Force Australia*, detailed quarterly report, 2012 average of four quarters, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003.

Short-term growth

Table 4 shows current employment and past growth for the occupations that feature prominently within the industry. **Note that the figures refer to the expected number of people in these occupations across all industries, not just in health care and social assistance.**

Key occupations in the health care and social assistance industry have grown strongly over the last five years, with almost all of the top ten occupations reporting growth above the national average. Employment of Aged and Disabled Carers has been particularly strong, with growth over the last five years almost nine times that of the average for all occupations. Only two key occupations, Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses and Receptionists, have experienced a decline in employment over the past five years.

Table 4 Current and past employment in key occupations

Occupation	Current employment (all industries)		Past growth: five years	
	'000	% of total	'000	%
2544 Registered Nurses	227.7	2.0	47.2	26.1
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	139.0	1.2	55.2	65.8
4211 Child Carers	123.6	1.1	18.8	17.9
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	88.4	0.8	10.4	13.3
5421 Receptionists	176.4	1.6	-3.1	-1.7
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	52.6	0.5	11.7	28.8
4117 Welfare Support Workers	56.2	0.5	7.5	15.5
8513 Kitchenhands	122.9	1.1	20.9	20.4
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	23.1	0.2	-3.8	-14.0
5311 General Clerks	204.1	1.8	70.0	52.2
All employed	11,588.7	100.0	798.1	7.4

Source: ABS (2013) *Labour Force Australia*, February, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003 (DEEWR trend).

Long-term growth and job openings

Table 5 indicates the long-term net job growth per annum expected in these occupation groups, according to Deloitte Access Economics' economic modelling of the scenarios.

In the longer term, many health care and social assistance occupations show above-average growth regardless of which scenario unfolds. Welfare Support Workers will grow at more than double the general growth rate in all four future worlds. Generalist Medical Practitioners; Child Carers, Aged and Disabled Carers; Registered Nurses; Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers; and General Clerks and are also forecast to have strong growth in the years to 2025.

Table 5 Average annual occupation growth in four scenarios, 2011–18 and 2011–25 (%pa)

Industry	Long Boom		Smart Recovery		Terms of Trade Shock		Ring of Fire	
	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025
2544 Registered Nurses	3.5	3.1	2.7	2.6	3.8	3.0	1.9	1.4
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.3	4.4	3.8	2.6	2.2
4211 Child Carers	4.0	3.9	3.4	3.4	4.7	3.8	2.7	2.2
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.6	3.6	3.0	1.9	1.5
5421 Receptionists	2.0	1.8	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.5	0.7	0.4
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	4.7	3.9	4.0	3.4	5.0	3.8	3.3	2.3
4117 Welfare Support Workers	5.0	4.1	4.4	3.7	5.5	4.1	3.7	2.6
8513 Kitchenhands	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.6	0.8	0.6
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	-0.5	0.8	-1.1	0.3	0.0	0.7	-1.7	-0.9
5311 General Clerks	4.0	3.1	3.2	2.6	3.5	2.6	2.3	1.6
All occupations	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	0.8	0.7

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2012) *Economic modelling of skills demand and supply*, Scenario output—detailed employment results.

As noted, the data in Table 5 concerns employment growth in an industry. The number of total **job openings** which includes both employment growth and **the replacement resulting from individuals leaving the occupation net of those re-entering** can also be estimated. This replacement requirement is particularly significant in industries where there are high numbers of people retiring or leaving the occupation.

Table 6 shows the average annual job openings per annum projected in key health care and social assistance occupations to 2025.

The health care and social assistance industry is forecast to have strong growth in job openings across all four scenarios. Kitchenhands and Welfare Support Workers are expected to have the highest proportion of job openings to 2025 under the Long Boom, at 7.9 per cent and 5.6 per cent per annum, respectively. In terms of actual job numbers, Registered Nurses are forecast to have between 10,800 and 12,700 job openings each year to 2025 under the three higher growth scenarios: the largest amount for any occupation.

Table 6 Average annual job openings per annum, 2011 to 2025, in four scenarios

Occupation	Long Boom		Smart Recovery		Terms of Trade Shock		Ring of Fire	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
2544 Registered Nurses	12.7	4.9	10.8	4.3	12.3	4.7	7.5	3.1
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	7.3	5.1	6.4	4.6	7.2	5.1	4.6	3.5
4211 Child Carers	7.5	5.5	6.6	5.0	7.4	5.4	4.7	3.8
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	5.5	4.7	4.8	4.2	5.4	4.7	3.6	3.1
5421 Receptionists	9.3	4.8	8.1	4.3	8.7	4.5	6.2	3.4
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	3.2	5.0	2.8	4.5	3.1	4.9	2.1	3.4
4117 Welfare Support Workers	3.4	5.6	3.0	5.1	3.3	5.5	2.2	4.0
8513 Kitchenhands	11.7	7.9	10.9	7.5	11.6	7.8	9.6	6.7
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	1.8	4.2	1.6	3.7	1.8	4.1	1.2	2.5
5311 General Clerks	10.6	4.7	9.2	4.2	9.4	4.2	6.7	3.2
All occupations	576.4	4.4	500.9	3.9	513.3	4.0	391.4	3.1

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2012) *Economic modelling of skills demand and supply*, Scenario output—detailed employment results. Net replacement demand by AWP (2013).

As Table 7 shows, the vast majority of job openings in this sector are expected to be driven by new growth rather than net replacement in the three higher growth scenarios. The exceptions are Receptionists, Kitchenhands and Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses. This may reflect the age profile of these occupations or other workforce dynamics such as the rate of job turnover.

Table 7 Total job openings (growth and net replacement) in four scenarios, 2011 to 2025

7.1 Long Boom

Occupation	Total growth (persons)		Net replacement estimates (persons)		Total job openings (persons)	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
2544 Registered Nurses	118.1	62.0	72.4	38.0	190.6	100.0
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	79.9	73.2	29.3	26.8	109.3	100.0
4211 Child Carers	76.3	68.1	35.7	31.9	112.0	100.0
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	54.7	66.7	27.3	33.3	82.0	100.0
5421 Receptionists	49.3	35.4	90.1	64.6	139.4	100.0
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	36.7	77.0	10.9	23.0	47.6	100.0
4117 Welfare Support Workers	36.2	71.6	14.3	28.4	50.5	100.0
8513 Kitchenhands	45.7	26.1	129.3	73.9	175.0	100.0
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	11.2	41.6	15.7	58.4	26.8	100.0
5311 General Clerks	102.0	64.1	57.1	35.9	159.0	100.0
All occupations	3,889.7	45.0	4,755.6	55.0	8,645.3	100.0

7.2 Smart Recovery

Occupation	Total growth (persons)		Net replacement estimates (persons)		Total job openings (persons)	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
2544 Registered Nurses	93.2	57.4	69.2	42.6	162.4	100.0
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	67.7	70.5	28.3	29.5	96.0	100.0
4211 Child Carers	64.6	65.3	34.4	34.7	99.0	100.0
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	46.1	63.6	26.3	36.4	72.5	100.0
5421 Receptionists	34.7	28.6	86.5	71.4	121.2	100.0
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	31.2	74.8	10.5	25.2	41.7	100.0
4117 Welfare Support Workers	31.3	69.3	13.8	30.7	45.1	100.0
8513 Kitchenhands	37.2	22.7	126.5	77.3	163.7	100.0
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	8.8	36.9	15.1	63.1	23.9	100.0
5311 General Clerks	83.0	60.4	54.3	39.6	137.3	100.0
All occupations	2,953.2	39.3	4,559.6	60.7	7,512.9	100.0

7.3 Terms of Trade Shock

Occupation	Total growth (persons)		Net replacement estimates (persons)		Total job openings (persons)	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
2544 Registered Nurses	111.0	60.4	72.8	39.6	183.8	100.0
4231 Aged and Disabled Carers	78.4	72.4	29.9	27.6	108.3	100.0
4211 Child Carers	75.0	67.3	36.4	32.7	111.5	100.0
4233 Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	53.6	65.8	27.8	34.2	81.3	100.0
5421 Receptionists	41.5	31.8	89.0	68.2	130.5	100.0
2531 Generalist Medical Practitioners	35.1	76.1	11.0	23.9	46.1	100.0
4117 Welfare Support Workers	35.4	70.9	14.5	29.1	49.9	100.0
8513 Kitchenhands	43.2	24.9	130.6	75.1	173.8	100.0
4114 Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	10.8	40.4	15.9	59.6	26.8	100.0
5311 General Clerks	85.4	60.7	55.2	39.3	140.7	100.0
All occupations	3,080.4	40.0	4,619.3	60.0	7,699.6	100.0

7.4 Ring of Fire

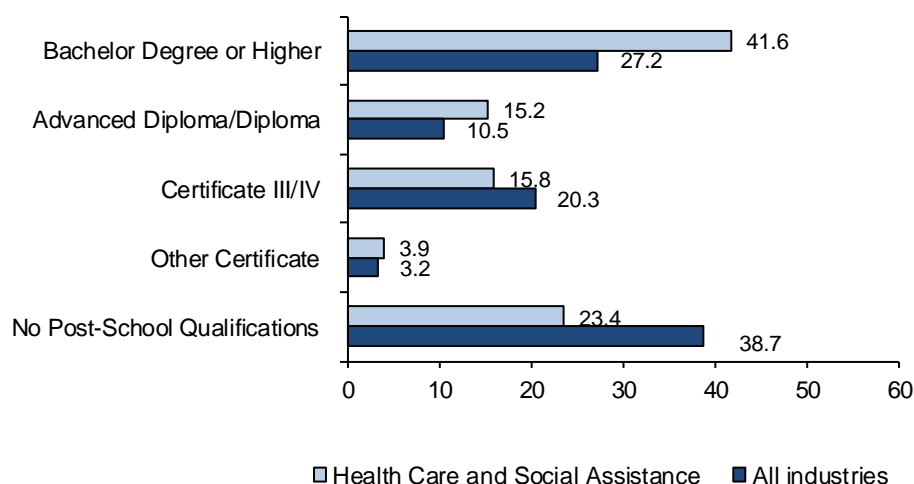
Occupation		Total growth (persons)		Net replacement estimates (persons)		Total job openings (persons)	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
2544	Registered Nurses	47.3	42.3	64.6	57.7	111.9	100.0
4231	Aged and Disabled Carers	42.0	61.3	26.5	38.7	68.4	100.0
4211	Child Carers	37.9	54.2	32.0	45.8	70.0	100.0
4233	Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	28.6	53.6	24.8	46.4	53.4	100.0
5421	Receptionists	10.4	11.2	81.9	88.8	92.3	100.0
2531	Generalist Medical Practitioners	21.0	68.1	9.8	31.9	30.8	100.0
4117	Welfare Support Workers	20.3	61.0	13.0	39.0	33.3	100.0
8513	Kitchenhands	22.9	15.9	121.3	84.1	144.2	100.0
4114	Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	4.3	23.4	14.2	76.6	18.5	100.0
5311	General Clerks	49.3	49.2	50.9	50.8	100.2	100.0
All occupations		1,532.9	26.1	4,338.5	73.9	5,871.4	100.0

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2012) *Economic modelling of skills demand and supply*, Scenario output—detailed employment results. Net replacement demand by AWPA (2013).

Education and training profile

The health care and social assistance industry is highly skilled, with many of the large employing occupations requiring tertiary qualifications. Two in five workers hold a Bachelor degree or higher qualification, with a further one-third hold Certificate III/IV or Diploma/Advanced Diploma qualifications.

Figure 1 Education profile of the health care and social assistance workforce (%)



Note: Excludes 'Level of education not stated' from total.

Source: DEEWR (2012) *Australian Jobs 2012* (ABS 2011 Census data).

Figure 2 illustrates how demand for qualifications is expected to change over time. It shows the current education profile for each respective occupation: across all industries and within the health care and social assistance industry. It also shows projected levels of educational attainment to 2025 by each occupation group depending on which of the four scenarios eventuates.

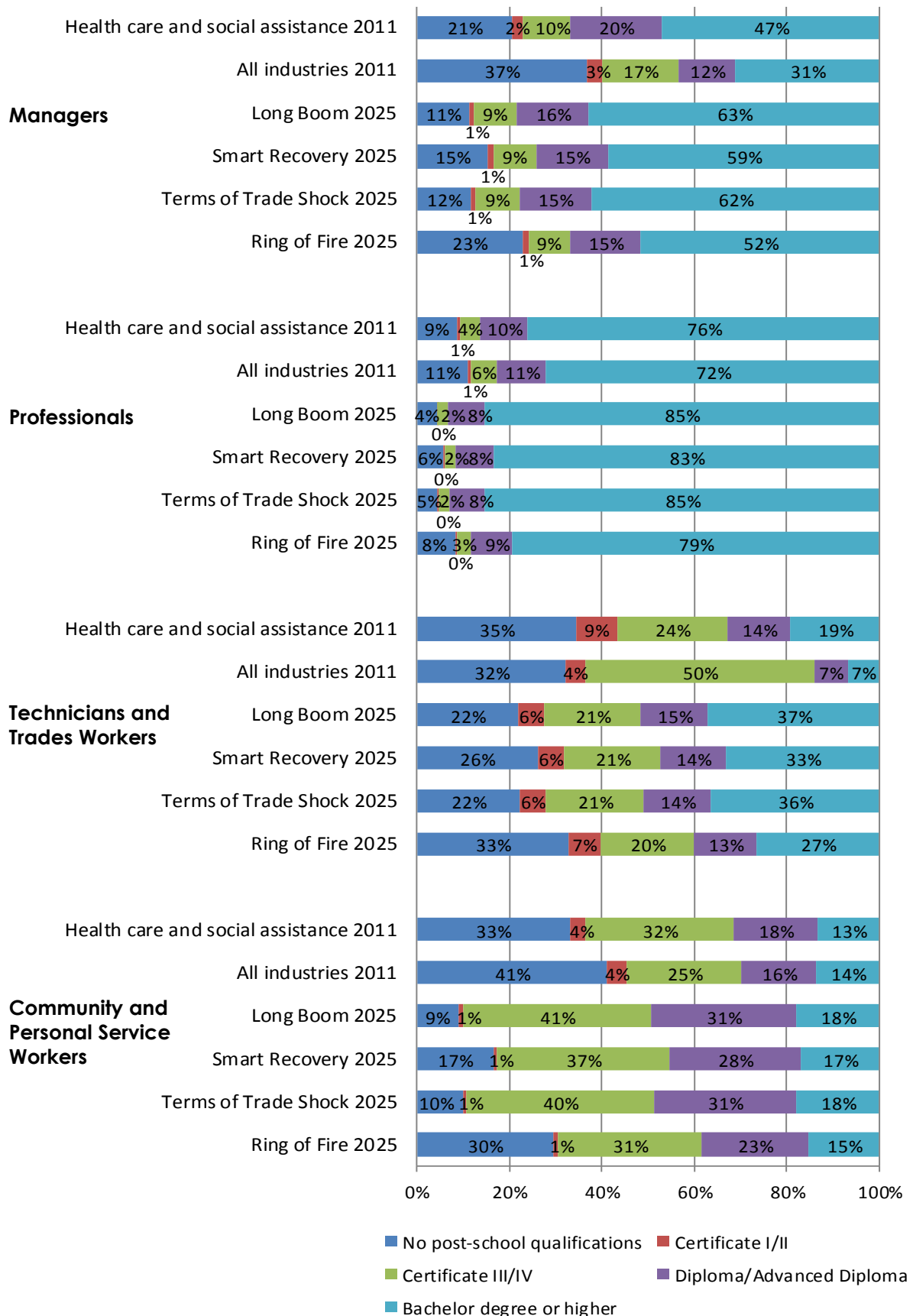
As Figure 2 shows, professions in the health care and social assistance industry overwhelmingly hold a Bachelor degree or higher, and this level of educational attainment is expected to increase in the years to 2025 irrespective of which scenario eventuates. In 2011, 76 per cent of professionals in the sector held a Bachelor degree or higher qualification. By 2025, this is expected to increase to between 83 and 85 per cent under the three highest growth scenarios, and to 79 per cent under Ring of Fire.

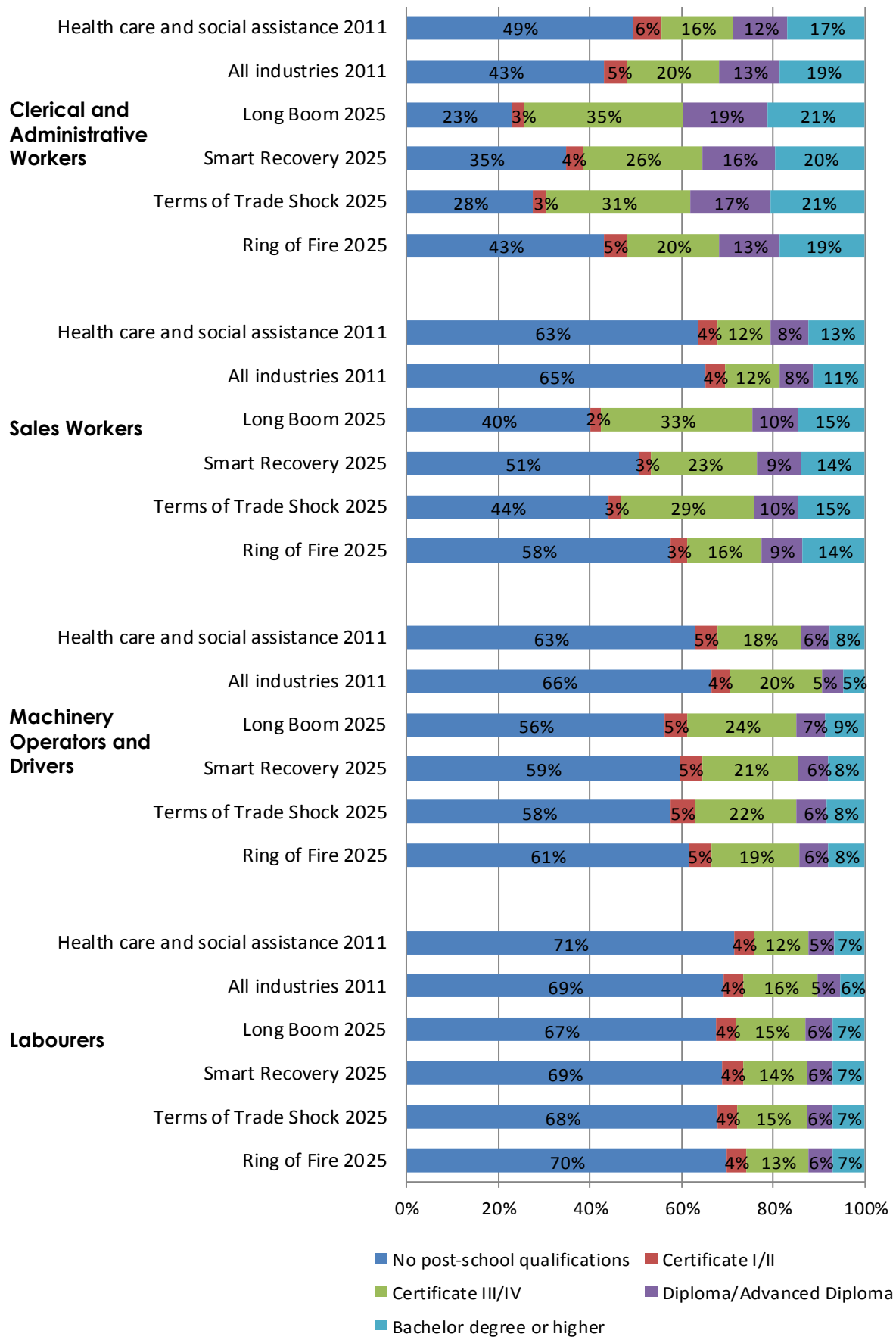
This pattern of upskilling is also true for managers. Currently, just under half of managers in health care and social assistance hold a Bachelor degree or higher, with a further 20 per cent holding a Diploma or Advanced Diploma. By 2025, around three-fifths are expected to hold a Bachelor degree or higher under the highest growth scenarios, while the proportion with no post-school qualification is forecast to halve under Long Boom.

This upskilling trend is also forecast for technicians and trades workers across all scenarios.

For community and personal service workers—the largest occupational group in the sector after professionals—the proportion of workers with no post-school qualifications is expected to decrease dramatically, with most of the growth in qualifications anticipated to be at the Certificate III/IV level.

Figure 2 Educational attainment in the health care and social assistance industry by occupation, 2011 and projections to 2025 (%)





Source: ABS (2012) *Survey of Education and Work 2012*, cat. no. 6227.0; and DAE (2012) Unpublished data.

Specialised occupations

In *Future Focus*, the 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy, AWPAs has proposed that national planning for skills and industry workforce development should focus on **specialised occupations**. Specialised occupations are defined as those 'where specialised skills, learned in formal education and training, are needed at entry level and where the impact of market failure is potentially significant for the economy and/or the community.'

Specialised occupations demonstrate these characteristics:

- ▶ long lead time—skills are highly specialised and require extended learning and preparation time over several years;
- ▶ high use—skills are deployed for the uses intended (i.e. good occupational 'fit');
- ▶ high risk—the disruption caused by the skills being in short supply is great, resulting either in bottlenecks in supply chains or imposing significant economic or community costs because an organisation cannot operate; and
- ▶ high information—the quality of information about the occupation is adequate to the task of assessing future demand and evaluating the first three criteria.

Monitoring skills supply, especially for specialised occupations, will remain a critical element in meeting our workforce needs.

A large number of specialised occupations are associated with the health care and social assistance industry, including:

Child Care Centre Managers	Specialist Physicians
Health and Welfare Services Managers	Psychiatrists
Dieticians	Surgeons
Medical Imaging Professionals	Other Medical Practitioners
Medical Physicists	Nurse Educators and Researchers
Medical Imaging Professionals	Nurse Managers
Optometrists and Orthoptists	Registered Nurses
Pharmacists	Midwives
Orthotists and Prosthetists	Psychologists
Chiropractors and Osteopaths	Social Workers
Dental Practitioners	Dental Hygienists, Technicians and Therapists
Occupational Therapists	Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses
Physiotherapists	Indigenous Health Workers
Podiatrists	Child Carers
Speech Professionals and Audiologists	Aged and Disabled Carers
Generalist Medical Practitioners	Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers
Anaesthetists	

More detailed information about specialised occupations is available in *Future Focus, 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy* at <http://www.awpa.gov.au>.

Example workforce development initiatives

Investment in workforce development has been shown to maximise people's capabilities, lift productivity and increase workforce participation. Employee satisfaction levels and engagement also increase when enterprises make better use of their employees' skills.⁵ Current workforce development initiatives in health care and social assistance include the following examples:

- ▶ Health Workforce Australia (HWA) is undertaking **Health Workforce 2025 (HW2025)**, which was first initiated by State and Territory health ministers, through the Standing Council on Health, to provide medium to long-term national workforce planning projections for doctors, nurses and midwives. HWA is continuing to build the evidence base on Australia's health workforce by expanding the HW2025 program to encompass different professions and sectors. See www.hwa.gov.au.
- ▶ The **Caring for Older People Program** aims to demonstrate and evaluate major shifts in the aged care workforce to improve the future supply and adaptability of the workforce for the care of older Australians. The project aims to enhance the capacity and capability of the workforce to improve older peoples' health service experience and outcomes. See www.hwa.gov.au/work-programs/workforce-innovation-and-reform/caring-for-older-people-program
- ▶ Queensland skill formation strategies in childcare, aged care, health and child protection bring together the major stakeholders to address the causes of skill shortages and other skilling challenges. A regional strategy in Northlakes and its surrounds, works across health care and social assistance providers to develop new service models and collective arrangements to develop the accompanying skills, see www.workforce.org.au.
- ▶ The **Dementia Training for Ambulance Workers Project** is part of the Department of Health and Ageing's Dementia Initiative aimed at making dementia a national health priority. The Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council has also undertaken a project that aims to upskill ambulance workers in managing crisis situations in the community that may involve people with dementia and their carers. For further information go to www.cshisc.com.au.
- ▶ The **National Disability Services (NDS)** project aims to promote and advance services which support people with all forms of disability through the provision of information, representation and policy advice. For further information go to www.nds.org.au.

⁵ Skills Australia (2012) *Better use of skills, better outcomes: A research report on skills utilisation in Australia*.