

# Aged care and disability apprenticeship pathways roundtable summary

## Proposals from paper supported by attendees

Concept	Detail	Discussed by
<b>Dedicated funding and incentives for aged care and disability services traineeships</b>	<p>Care and support sectors lack the margins to support the apprenticeship infrastructure, including added employer costs of supervision and coordination.</p> <p>Incentives need to be better aligned with part-time workforce realities and individualised funding.</p> <p>Incentives reform requires an incremental approach, funding traineeships outside NDIS and aged care pricing, funding systems.</p> <p>Policymakers should consider designating aged care and disability services under the 'key apprenticeship programs' to expand access to mentoring and trainee support.</p>	All three tables.
<b>A tailored supervision framework</b>	<p>A lack of supervision is a key barrier to care and support traineeships.</p> <p>Creating better guidelines, including supervisory frameworks to ensure trainees to complete mandatory minimum skills working independently, with ongoing supervisor support</p>	Combined and disability sector tables.

	(examples included NACCHO, BlueCare).	
<b>Upskilling supervisors</b>	Continued training programs are needed for supervisors as they come and go to support workforce capability building, and different modes of assessment.	Combined and disability sector tables.
<b>Hub and Spoke Workforce Educators</b>	<p>Some support for resourcing teachers, trainers and assessors (TTAs) to work across different employers to support supervision and assess trainees.</p> <p>Some found this could better support pace-based delivery, as many students prefer mixed training models (as opposed to fully online).</p> <p>Strong feedback that TAFEs and RTOs need to be adequately funded.</p>	Combined table only.
<b>Specific structures and models for rural, regional and remote.</b>	<p>Rural, regional and remote areas face distinct challenges and barriers.</p> <p>Specific incentives and funding for supervisors, mentors and assessors are needed for employers, trainers and trainees</p> <p>Well-funded programs that connect TTAs, locum nurse or allied health professional through a multi-purpose service) offer great potential to integrate traineeships to give learners different experience in regional areas.</p>	Aged care table only.

## Further proposals supported by attendees

Concept	Detail	Discussed by
<p><b>Expand GTO, brokerage models, expose students to different career pathways</b></p>	<p>There is neither “one model” of traineeships for the aged care and disability sectors, nor “one career pathway”: opportunities to grow the Allied Health Assistance and Aboriginal Health Workforce through traineeships are often overlooked.</p> <p>Opportunities should be explored to better connect learners to training, schools, incentives and placement, especially in regional and remote areas, and via GTOs.</p> <p>Group training organisations (GTOs) and schools can play a bigger role in developing traineeship pathways, including exposing learners to different career pathways (home, community care, allied health assistance).</p>	<p>All three tables.</p>
<p><b>Link traineeships to workforce strategy, retention, professionalisation</b></p>	<p>In addition to attracting new workers into care and support work – traineeships can be better utilised to retain and upskill existing workers.</p> <p>Other sectors (e.g. construction) have a “ticket” to work – no minimum workforce standard, which requires a paid learning pathway, exists in aged care or disability.</p>	<p>All three tables.</p>

	<p>Traineeships need to be clearly mapped to workforce objectives (e.g. recruitment, retention, quality, safeguards), support entry-level and upskilling pathways.</p> <p>This requires better data about the roles and skills gaps workers are trained into.</p>	
<b>Improve trainee wages</b>	<p>Aged care and disability support workers earn below average wages and are mostly women. Trainee wages are too low to incentivise people – especially mid-career workers – to take on a traineeship.</p>	
<b>Better incentives, time, careers for supervisors</b>	<p>Supervisors are often directed to supervise a trainee, additional to other responsibilities, which can cause supervisors to disengage.</p> <p>Supervisors need to be incentivised to upskill and employed in positions that are appropriately classified and fully funded (e.g. team leaders in disability sector).</p> <p>Existing industrial structures, Agreements and Awards provide classifications for supervisors and could be better utilised, to attract, retain skilled workers as engaged supervisors.</p>	Combined and disability sector tables.
<b>Improve cultural safety</b>	<p>Workplaces are the most commonly cited setting that racism occurs in towards First Nations students and workers.</p>	Combined, aged care tables.

	<p>Culturally safe workplaces prevent workforce attrition.</p> <p>Cultural frameworks are needed to support trainees in mainstream services, especially where there is a small number of Aboriginal workers with Indigenous-led partnerships.</p>	
<b>Protect learning time</b>	<p>Service providers operate under significant pressure and workforce shortages.</p> <p>Resources for a student's study time is often diverted towards operational needs and retaining existing staff. Learning and training time needs better protection.</p>	Combined, aged care tables.
<b>Hybrid placement, pre-apprenticeship models</b>	<p>Providing a period of "block" training for learners that moves to on-job, paid workforce application mid-way through the traineeship.</p> <p>Better formalizing and supporting training in "pre-work" units, e.g. WHS, ensures trainees can "try before they buy" and obtain foundational skills, but must operate as genuine pathway programs.</p>	Combined table only.
<b>Learning pathways need to be flexible, stackable, adapt to the workforce</b>	<p>Systems such as the NDIS are structured around choice and control, and have a largely mobile, casualised, sole trading workforce.</p> <p>Paid learning pathways need to be accessible for people working</p>	Disability sector table only.

	in another person's home, or do not have ongoing employment.	
<b>Greater consistency with states and territories</b>	Differences in funding and placement hours for courses across jurisdictions limits scaling out of traineeship programs, especially for national training and service providers.	Disability sector table only.

## Related issues to note

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Improvements to RPL – including widespread RPL assessors – can support access and completions in traineeships, and any transition to workforce registration.
- Qualification and regulatory settings: In absence of a minimum qualification for aged care or disability support work, the incentive to train is low. Inconsistencies in workforce screening remain a barrier to delivering traineeships.
- Changing demographics: There are different motivations between young entrants and mature workers. For qualified workers, the language of “trainees” can act as a disincentive. Multi-job workers also face challenges committing to structured learning.
- Career pathways: need to be more visible to incentivise learner uptake – including of supervisory and specialist roles.
- Industry responsibility and support: service providers need to be encouraged to grow their workforce and be ambassadors for good traineeship models to support uptake.
- Need to grow both workforces: There is considerable mobility between the aged care and disability support workforces. Strategies to grow traineeships must ensure growth in one workforce does not come at expense of the other.
- Systems navigation and coordination: There is fragmentation across employers, RTOs, trainees and funding systems. Employers struggle to navigate compliance, and there is a need for better coordinating functions across governments.