

Workforce Wizard report

Queensland edition, September 2017

Contents

Introduction	3
This report	4
The Queensland disability support workforce.....	4
Type of employment	4
Workforce turnover	6
Workforce growth.....	8
Working hours.....	10
Age and gender distribution	11
The Queensland allied health workforce	12
March 2017 spotlight topic: Difficulty in recruiting	12
Filling vacancies- disability support workers	12
Reason for unfilled vacancies	13
June 2017 spotlight topic: Workforce Absences.....	14
Direct support workers	14
Allied health professionals	15
Conclusion	15
Appendix	17
The sample	17
Methodology	19

Introduction

Australia's capacity to provide a quality workforce to meet the increasing workload that the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) demands is one of the significant challenges to the design of the scheme overall. In the 2011 Productivity Commission report 'Disability Support and Care', the foundation on which the NDIS was designed, the authors found no reliable estimate for the exact size of the disability support workforce. It is well known that the ABS labour force and workplace data commonly used in other industries to assess workforce trends are not available for the disability sector.

National Disability Services, with funding from the Department of Education and Training, sought to fill this evidence gap with the introduction of Workforce Wizard in late 2015. Workforce Wizard is an online tool aimed at human resource managers and executives within the disability sector, who enter their organisation's key workforce metrics on a quarterly basis. A key feature of Workforce Wizard is that it is short, aiding retention of users, and benchmark reports are automatically generated as both an incentive to users but also a guide to further educate the disability sector about workforce strategy.

Since launching in October 2015, Workforce Wizard has opened for data entry every quarter. Data entry is open for two weeks, after which the Workforce Wizard team clean the data. When finalised, benchmark reports are made available to each participating organisation.

Following the success of Workforce Wizard at the national level, appetite for more refined data at the state level has emerged. In July 2016, Workforce Wizard began to release benchmark disaggregated by state where there were sufficient users to constitute a reliable sample. As part of the WorkAbility Queensland strategy, a trial funded by Queensland State Government was conducted in the same period to collect data at a level approximate to the NDIA regions.

The results of the Queensland regional trial show a mixed picture. A strong take up of the regional option for direct support workforces suggests that there is an appetite for regionalised workforce information among providers. However, the user population did not generate sufficient numbers of workforce region-by-region to provide meaningful regional benchmarks. Methodological adjustments were made to ensure all Queensland users received regional benchmark charts. The original ten Queensland regions were merged into three broader regions in the benchmark charts. These are:

South East Queensland: Brisbane, Ipswich & surrounds, South Coast and North Coast.

Northern Queensland: Far North Queensland, North Queensland and Mackay & surrounds.

Central and South West Queensland: Wide Bay Burnett, South West Queensland and Central Queensland.

These three broader regions remain the category used in generating regional benchmark reports in Queensland by the time of this report.

This report

This is a Queensland state report which analyses the characteristics of Queensland disability workforce. It contains three main sections:

1. Key findings on the disability support workforce in Queensland, including information on the following workforce metrics:
 - type of employment
 - workforce turnover
 - working hours
 - age and gender profile.
2. Results of Workforce Wizard March 2017 spotlight topic on recruitment trends and recruitment difficulty.
3. Results of Workforce Wizard June 2017 spotlight topic on workforce absences.

The Queensland disability support workforce

Type of employment

Compared to the national average, Queensland has a higher proportion of casual workers (46 per cent) (see Figure 1). Casual employment is particularly common in regional Queensland, where nearly half of the workers are casually employed in Central and South-West Queensland (47 per cent) and more than half in Northern Queensland (52 per cent) (See Figure 2). Nationally in the June 2017 quarter only two-fifths of the workforce were casual (41 per cent).

Figure 1: Type of employment (as a percentage of all workers), June 2017 quarter, Australia and Queensland

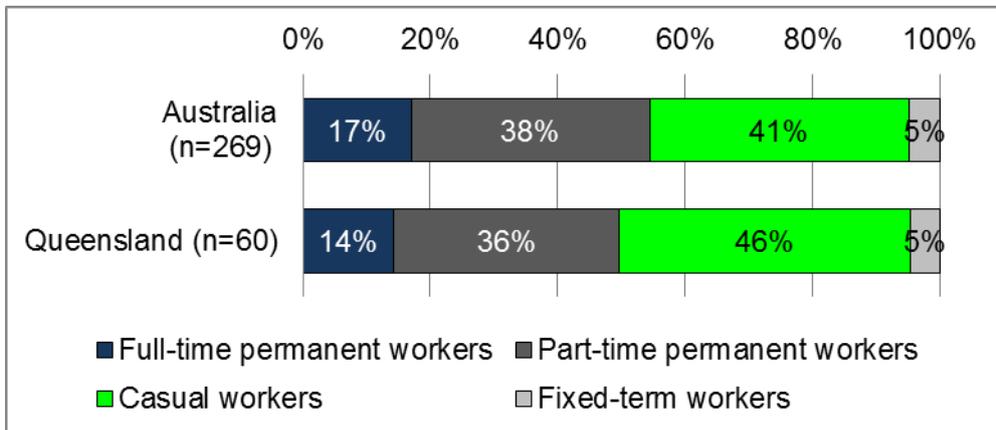
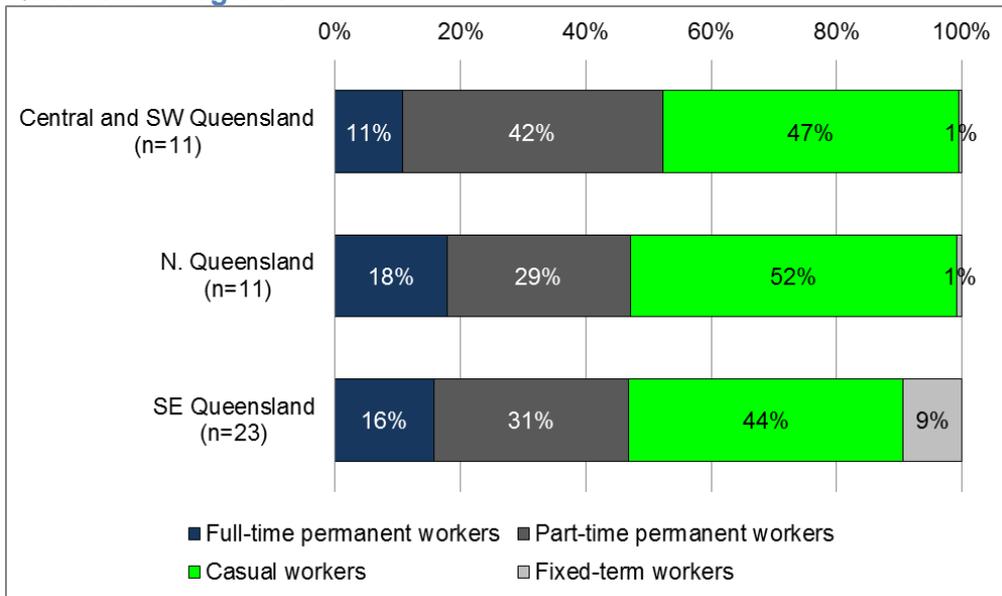


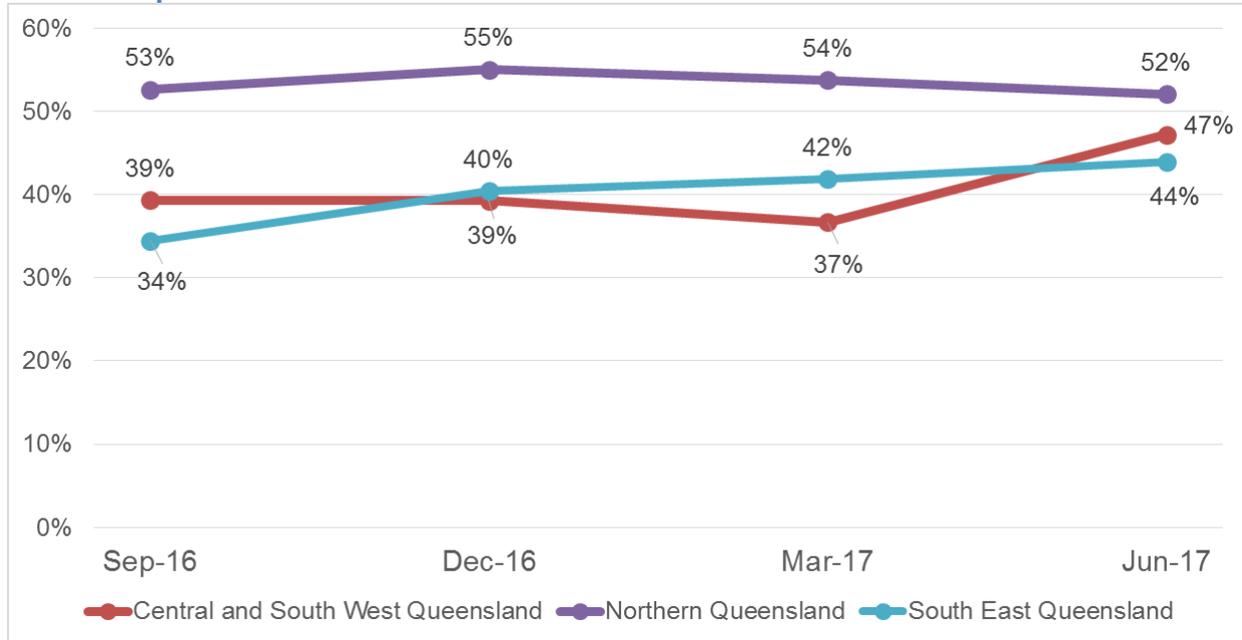
Figure 2: Type of employment (as a percentage of all workers), June 2017 quarter, Queensland regions



However, caution should be taken before making generalisation based on June 2017 quarter results. Due to a small sample, variations between quarters are substantial (See Figure 3). In Central and South West Queensland, proportion of casual employment jumped from a relatively low share of 37 per cent in Mar 17 quarter to 47 per cent in June quarter. Only data from Northern Queensland shows a consistent pattern of high proportion of casual employment. South East Queensland, which comprises the Brisbane Metropolitan area, has a share of casual employment

that is on par with the national average¹ in all three recent quarters –with around two-fifths of workers were casually employed.

Figure 3: Casual employment as a percent of all workers, Queensland regions, Sep 16 to Jun 17 quarter

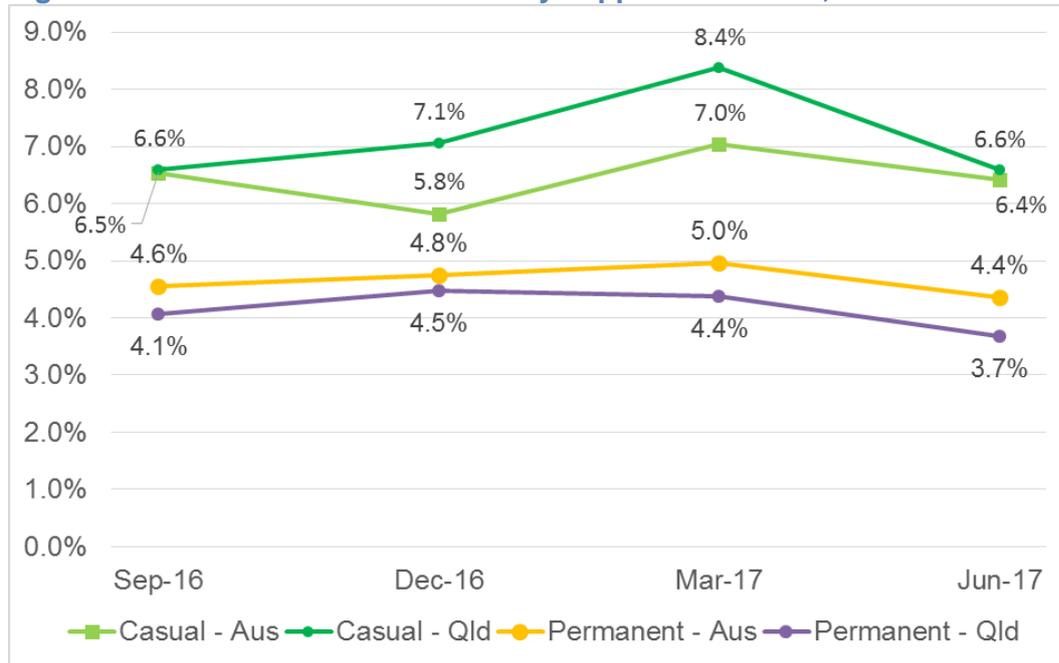


Workforce turnover

Consistent with the national pattern, the casual disability support workforce in Queensland has a persistently higher turnover rate than the permanent workforce (See Figure 4).

¹ Quarter-to-quarter consistency in the percentage of the four different employment types is evident in Workforce Wizard’s national data. Variations are between one and three percentage points, suggesting the data is giving reliable indications of the sector workforce profile nationally.

Figure 4: The turnover rate of disability support workforce, Australia and Queensland



The quarter-to-quarter turnover rates of both permanent and casual workforces are more volatile in Queensland regions, especially in regional Queensland. However, the general pattern supports the observation from national and Queensland data – that the casual direct support workforce experiences higher turnover persistently.

Within Queensland, workforce turnover appears to be more common in Central and South West Queensland. The region has a high casual workforce turnover rate in all four recent quarters, and a higher permanent workforce turnover rate in the two recent quarters than its counterparts (See Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5: The turnover rate of permanent disability support workforce, Queensland regions

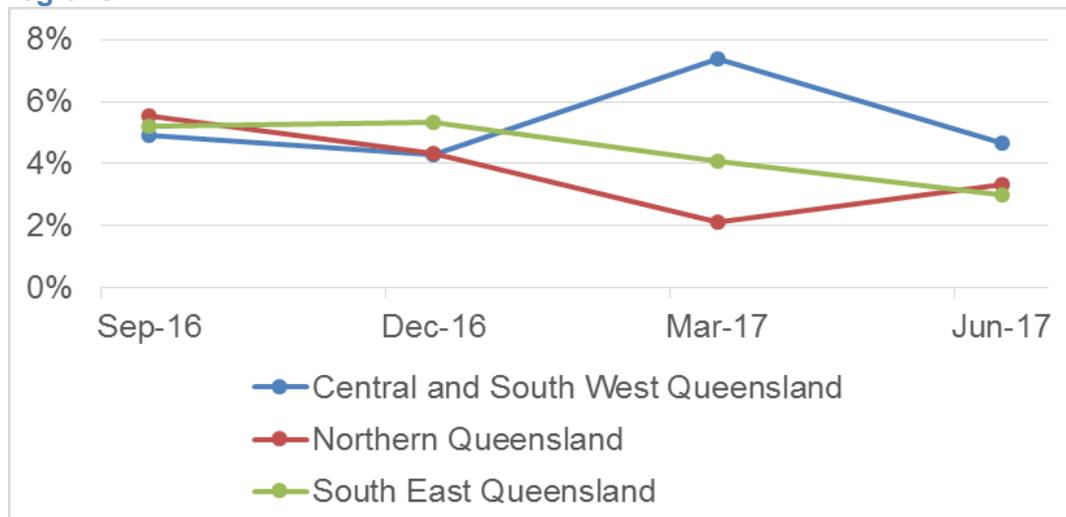
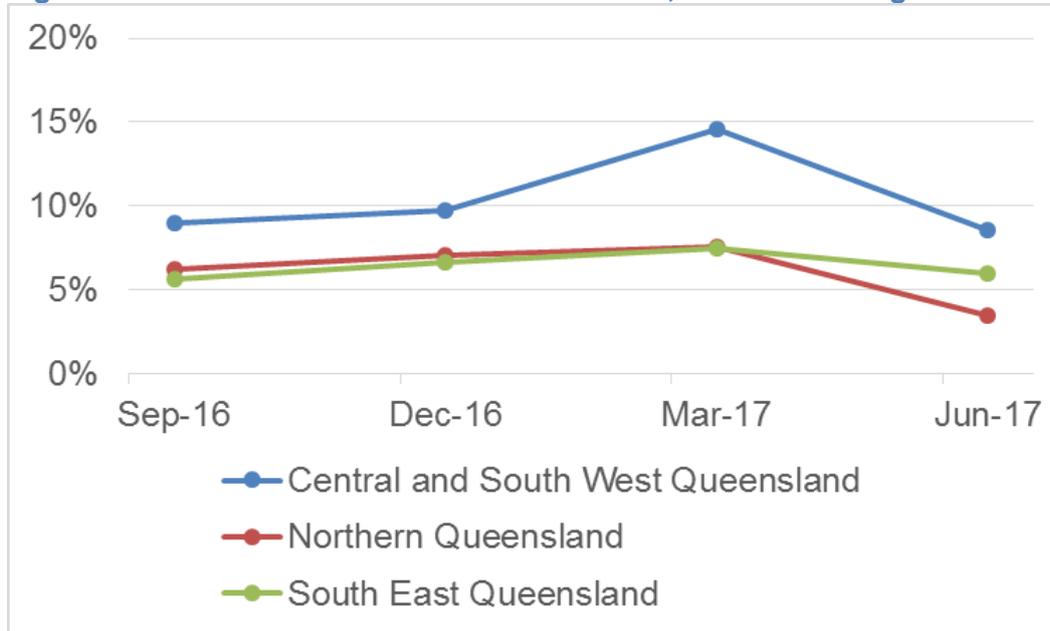


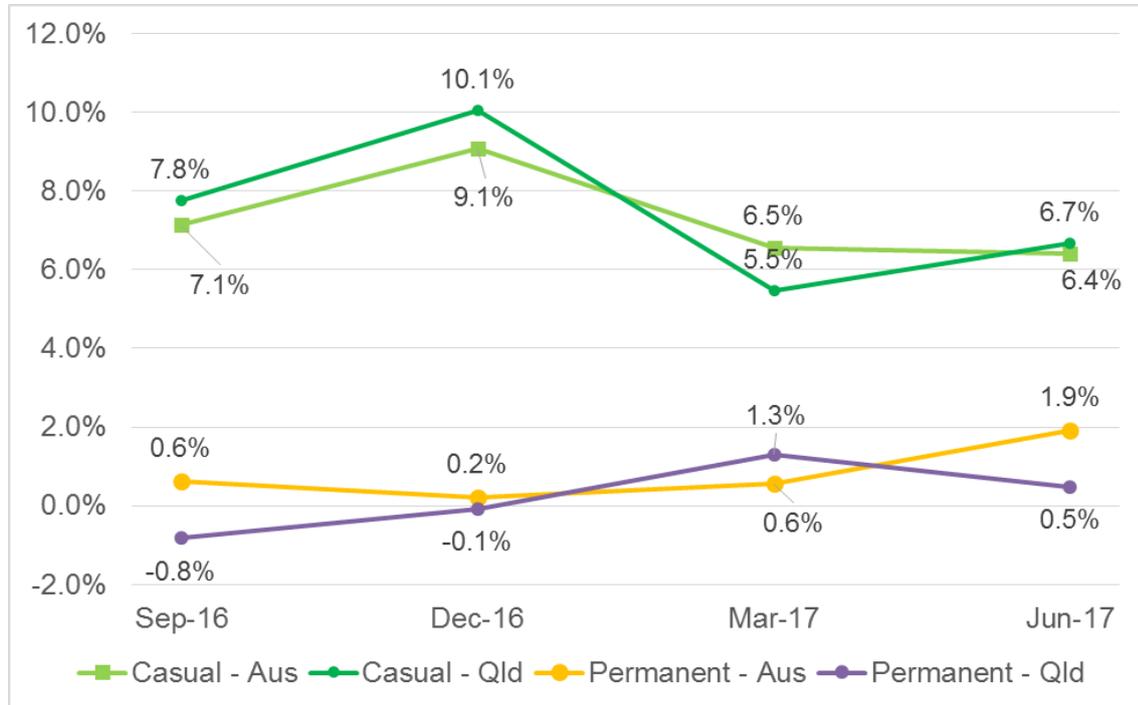
Figure 6: The turnover rate of casual workforce, Queensland regions



Workforce growth

Casual employment in the disability sector has been growing substantially. Figure 7 shows the net growth rates of permanent and casual disability support workforce. The net growth rates take into account people who left the organisation during the quarter and people who have joined. For four consecutive quarters, the casual workforce growth rate was much higher than the permanent workforce growth rate, both nationally and in Queensland.

Figure 7: The workforce growth rate of disability support workforce, Australia and Queensland



This discrepancy between permanent and casual workforce growth rates applies to all regions in Queensland, with the casual workforce growth rates are generally higher than the permanent workforce growth rates in all four quarters. There are however, signs that casual workforce growth are slowing down in recent two quarters in all three regions (See Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Figure 8: The permanent workforce growth rates, Queensland regions

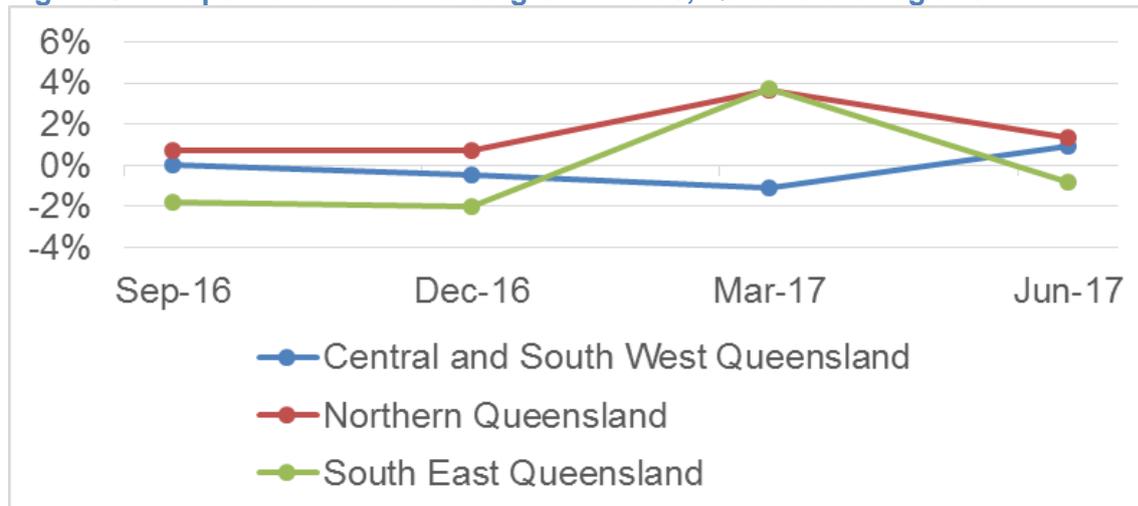
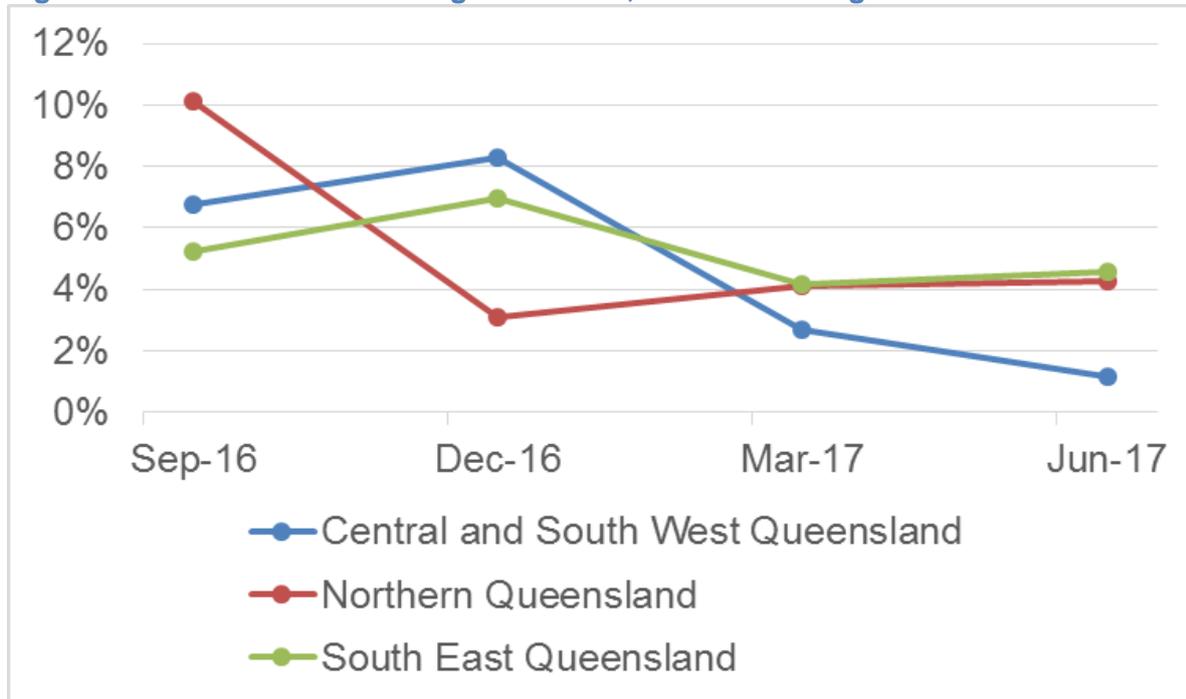


Figure 9: The casual workforce growth rates, Queensland regions



Working hours

The average weekly working hours for Queensland disability support workers were 22 hours/week in June 2017 quarter, at the same level as the national average weekly working hours. Average working hours in disability workforce are very short compared to the broader workforce. Average weekly working hours across all industries in Australia is around 35 hours (because a much higher proportion of the workforce works full-time). The national all-industries average for part-time workers is just over 20 hours.² Hence, the weekly working hours of an average Queensland disability support worker is just a little longer than an average **part-time** worker.

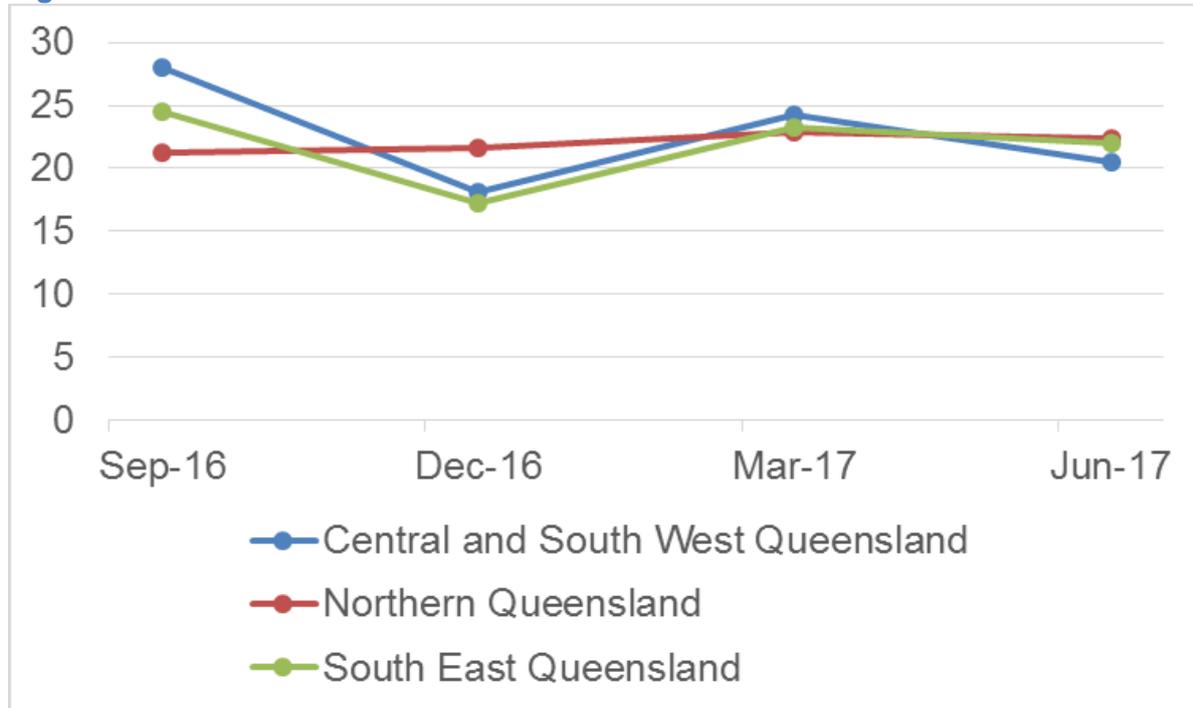
The average weekly working hours of disability support workers are generally stable, with the exception of December quarter. The holiday effect means a shorter weekly working hours in this quarter, with only 18 hours/ week for Queensland workers, and a national average of 19 hours/ week.

Despite a quarter-to-quarter volatility in each Queensland region, which is likely to be caused by a small sample size, the general pattern does not show any persistent

² These are estimated figures based on the hours actually worked in main job per employed person in ABS (2017) **Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, March 2017**, cat no. 6291.0.55.001. Please note that the ABS Labour Force, Australia survey defines full-time workers as those who ordinarily work 35 hours or more per week. In Workforce Wizard, full-time workers refer to those who ordinarily work 38 hours or more per week consistent with the SCHCADS award.

regional variation in the average weekly working hours of Queensland disability support workers (See Figure 10).

Figure 10: Average weekly working hours of disability support workers, Queensland regions



The average headcount to FTE ratio³ in Queensland was around 2 in the June 2017 quarter – again, at the same level with the national average. Similar to the average weekly working hours, no persistent regional variation in headcount to FTE ratio can be identified between Queensland regions.

Age and gender distribution

Consistent with previous quarters, data from June 2017 indicates that there is more than triple the number of women (77 per cent) as men (23 per cent) among disability support workers. This is higher than the gender ratio of 7:3 nationally (where 70 per cent of workers are women and 30 per cent are men).

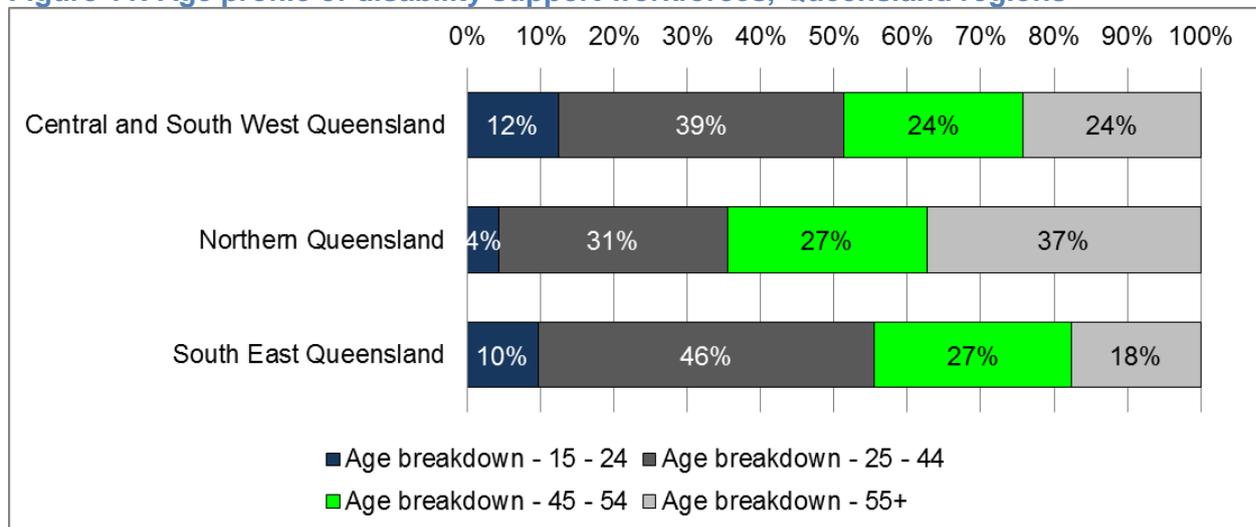
It is interesting to note that regional Queensland is more female-dominated than South East Queensland. In Central and South West Queensland, around four-fifths of workers are women. In Northern Queensland, up to 85 per cent are women. The gender ratio in Queensland regions has been consistent in three recent quarters.

³ Headcount to FTE ratio is a measure of how many actual people are employed for every Full Time Equivalent (FTE) position.

The disability sector has a relatively ageing workforce. Half of disability support workers in Queensland (50 per cent) and 46 percent of all-Australian disability workers were order than 44 years, compared with around 40 per cent for the Australian all-industry employed workforce⁴.

Northern Queensland has an older workforce than the other regions, with about a-third of workers who were younger than 45 years, compared with the more than half in Central and South West Queensland (51 per cent) and South East Queensland (56 per cent) (See Figure 11). This regional difference in the age profile of Queensland disability workers has been shown consistently in all four recent quarters.

Figure 11: Age profile of disability support workforces, Queensland regions



The Queensland allied health workforce

No analysis has been conducted due to an insufficient sample size.

March 2017 spotlight topic: Difficulty in recruiting

Filling vacancies- disability support workers

Queensland organisations in the March 2017 quarter reported a lower level of recruitment than the rest of the nation, with 70 per cent of organisations advertising to fill a position, compared with 76 per of organisations in Australia as a whole.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2017*, Cat no. 6291.0.55.003 (Table 26b).

Table 1: Organisations advertising to fill a DSW role, March 2017 quarter

State	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)	n
Queensland	70	30	100	34
Australia	76	24	100	192

Note: n is the number of organisations in the sample.

Less organisations in Queensland experienced difficulty in filling their vacancies than other states. Nearly four-fifths of Queensland organisations (79 per cent) were able to fill all positions. This is higher than the Australian average – nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of organisations which advertised were able to fill all disability support positions advertised in the March 2017 quarter.

Table 2: Organisations with advertised positions filled and unfilled, March 2017 quarter, by state (%)

State	Filled (%)	Unfilled (%)	Total (%)	n
Western Australia	79	21	100	19
Australia	65	35	100	133

Note: n is the number of organisations in the sample.

Reason for unfilled vacancies

The most common reason given by Australian organisations for difficulty filling positions was the lack of suitable or qualified candidates (41 per cent). Candidates being unable or unwilling to meet specific job requirements, poor employment conditions and/or job prospects, geographical factors and seasonal factors were given as reasons and are described below.

A common difficulty faced by providers appears to be the increasing specificity of job requirements for disability support positions, a result of providers tailoring jobs to clients under the NDIS. Around 22 per cent of responses mentioned that the advertised role required one or more of the following:

- demographic characteristics (e.g. young male, Indigenous or another cultural background)
- personality attributes (suitability to care for clients with challenging behaviours)
- other requirements tailored to match client need.

Some mentioned that the requirements for flexible working hours or shift work were other factors limiting the candidate pool.

A significant minority of responses (13 per cent) mentioned poor employment conditions, especially the lack of permanent full-time roles and low rates of pay as possible reasons for the vacancies to be unfilled.

Geographic location also poses a challenge for recruitment. Thirteen per cent mentioned that rural or remote areas or the need to travel across long-distance locations as a factor for the vacancies to be unfilled.

Only four Queensland organisations responded to this question by providing a reason for difficulty in filling a position. This is not surprising given that not many organisations were unable to fill a position in the first place. The reasons given by Queensland organisations in recruitment difficulty include the lack of suitable or qualified candidates and the candidates being unable or unwilling to meet specific job requirements.

Table 3: Reasons positions were unfilled at the end of the recruitment round (national results)

Reason given	(%)
Lack of suitable/qualified candidates	29
Candidates unable/unwilling to meet job requirements	22
Geographical factors	13
Poor employment conditions and/or job prospects	13
Seasonal factors	3
Total	100

Notes: This was an open-ended question so a respondent could mention more than one factor.

June 2017 spotlight topic: Workforce Absences

Workforce absences was the spotlight topic in the June 2017 quarter. Nearly three-quarters of users (72 per cent) entered data on the spotlight topic. Among them, more than a-fifth (22 per cent) were Queensland organisations.

Direct support workers

Permanent and fixed term direct support workers in Queensland, on average, took 1.9 days of paid personal and carers' leave per person in June 2017 quarter and 0.6 days of leave without pay. This translates to direct support workers taking 7.6 days of paid personal and carers' leave and 2.3 days of leave without pay each year. The average number of paid and unpaid leave taken by Queensland direct support workers are very close to the national average (which are estimated to be 7.7 days of paid personal and carers' leave and 2.8 days of leave without pay per worker each year).

Given that direct support workers have low average working hours (22 hours/week) we would expect **pro rata personal and carers' leave** to be approximately 6 days per year – less than the nearly 8 days recorded in this sample.

Allied health professionals

Nationally, permanent and fixed term allied health professionals, on average, took 2.2 days of days of paid personal and carers' leave per person in June 2017 quarter and 0.5 days of leave without pay.

This translates to allied health professionals taking 8.9 days of paid personal and carers' leave and 2.2 days of leave without pay each year.

No analysis can be conducted for Queensland allied health professionals due to an insufficient sample size.

Conclusion

This Queensland Workforce Wizard report compares results between Queensland and the whole of Australia, and between the three broad regions within Queensland (Central and South West Queensland, Northern Queensland and South East Queensland). Results from the recent four quarters (from September 2016 to June 2017 quarter) are used for analysis in this report. Using the best available estimates of the total disability workforce, disability support workers covered by Workforce Wizard equate to around 30 per cent of the sector in Queensland - a substantial portion of the whole Queensland workforce. This makes Workforce Wizard a good vehicle for understanding workforce trends in the Queensland.

Casual employment is the most common forms of employment for disability support workers in Queensland. This is especially true in regional Queensland. In Northern Queensland, more than half of the disability workers were casually employed. Already the most common form of employment, casual employment has been growing rapidly and persistently, with a higher growth rate than the permanent workforce for four successive quarters.

The turnover data revealed through Workforce Wizard highlights the greater recruitment effort a high rate of casualisation requires. The casual turnover rate is nearly double that of the permanent one, making workforce planning challenging.

Data from the March 2017 spotlight topic on recruitment trends revealed that organisations in Queensland were less active in recruitment than other states - the second least active state in Australia after Victoria. Despite being less, organisations which recruited direct support workers were still the majority, with seven out of ten organisations reported to have advertised for a position in March 17 quarter. Most of them had no difficulty in filling the vacancy – demonstrating a strong labour market ready to absorb an increasing demand from the NDIS roll-out.

Data from the June 2017 spotlight topic on workforce absences revealed that Queensland direct support workers take roughly 7.6 days of paid personal and carers' leave and 2.3 days of leave without pay each year. The number of paid personal and carers' leave taken is higher than the expected pro rata personal and carers' leave of 6 days per year.

Queensland has a relatively ageing disability workforce. Organisations in the sector, therefore, are likely to face employee attrition due to staff retirement in the nearer future than other industries.

The Workforce Wizard report – Queensland edition reveals many interesting development of the sector in the transition to NDIS. Some regional differences can be identified pointing at the unique challenges each organisation is facing locally. Despite this, all organisations in Queensland share a common challenge – an increasing demand under NDIS, which is increasing absorbing by a rapidly growing casual workforce. How to manage this transition becomes a top priority for providers in Queensland, as well as the whole of Australia. Through Workforce Wizard, NDS will report on these trends and other special interest topics which helps the sector understand both the common and the unique challenges faced by Queensland organisations as the NDIS moves to full rollout.

Appendix

The sample

Disability support workers

Since launched, participation in Workforce Wizard has increased persistently. In the June 2017 quarter, participation reached a new peak, with over 210 organisations across Australia used Workforce Wizard (See Figure 12). The number of workers covered by Workforce Wizard also exceeded 35,000 for the recent March and June 2017 quarter (See Figure 13). Using the best available estimates of the total disability workforce, disability support workers covered by Workforce Wizard equate to around 41 per cent of the sector in Australia (see Table 4).

Contrary to the national trend of sustained increase in participation, Queensland experienced a surge in participation during the regional trial in June and September 2016 quarter, which peaked at 41 organisations. Participation began to drop since then, to 35 organisations in the latest June 2017 quarter. (See Figure 12). The number of workers covered by Queensland workforces, however, peaked at 8,700 workers in June 2016 quarter, and dropped to just above 5,000 in September 2016 quarter – the quarter when the highest number of Queensland providers participated. This suggests that the drop in workers covered in Queensland is caused by the disengagement of large providers, rather than a drop in participating organisations. In the latest June 2017 quarter, the workforces for which data was entered covered around 4,600 Queensland disability workers (see Figure 13), equating to around 30 per cent of all Queensland disability workers using best estimates (see Table 4).

Figure 12: Participating organisations, Australia and Queensland (disability support workers)

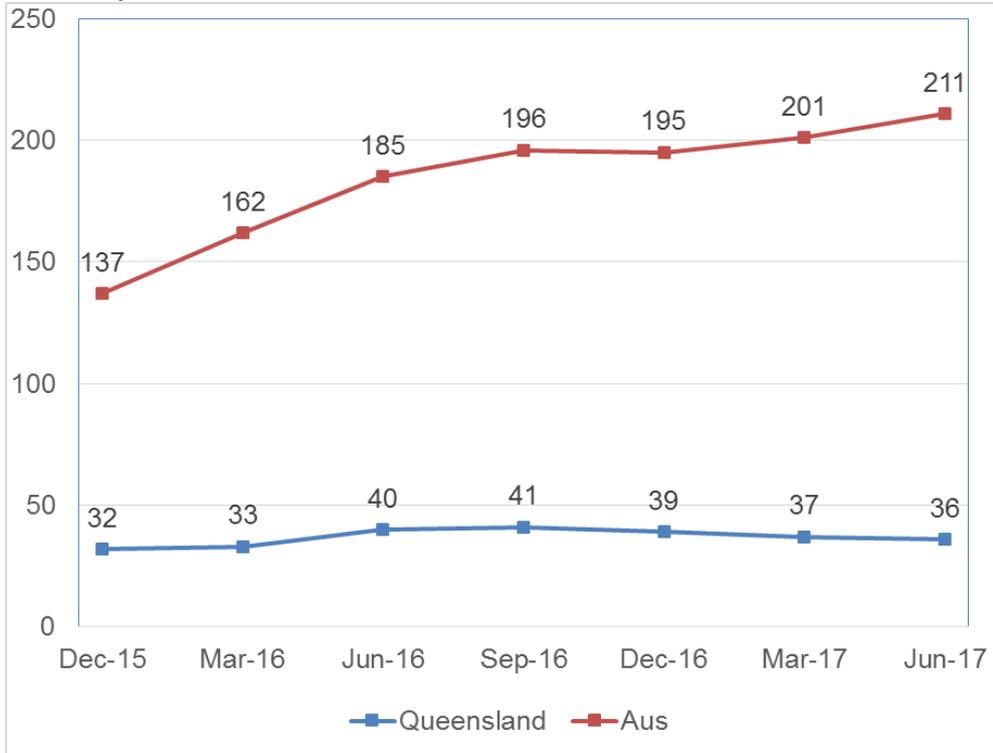


Figure 13: Workers covered, Australia and Queensland (disability support workforce)

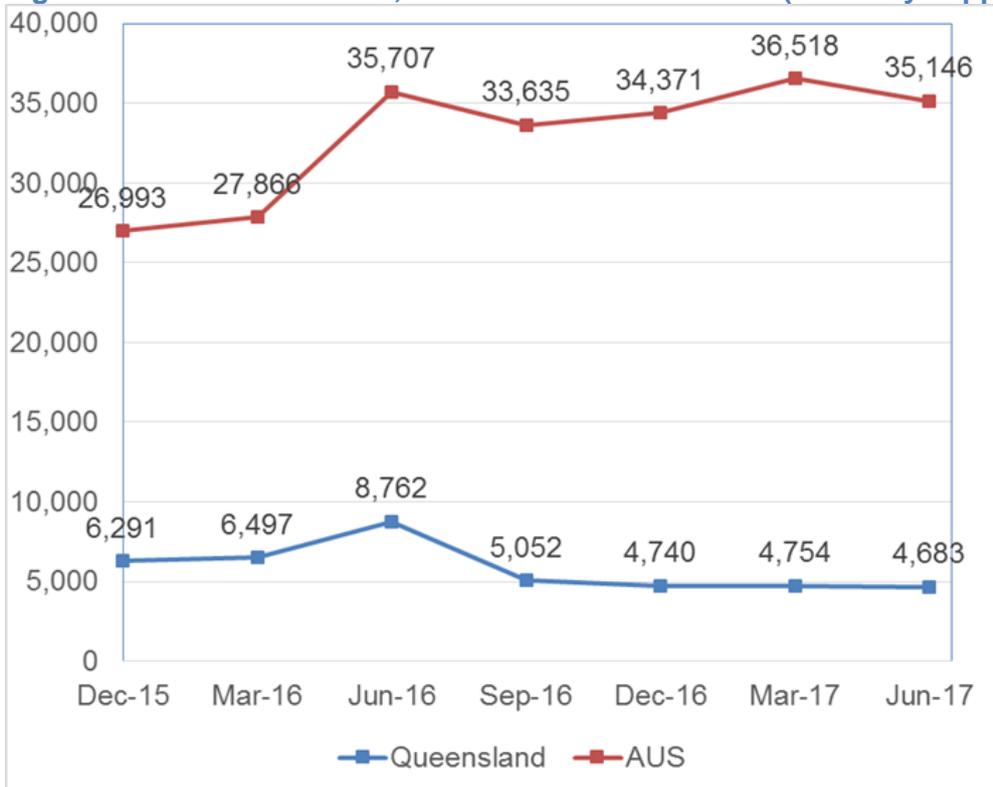


Table 4: Distribution of organisations and workers, by state and territory, June 2017

	Number of orgs (disability support workers)	Total disability support workers	Total allied health workers	Best available disability support workforce estimates 2016 (projected) ¹	Percentage of headcount over workforce estimate %
VIC	41	4,251	0	21,626	20
WA	36	7,280	341	8,348	87
QLD	36	4,683	39	15,745	30
NSW	35	7,117	195	27,316	26
SA	26	5,149	121	8,348	62
TAS	12	1,539	19	3,146	49
NT	7	503	0	932	54
ACT	5	577	0	1,245	46
Multi-state	13	4,047	279		
Total	210	35,146	994	86,366	41

¹ Source: NDS and Sphere (2014) 'National disability-related workforce, methodology and modelling results', based on custom-ordered ABS 2006 and 2011 Census data of selected occupations and industries, following PWC (unpublished) 'Planning for a sustainable disability-related workforce'.

Allied health

In June quarter 2017, 24 Workforce Wizard users entered data for their allied health professional workforces. The number of allied health workers covered by Workforce Wizard was nearly 1,000. Among them, nearly 40 were Queensland workers.

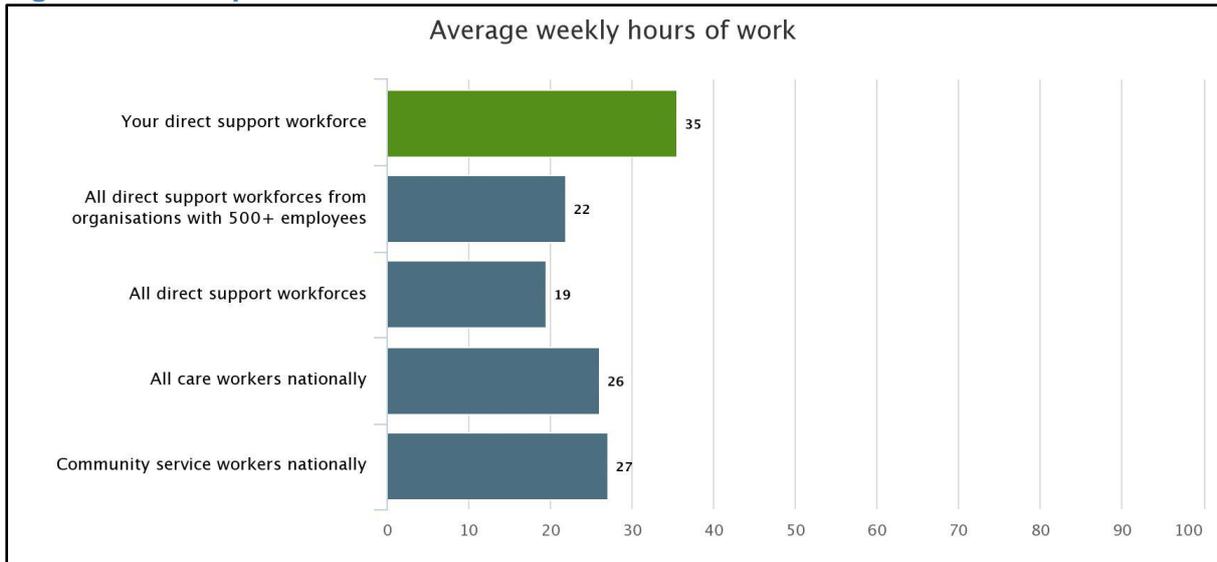
Methodology

A communication campaign was widely implemented when Workforce Wizard was first launched in October 2015. From this campaign, and continued efforts, there are more than 500 users of Workforce Wizard who have varying engagement with the website. Each quarter, five announcements and reminder emails are sent to these users notifying them of the data entry period or of new Workforce Wizard features. Targeted phone calls are also conducted, which are particularly successful at supporting a good response rate.

The data entry period is open for two weeks, after which the Workforce Wizard team clean the data and verify any anomalies. When finalised, benchmark reports are made available to all participating organisations comparing their own results with similar organisations and community sector data (see Figure 14).

Organisations are able to enter data based on workforces of their own defining. For the purposes of Workforce Wizard, a ‘workforce’ is a collection of employees specified and defined by the user. A user can define a workforce by region, occupation, service type or any other preferred criteria.

Figure 14: Example benchmark chart from Workforce Wizard



The Workforce Wizard benchmark figures, as well as the national, state and regional results presented in this report, of all indicators are calculated using the mean results of all workforces in a population, with the exception of workforce turnover rate and workforce growth rate. For these two indicators, the aggregate results from workers, not workforces, are reported. This is applied to avoid inflating results given the large number of small regional Queensland workforces being entered.