

Our innovative approach to building a permanent workforce

In regional aged care, workforce stability is not just an operational issue. It is central to the quality and continuity of care residents receive every day. When teams are stable, residents see familiar faces, relationships deepen and care becomes more personal and consistent. When workforce pressure builds, that continuity is often the first thing to suffer.

For Juliana Lalli, Chief Human Resources Officer at Apollo Care Alliance, that is why the workforce conversation must go beyond recruitment alone. “It’s not just about having people. It’s about having the right people, with the right skills, at the right time,” she says.



A model built to strengthen workforce over time

This thinking sits behind Apollo Care Alliance’s workforce model, which is designed to build and strengthen a permanent workforce in regional communities, reduce reliance on agency staff and support better resident outcomes over time. The model is built around four connected parts.

The first is growing capability from within. In regional communities, the talent pool is often limited, so building a stronger workforce means creating pathways for local people to step into aged care, develop their skills and grow over time. That can include traineeships, upskilling and helping existing staff move into new roles.

“In regional communities, you do not always have the luxury of a large talent pool,” Juliana says. “So you have to build it.”

The second is attracting the right people by positioning aged care as meaningful work and being clear about the role, the expectations and the opportunity to build a career in the sector.

The third is deploying the workforce effectively by aligning skill mix to resident needs, ensuring the right capability is present on the right shifts and moving beyond simply filling rosters to planning them with intent.

The fourth is using systems and data to support decisions. Better systems provide real-time visibility, reduce duplication and give managers more time to focus on their teams and residents. Technology, including AI, plays a role here as a support layer, helping leaders make informed decisions earlier and reduce administrative pressure.

How instability quickly becomes a cycle

This model matters because workforce instability rarely stays contained. When gaps are not addressed early, they flow through the entire operation. Managers spend more time filling shifts than leading teams. Permanent staff carry more pressure to hold things together. The default solution, more often than not, becomes agency.

While agency can stabilise a shift in the moment, it often creates a different kind of instability over time. It increases pressure on already tight budgets and breaks continuity, with residents seeing different carers from one day to the next.

Aged care is built on familiarity, knowing the person caring for you, trusting that they understand your routines, your preferences and your story. When that continuity is lost, the resident experience changes with it.

“Once that cycle begins, it becomes harder to reverse,” Juliana says. “The more unstable a workforce becomes, the harder it is to stabilise again.”

Strengthening teams without taking over

Just as important as the model itself is how it is introduced. When a new community joins Apollo Care Alliance, the starting point is not immediate change, but listening. The focus is on understanding the workforce, the culture and the local dynamics of the home.

From there, Apollo Care’s role is to strengthen workforce capability over time through broader HR support, clearer workforce planning and the right tools to help homes build greater consistency in care.

Ultimately, the goal is not simply to fill shifts. It is to create the conditions for more consistent, high-quality care. Juliana adds, “When we get workforce right, everything else has the chance to work, because it underpins everything that happens within a home.”