

April 2004

Working in Home and Community Care

**IN THE EASTERN
REGION**

*A snapshot of work and career options in Home
and Community Care, including:*

- ❖ *Training and Qualifications*
- ❖ *Employment opportunities*
- ❖ *Understanding the job*
- ❖ *Case studies*



A.B.N. 27 084 251 669



Working in Home and Community Care in the Eastern Region

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The information contained in this resource is intended as a general guide only.

The authors, contributors, the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) and DHS can accept no liability for errors or omissions in this kit.

This information is also available on the MIC website.

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Contacts

...Local Government in the Eastern Region

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| ☎ | Boroondara City Council
Home and Community Care Services
www.boroondara.vic.gov.au | 9278 4722 |
| ☎ | Knox City Council
Home and Community Care Services
www.knox.vic.gov.au | 9298 8375 |
| ☎ | Manningham City Council
Aged & Disability Support Services
www.manningham.vic.gov.au | 9841 5044 |
| ☎ | Maroondah City Council
Coordinated Care Unit
www.maroondah.vic.gov.au | 9298 4275 |
| ☎ | Monash City Council
Community Care Services
www.monash.vic.gov.au | 9518 3553 |
| ☎ | Whitehorse City Council
Aged & Disability Services
www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au | 9262 6460 |
| ☎ | Shire of Yarra Ranges
Aged & Disability Services
www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au | 9294 6224 |

Training Institutions

Further information about TAFE Colleges and other training institutions that offer Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care or Disability Work) and HACC Certificate III can be found online at:

<http://www.tafe.vic.gov.au/Courses/Detail.asp?ID=45103&ViewAll=true>

Case Study: A Client's Perspective...

Mrs. Chen* lives in an Eastern Region suburb and receives personal care from Council. She is very frail and in a wheelchair. She has just come out of hospital and at the moment is living with her son and his family. This is her story as told to the worker through a Mandarin interpreter. (**The client's name has been changed to respect her privacy.*)

"I come from the Fujian province in China, but lived in Malaysia, before coming to Australia to be with my son and his family. At times I get sad when I think about my home country. It can be lonely growing older in Australia, but at least I am near my son. I enjoy having people to talk to in Chinese.

I have been having a worker from the Council come to shower me three times a week since I came out of hospital. I am in a wheelchair now and can't shower by myself anymore.

I have three different carers. Only one speaks Mandarin. It is OK when I have workers who don't speak my language, as they always look after me very carefully. However it is very nice to have someone to talk to and who I can communicate with. It makes me feel not so lonely, in my new home. I am very happy to get this service."

Mrs Chen explained to the worker that whilst she is grateful to have someone assist her with showering, she does appreciate having someone who speaks her language.

- As a carer you will be working with people from many different cultures, with different religious beliefs and speaking many languages.
- As a bilingual carer, some of your clients may share your cultural background and / or language. This is an opportunity to provide a positive experience of the service and make a difference in their lives.

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Introduction

Home and Community Care workers provide an important service for people in our community. The service is highly valued by both individuals receiving the service and the wider community.

The Home and Community Care sector is professional and employees require specific qualifications and personal attributes to be successful in their work. Depending on your employer the qualifications required for work in this field can be obtained through attending courses while you are working as a Home and Community Care worker or through independent study before you apply for employment.

In addition to providing an important service employment in Home and Community Care also offers:

- Flexible working hours
- Award pay and conditions
- Regular training and opportunities for career development
- Independent and team work

Home and Community Care agencies are seeking to employ more people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to provide this valuable service.

This booklet provides information on the type of work available in Home and Community Care, the qualifications required, how to apply for positions and what you can expect should you decide to work in this field.



The best part of my job is visiting clients. They are so happy to see you and they love having someone to talk to. They need the service, but also the warmth. Personally I love not being stuck in an office all day. This job is great if you like going from one place to another and having some variety in your work. The flexibility of this job is also a bonus. I can do 2-3 jobs a day and still pick the kids up from school and be with them in the evening. Other bonuses of the job include getting paid to attend meetings and training if they aren't in your regular working hours, plus a travel allowance for driving my car between jobs.

One of the hardest parts of the job, is seeing people who are lonely and isolated, or people that need more services and can't get them. It can also be difficult to say 'no' to clients. Sometimes they ask us to do things that we aren't allowed to do, like climb ladders or clean windows, but it is important to set boundaries. Also most of the clients find it hard to deal with change, like when a new carer or routine starts. This can mean that they may get upset with you about the way you do things, because the person before you did them a little different. It can take a while to build up trust with some clients but once they get used to you things are OK.

It is important when working with clients to remember that they are all individuals and that we are there to help them stay in their homes, because we all know that there is no place like our own home. It is our job to help them maintain their independence, dignity and pride.

I would definitely recommend this job because it is extremely rewarding making a difference in someone's day. Also it prevents boredom, loneliness and is perfect for people who's children are at school. I am only sorry that I didn't get into it sooner."

Case Study: A Carers Perspective

Demetra Ioannou is a Personal / Home / Respite care worker from a Greek background. She has been working with a Council for two years.

“My sister has been a carer for a while so I had some idea about the job. I didn’t have any formal qualifications, but I had experience looking after my father. I started at Council as a Home Carer, after about six months at a Private Agency. Since I’ve been at Council I have finished my Certificate III in Aged Care and gained a lot of experience. There is always ongoing training at Council, so you are learning as you work. I now do Personal and Respite Care as well.

When I started I was prepared to give anything a try and I think that this is an important attitude in this job. Some of the tasks in Personal Care may seem a bit daunting, but you don’t know until you try, and often you can surprise yourself at what you can do. I have between 20-30 regular clients. Most of my clients are Greek elderly people. They really appreciate it when someone visits who can speak their language because sometimes they are lonely and want someone to talk to. I think being from the same background they feel comfortable with me. Not all my clients are Greek though and I enjoy visiting people from all backgrounds.

On an average day I visit between 2-4 clients. This morning I visited a client in a retirement village. I hung the washing, cleaned the toilet, shower and hand basin. I also mopped the kitchen, bathroom, toilet, vacuumed lounge and bedroom, in one hour. I then visited another client in their home for 2 hours and did all these tasks and more. Other things I do include shopping for one client once every two weeks. I only come into the office once a week to pick up my roster, for training or staff meetings.

Employment Options

Home Care Worker:

Home care workers help people to maintain their independence in the home through housekeeping tasks that include but are not limited to:

- Cleaning of floor areas, mopping and vacuuming
- Cleaning of bathrooms and toilets
- Cleaning of kitchen, washing and drying dishes
- Changing and washing bed linen and making beds
- Washing, pegging out and ironing clothes
- Shopping for clients

Personal Care Worker:

Personal care workers help people to maintain their independence at home through tasks that include but are not limited to:

- Toileting, bathing and dressing
- Assisting with transfers and the use of mobility aids
- Preparing light meals
- Providing assistance with eating / drinking

Respite Care Worker:

A respite care worker can provide an opportunity for the person being cared for to have a break or an outing without their usual primary care giver. An example of a primary care giver can be a family member or a friend. Respite care may also include aspects of personal care and household duties.



It is important to note that every employer has slightly varied recruitment processes and requirements of their staff.

Personal Attributes

- ✓ Ability to communicate effectively with frail older clients and clients with a disability and their families
- ✓ Ability to work independently without direct supervision, but also to be a team member and participate in staff meetings
- ✓ Ability to maintain confidentiality and privacy
- ✓ Good time management skills
- ✓ Willingness to undertake further training and professional development
- ✓ Ability to provide non-judgemental assistance to clients from any backgrounds

Professional Requirements

All prospective employees require the following:

- ✓ Current Victorian drivers licence, a reliable car and a telephone
- ✓ All employees must consent to a medical and police check
- ✓ The ability to complete staff time sheets and travel forms
- ✓ Ability to collect data and fill out observation forms

In addition the following skills / qualifications are desirable but not essential:

- ✓ Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care / Disability Work) / HACCC Certificate III or equivalent. *If you are undertaking this certificate on the job you will not be able to perform any personal care tasks prior to its completion.*
- ✓ Experience working within a Home and Community Care environment
- ✓ A second community language
- ✓ Basic understanding of First Aid procedures (first aid certificate)

Frequently asked questions...

When do Employers Recruit?

- ❖ **Local Government / Councils:** Each Council is different. However, common recruitment periods are Jan/Feb and June/ July.
- ❖ **Private Agencies:** All year round, depending on vacancies

How can I find employment opportunities?

Some common ways of finding vacancies include:

- ❖ Local Newspapers - Employment Section
- ❖ Major newspapers - Employment Section
- ❖ Websites of local Councils / Private Agencies
- ❖ Contact the Council or Private Agency directly

What are the benefits of doing a traineeship?

- ❖ You are paid while you study for your qualification
- ❖ Obtain a nationally recognised qualification while you work
- ❖ Gain hands on experience in a work environment.

What are the benefits of studying independently?

- ❖ Obtain a nationally recognised qualification
- ❖ Flexibility to apply for jobs with private agencies or local government
- ❖ It may take a shorter time to complete the qualification

What can I expect to get paid as a worker?

- ❖ The average base pay rate for a Home and Community Care worker is between \$14-16 per hour. This varies depending on your qualifications, experience, your specific role and employer. Penalty rates may also apply.
- ❖ A number of employers will also provide money for traveling in your car between clients
- ❖ *Some* agencies are able to offer sick leave and other benefits.

More Options for Employment and Training

Private Agencies

Private agencies employ carers and then contract them to other organisations such as hospitals, local government, community service agencies or directly to clients.

Each private agency has their own recruitment processes. With some agencies you can fill in an application on line, others advertise in the newspapers or with employment agencies. Contact the agency directly for information about their professional requirements.

Contacts for private agencies can be found on the internet or in the yellow pages under 'Aged Persons' Support', 'Domestic Help Services' and 'Disability Services & Support Organisations'

Group Training Organisations (GTOs)

Group Training Organisations recruit and employ 'young' people to undertake a Apprenticeship / Traineeship and place them with host employers. They support the trainees throughout the period of their study and placement.

Many GTOs are also involved in assisting trainees in the transition to employment after the traineeship is completed.

Further information and a list of Victorian GTOs can be found at: <http://grouptraining.ntis.gov.au/>

Job Network Members

If you are currently unemployed, registered with a Job Network Member, and interested in working in the Home and Community Care field, talk to the Job Network staff about options for training and employment.

The Realities of Working in Home and Community Care

The following comments are some of the positive aspects that carers working in Home and Community Care have shared about their jobs:

"I get paid to exercise as I clean other people's homes"

"The chance to learn new skills and gain new knowledge"

"Making a difference in people's lives"

"Assisting the clients to feel more independent"

"Personal job satisfaction"

Other aspects of working in Home and Community Care include:

"Communicating with people with different values and beliefs"

"Knowing how to establish professional boundaries with clients"

"It can be a physically demanding job"

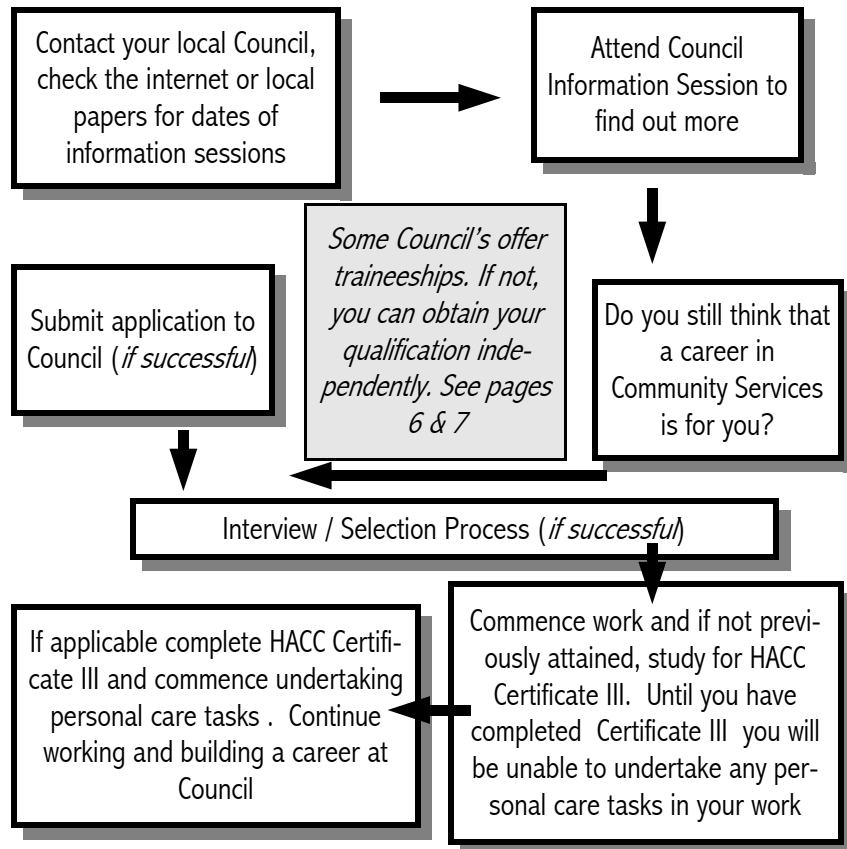
"Juggling multiple tasks"



Pathways to Employment ...in Local Government*

* Each Local Government has different recruitment processes, timeframes and training opportunities. For further information contact your nearest Council. For contact details of local governments in the Eastern Region, see page 12.

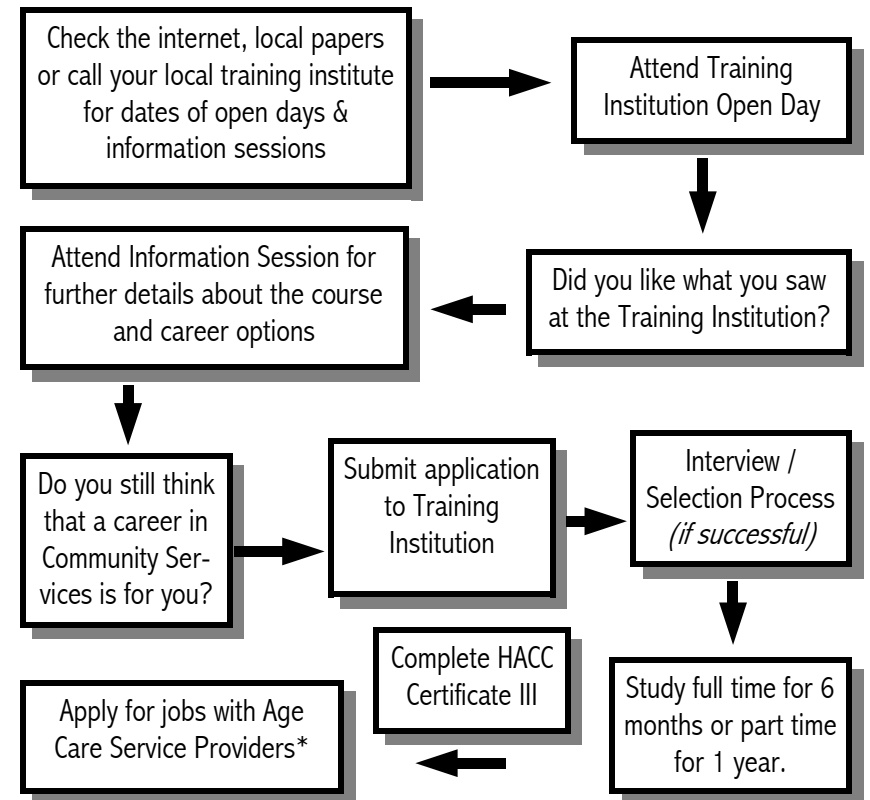
- Are you interested in helping people?
- Do you want to make a career in community services?
- Does the idea of working whilst gaining a qualification appeal to you?



Pathways for Independent Study ...and Employment

Internet links to Training Institutions offering the required Certificate III in Aged Care (or HACC Certificate III) can be found on Page 12.

- Do you want to make a career in community services?
- Does the idea of working with older people & people with disabilities sound good to you?
- Are you able to cover the costs of the course?
- It is important to finish your qualifications before looking for work



* Aged Care Service Providers may include Local Government, Not-for Profit or Private Agencies.