

Guide to Becoming a Support Worker

Get more out of life

About Nextt

Nextt is a leading Australian provider of services that empower people with disability to get more out of life.

With over 1800 staff and services across NSW, QLD, SA and VIC, we provide quality support to more than 1500 clients each year.

Over the last 20 years we have built a strong service that specialises in supporting people with a broad range of disabilities including autism, psycho-social disability, cognitive support needs, high physical support needs and Acquired Brain Injury. We have developed communities of practice to support our staff and clients with specific skill and support requirements. Our focus is on person centred active support to assist each person to get more out of life.

Nextt provides individualised person centred supports that help people with disability and/or mental health to meet their goals and become more independent.





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“Working for Nextt over the last 3 years as a Disability Support Worker has been a great experience for me personally and professionally. Being placed with clients who I’ve been able to help develop and assist with every day tasks, community access and reaching their goals, has been an extremely rewarding career choice for me.” - Neil

Becoming a Disability Support Worker

Working as a Disability Support Worker can be an extremely rewarding career option.

As a Disability Support Worker, you will be providing care and assistance to people with physical and/or mental health disability.

You'll be supporting people with disability to reach their individual goals, to become more independent and to get much more out of life.

This work can be challenging – but it is also extremely rewarding – knowing you are making a real difference to someone's life – as well as the lives of their families and the communities in which they live – each-and-every day.

This guide provides a short overview of some of the things you need to know if you'd like to become a Disability Support Worker.

It includes information on required qualifications and checks, additional training to help you perform at your very best, how to apply for current roles, and future career path opportunities.



Demand for Disability Support Workers

According to the Australian Government Labour Market Information portal, healthcare and social assistance is currently the largest employment sector within Australia accounting for approximately 13% of the total workforce.

The disability sector receives the second largest federal government spend after Medicare, with Disability Support Workers the largest employee group in the sector. And jobs in the sector are predicted to increase by a further 253,000 over the next 5 years.

Over the last 12 months, the demand for support workers has been growing at a staggering rate, and

there is currently an extremely high demand to meet the skills shortage.

If you are looking for a long-term career in a job that can lead to new and different opportunities, Disability Support Work is a great path to follow.

Where are positions advertised?

Open roles for Disability Support Workers can be found on many different platforms.

Some of the most popular online search engines include:

<https://www.seek.com.au/>

<https://au.indeed.com/>

<https://au.jora.com/>

<https://www.simplyhired.com.au/>

<https://www.careerone.com.au/>

<https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/>

Most disability service providers will also advertise current positions on their websites.

You can view the current support worker jobs available through Nextt at <https://nextt.com.au/vacancies/>



What qualifications do I need?

Most disability service providers will require that you have a vocational qualification in disability or community services.

This may be a **Certificate III in Individual Support (CHC33015)** or a **Certificate IV in Disability (CHC43115)**.

You can get the necessary qualifications from a wide range of registered training organisations including Open Colleges, and TAFE.

A Certificate IV in Disability will generally take you 27 weeks full-time to complete and may involve a study commitment of about 22 hours per week (which includes class participation, directed study and any required work placements).

What additional training do I need?

To be successful as a Disability Support Worker, and to arm yourself with the tools you need to be successful and to build your career, it's important to invest in continuous learning.

Each disability service provider will provide their own on and off-the-job training.

As an example, Nextt provides a wide range of support and training for a rewarding long-term career in Disability Services. This includes:

- foundational skills training
- work safety training
- restrictive practices training
- complex behaviour training and
- negotiation training.



What skills **do I need?**

In addition to training and qualifications, you should also have a range of ‘soft skills’ including resilience and communication skills. You will also need to learn how to work in a team.

Customer service skills: a customer service mindset is extremely important when supporting people with disability reach their goals, make their own decisions and to live their lives independently.

Relationship building skills: you should be genuinely good with people and have the ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships.

Life experience and transferrable skills: our clients look for support workers who share common interests, which can be extremely important when you are assisting them to participate in their local community and to achieve their personal goals. Life experience can also be invaluable - for example - return-to-work parents who have had experience supporting someone with disability, can have fantastic transferable skills.

What will **you be doing?**

The best thing about working as a Disability Support Worker is that no two days will be the same.

Some of the duties and tasks you will do include:

- Assist people with daily living, with a focus on self-care and high intensity personal care activities.
- Help clients develop skills and participate in community activities.
- Facilitating daily personal hygiene and dressing tasks.
- Performing home based tasks such as food preparation and housework.

- Implement a client-centred approach in delivering services and support.
- Providing community access to clients so they can improve social skills and confidence.
- Assist with high-level manual handling tasks.
- Providing emotional support and friendship.

Please note that this job involves weekday shifts, evening and weekend shifts. Of course, penalty rates apply for weekends, Public Holidays, and after 8pm and after 12pm.



What certifications do I need?

As a Disability Support Worker, you will be working with some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. It is therefore essential that you get a number of certifications including a current working with children/vulnerable people check, a first aid and CPR certificate and that you have passed your NDIS Worker Screening Check (or current National Police Records Check) and manual handling check.

Working with children and vulnerable peoples checks

There is no national framework for these checks – although the following information will help you work out what you need based on the state you live in.

NSW Working with Children Check

- This is a prerequisite for child-related work in New South Wales
- It is valid for 5 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>

ACT Working with Vulnerable People Check

- This is a prerequisite for all support workers in the ACT
- General registration is valid for 3 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-%28wwwvp%29-registration

NT Working with Children Clearance

- This is a prerequisite for all child-related work in the Northern Territory
- You must hold an Ochre Card
- It is valid for 2 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance>

QLD Working with Children Check (Blue Card or Exemption Card)

- This is a prerequisite for child-related work in

Queensland

- You must hold a blue card or a positive exemption card
- Blue Cards are valid for 3 years. Exemption cards have no expiry date and remain valid as long as the person is a registered teacher or police officer
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/applications/apply>

SA Child-related Employment Screening

- This allows people to work with children and young people and children with disability
- Apply online: <https://screening.sa.gov.au/types-of-check/working-with-children-check>

SA Disability Services Employment Screening

- Disability services employment check does not apply to working with children. It is only a prerequisite for workers who wish to support adults
- Apply online: <https://screening.sa.gov.au/types-of-check/disability-services>

TAS Working with Vulnerable Registration

- This is a prerequisite for child-related work in Tasmania
- It is valid for 3 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/registrations/work-with-vulnerable-people/applications>

VIC Working with Children Check

- This is a prerequisite for child-related work in Victoria
- It is valid for 5 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

WA Working with Children Check

- This is a prerequisite for child-related work in Western Australia
- It is valid for 3 years
- Make sure it is valid for paid employment, not volunteer work
- Apply online: <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/>

First aid and CPR Certification

You can find either online or in-person courses in most areas. You may want to check:

- <https://www.australiawidefirstaid.com.au/>
- <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-involved/learn/first-aid/courses/provide-first-aid>
- <https://stjohn.org.au/first-aid-training>

NDIS Worker Screening Check

- NDIS Worker Check NSW: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/ndiswc>
- Disability Worker Screening QLD: <https://workerscreening.communities.qld.gov.au/>
- NDIS Worker Checks SA: <https://screening.sa.gov.au/types-of-check/ndis-worker-checks>
- NDIS Worker Screening Check TAS: <https://cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/registrations/work-with-vulnerable-people/rwvp-ndis-worker-screening>
- NDIS Worker Screening Check VIC: <https://www.vic.gov.au/ndis-worker-screening-check>
- NDIS Worker Checks WA: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/ndis-worker-screening-check>

How much do **you** get paid?

The current average salary of an Disability Support Worker is \$52,000 - 65,150 per year based on 36 hours per week.



Your resume

Your resume is one of the most important pieces of your job application and sums up all of your skills and experience in roughly one-page.

Following is a quick guide on what you should include in your resume.

Your name and contact details, including your address, email and contact phone number.

Jane Smith

123 Applegate Street, Geelong VIC

Phone: 0400 000 000 Email: jane.smith@sample.com.au

Your professional summary/objective

This resume component is a short section at the top of your resume that summarises your key qualifications and tells the hiring manager how your goals align with theirs.

Disability Support Worker with 5 years of experience providing support and assistance to individuals and groups of people with disability. Strong communication skills and ability to work with clients, families, advocates, providers and the public with professionalism, courtesy and compassion. Proficient in the use of common implements, devices and tools for disabled daily living. Extremely approachable and helpful attitude.

Work Experience

Your experience section should include the following information for each entry:

- Employer or company name
- Location (city and state)
- Dates employed
- 3-5 bullet points describing your responsibilities and accomplishments

Jonathon Home Care – Geelong, VIC

Disability Support Worker - April 2019 to present

- Provided reminders for medications and appointments
- Assisted clients in daily personal care, toileting, clothing care, household duties and transportation.
- Assisted with grocery shopping, errands, banking, bill paying and community engagement.

The Living People – Geelong, VIC

Disability Support Worker - July 2015 to April 2018

- Followed programs of physical therapist to ensure physical fitness and wellness.
- Assisted in cooking and food preparation.
- Worked with family, health care providers, therapists and support coordinators to ensure all client needs were met.

Skills

To write a strong skills section, list your most marketable abilities and include a mix of both hard skills and soft skills to show employers that you're a dynamic candidate.

- Compassionate and kind care provider
- Patient, understanding and flexible
- Efficient in domestic duties
- Physically capable of meeting demands
- Highly organised and efficient
- Prompt, courteous and team oriented.

Education, Certifications and Licenses

Your education section should include an overview of your education, training and qualifications. It should include:

- Education provider name
- Education provider location
- Qualification
- Year

Certificate IV in Disability (CHC43115), ABC Training, Geelong (completed 2015).

First Aid Certificate, ABC Training, Geelong (completed 2018).

Working with Children Check (2016).

References

It is suggested that you include a statement 'available on request'. This allows you to contact your referees to let them know they are likely to be called, and to give them a heads-up on the questions they might be asked.

Typical Interview Questions

Whether you are an experienced Disability Support Worker or going for your very first interview, it is important that you prepare for the interview process. You must demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities involved, while expressing a passion towards working as a Disability Support Worker.

Although disability support work has physical, mental and emotional challenges, it is also a highly rewarding and fulfilling career choice, where you are making a real difference to people's lives. The interview questions you are likely to be asked are designed to assess your suitability and capability as a Disability Support Worker. You are likely to be asked situational questions, to demonstrate what you may have done in previous work situations. At the same time, you want to give hiring managers an indication of your relationship building skills, and highlight how you have helped people with disability to maintain their independence and improve their quality of life.

To help in your next interview, we have provided some common Disability Support Worker interview questions.

Can you describe what you think a Disability Support Worker does?

This broad question offers you the chance to demonstrate your grasp on, and overall knowledge of, the disability services sector. Being a very open question, it will show the employer whether you understand the expectations of the job and give indication to any research done. A possible response could be along the lines of:

A Disability Support Worker supports people with disability to achieve their goals and to live an independent life. You will need to have a real empathy for clients and be proactive and motivated to assist in delivering exceptional service. As a Disability Support Worker, you provide a variety of support that might include assisting with personal care, assisting clients with household chores and supporting them to build their confidence and access their local community.

What can you bring to this role?

This is your chance to speak about your personal qualities, skills and previous experience that make you suitable for this role. Reflect on some of the things that you are really good at. Are you a great communicator? Do you have a knack for showing empathy to your clients? Have you supported your clients to achieve their personal goals? Mention anything that you are good at – and include examples if possible.

Can you outline a challenging experience that you have had, and how you dealt with it?

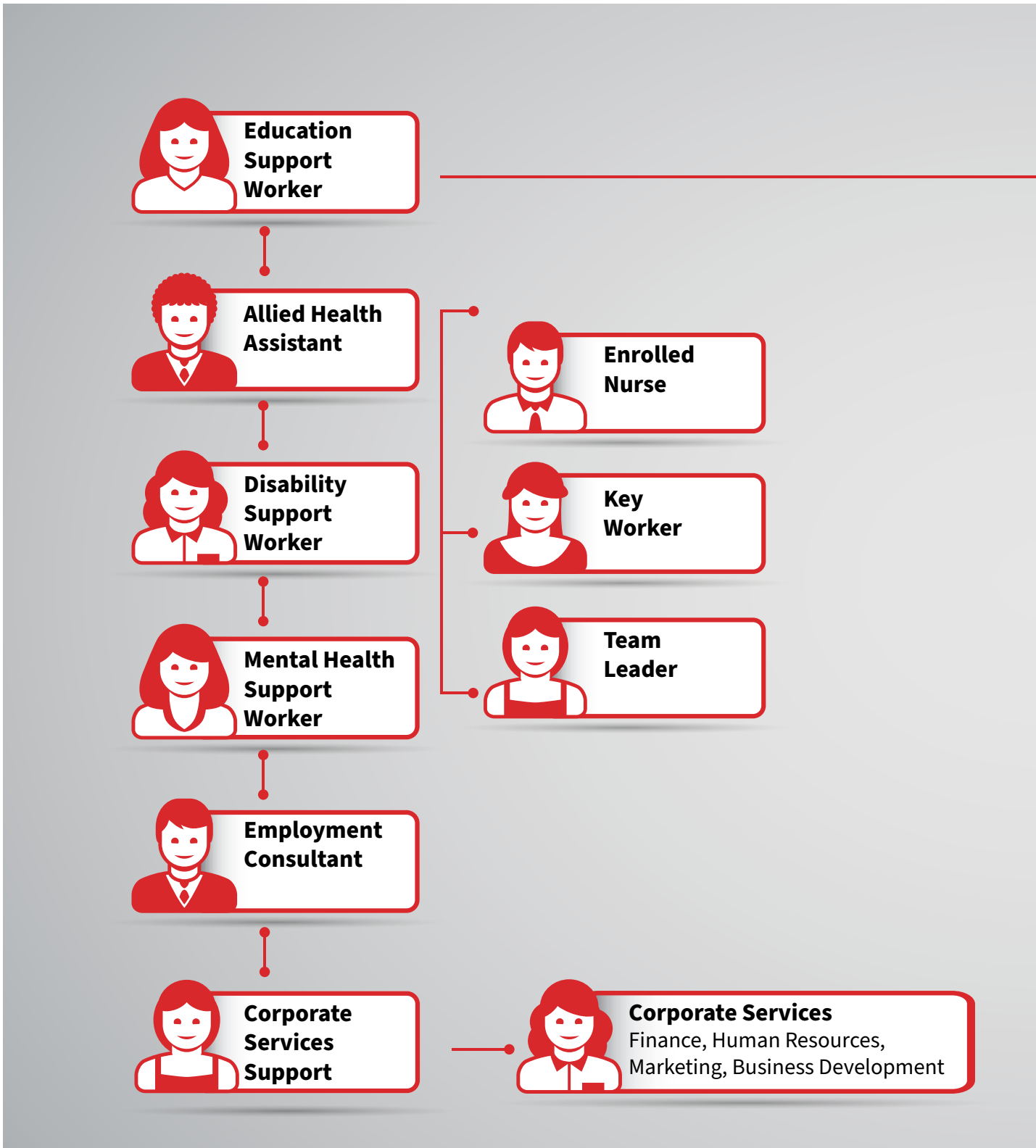
This is a behavioural type question, where the employer will want to know what happened (the problem) and what you personally did to find and implement a solution. Your answer can demonstrate your adaptability and how you might cope in new and unfamiliar situations. You should draw on previous challenging roles that required quick decision making, and where you were able to strictly follow regulations and procedures.

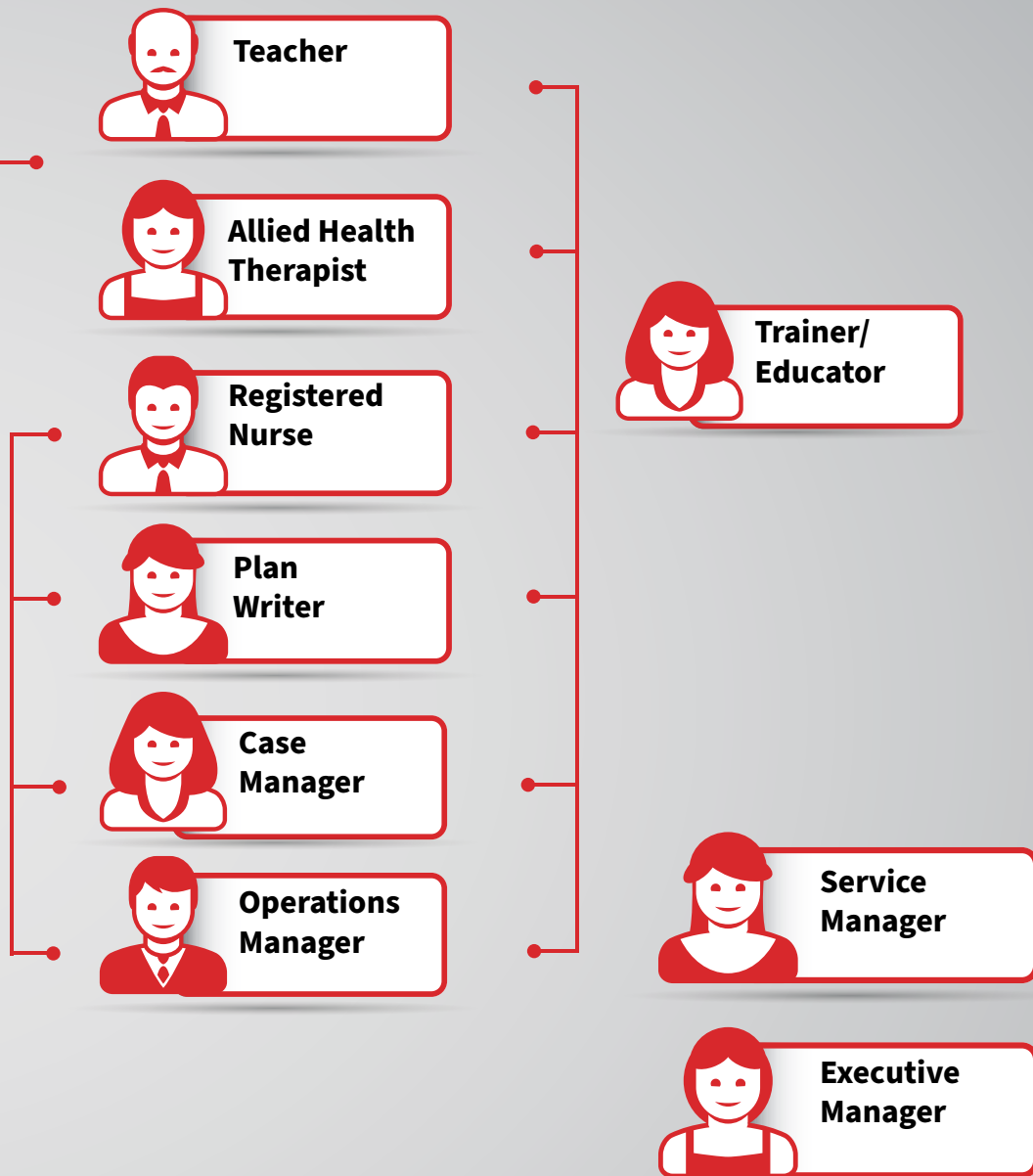
Describe how you would assess a client's needs?

There is always a balance between supporting your clients and leaving them to their own abilities. Knowing when to draw the line is key to facilitating their independence and learn on their own to be less reliant. Unless, of course, it is physically required, you should express the importance of functioning independently, and the happiness that comes with independence.

Career Pathways

There are a wide number of different career pathways that Disability Support Workers are able to take.





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Career pathways based on certificate course type

Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma
Assistant Community Services Worker	Disability Support Worker	Aged Care Activity Worker	Diversional Therapist	Disability Services Manager
	Home Care Assistant	Care Service Team Leader		
	Aged Care Worker	Care Supervisor (Aged Care)		
		Disability Officer - Day Support		
		Disability Support Worker		
		Leisure and Therapy Assistant		
		Coordinator of Volunteers (Services to Older People)		



Our locations

With over 1800 staff and services across NSW, QLD, SA and VIC, we provide quality support to more than 1500 clients each year.



Adelaide

(08) 8172 6210

Unit 4, 53 – 57 Glen Osmond Road
Eastwood SA 5063

Ballarat

(03) 5303 0409

39 Webster Street
Ballarat VIC 3350

Baulkham Hills

(02) 8850 4212

4 / 11-13 Brookhollow Avenue
Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

Brisbane

(07) 3498 6320

1 Miles Platting Road
Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113

Suite 2.11/371 Macarthur Avenue
Hamilton QLD 4006

25 Cambridge Parade
Manly QLD 4179

Camberwell

(03) 9829 9120

Unit 2, 6 Railway Parade
Camberwell VIC 3124

Chippendale

(02) 8736 7220

Suite 2 & 3, Level 1
12-16 Chippen Street
Chippendale NSW 2008

Coffs Harbour

(02) 6651 3220

1/129 West High Street
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Geelong

(03) 5272 7700

Suite 3, 74 Gheringhap Street
Geelong VIC 3220

Sunshine

(03) 8798 9650

Level 5, 12 Clarke Street
Sunshine VIC 3020

Toronto

(02) 4041 5314

104 Brighton Avenue
Toronto NSW 2283



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