

CARE MANAGERS IN AGED CARE

2026 Satisfaction Survey Report

e4 PEOPLE



We reached out to 4,701 Care Managers working across residential and community aged care services to better understand satisfaction levels, workload pressures, burnout risk, and the key factors influencing retention in 2026.

This report captures both quantitative survey results and direct Care Manager commentary, offering a grounded view of the challenges and rewards of leading care delivery in today's aged care environment.

The findings highlight a workforce that remains deeply invested in residents and quality outcomes, yet increasingly strained by workload, compliance demands, and limited organisational support.

1. Job Satisfaction with Current Role

Care Managers reported moderate overall job satisfaction, with responses clustering around neutral to dissatisfied.

- National satisfaction ratings
 - Very Dissatisfied: 14.7%
 - Dissatisfied: 17.6%
 - Neutral: 41.2%
 - Satisfied: 23.5%
 - Very Satisfied: 2.9%

While many respondents still find their roles meaningful, satisfaction is heavily impacted by workload, support structures, and workload sustainability.

State breakdown:

- **NSW:** Care Managers reported higher dissatisfaction, with workload volume, staffing gaps, and poor communication from senior leadership cited most frequently.
- **VIC:** Satisfaction was mixed. Those working in metro facilities reported higher stress related to compliance and staffing, while regional respondents felt more supported.
- **QLD:** Slightly higher satisfaction overall, particularly in regional roles where autonomy and team cohesion were stronger.
- **WA:** Smaller response numbers but consistently lower satisfaction, driven by isolation, workforce shortages, and limited access to support.
- **TAS:** Feedback focused on role overload and lack of psychological safety, with lower reported satisfaction.

▶ *"The role itself is rewarding, but the expectations are unrealistic."*



WHAT THIS MEANS

Care Managers remain engaged with the purpose of their roles; dissatisfaction stems from how the role is resourced and supported, not from the work itself.

2. Risk of Burnout

Burnout emerged as a dominant issue across all states and experience levels.

- Commonly reported contributors included:
 - Excessive workloads and large caseloads
 - Long and unpredictable working hours
 - Emotional strain without formal support
 - Administrative and compliance burden

Several respondents indicated they had recently exited roles or were actively seeking alternatives due to burnout.

State trends

- **NSW & VIC:** Higher burnout risk linked to staffing shortages, compliance pressure, and inability to step away from operational firefighting.
- **QLD:** Slightly lower burnout risk, particularly in regional settings, though workforce shortages remain a concern.
- **WA:** High reported fatigue due to limited workforce pools and expanded responsibility scopes.
- **TAS:** Burnout linked closely to poor workplace culture and lack of psychological safety.

▶ *"The workload is not sustainable long-term."*

WHAT THIS MEANS

Burnout is no longer a theoretical risk — it is actively driving turnover and disengagement, particularly among experienced Care Managers.



3. Salary alignment with responsibilities

Despite a wide range of salaries reported, perceived pay misalignment was consistent.

Care Managers expressed that remuneration does not adequately reflect:

- Scope of accountability
- Emotional burden
- After-hours work and unpaid overtime
- Increased compliance and reporting load

▶ *"There are responsibilities, but no benefits."*

- **State breakdown:**

- **NSW & VIC:** Strong dissatisfaction with salary alignment, especially in metro areas with higher living costs.
- **QLD:** Slightly better perceived alignment in regional roles, though concerns remain.
- **WA:** High dissatisfaction, with respondents noting workload increases without commensurate pay rises.
- **TAS:** Pay concerns compounded by limited role flexibility.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Pay dissatisfaction is driven less by base figures and more by fairness and recognition. Care Managers want alignment between responsibility and reward.

4. Level of support received in the workplace

Support from senior leadership and organisations was described as inconsistent and often inadequate.

Key concerns included:

- Poor communication from higher management
- Limited operational backup
- Lack of clarity around expectations
- Feeling isolated in decision-making

▶ *"We were left to figure things out on our own."*



State trends:

- NSW, VIC & WA: Highest dissatisfaction with support, particularly around responsiveness from executive teams.
- QLD: More positive feedback where smaller teams allowed stronger relationships.
- TAS: Reports of unsupportive cultures and lack of trust

WHAT THIS MEANS

When Care Managers lack organisational backing, decision fatigue and burnout escalate rapidly, increasing turnover risk.

5. Location's impact on job satisfaction

Location continued to influence satisfaction and workload experience.

- **Metro settings:** Higher stress, heavier caseloads, staffing shortages, limited flexibility
- **Regional & rural settings:** Greater autonomy and team cohesion, offset by resource constraints

State overview

- **NSW & VIC:** Metro roles reported more negative impact due to workload and commute.
- **QLD:** Regional roles showed the most positive location impact.
- **WA:** Remote locations created added pressure due to isolation.
- **TAS:** Mixed impact, influenced heavily by individual workplace culture.

**WHAT THIS MEANS**

Location alone does not determine satisfaction - support structures and resources matter more.

Areas for improvement in the Care Manager role

Respondents consistently highlighted:

- Workload and caseload reduction
- Clearer role boundaries
- Improved communication from leadership
- Fair, transparent salary frameworks
- Better training for systems and compliance changes

Respondents consistently highlighted:

- Some praised structured learning and CPD access
- Others reported receiving little to no guidance

▶ *"More training — we haven't received any."*

WHAT THIS MEANS

Investment in structured training and realistic expectations directly improves confidence, engagement, and retention.

SUMMARY

This survey highlights a workforce that is:

- Deeply committed to residents and quality care
- Increasingly strained by workload and burnout
- Actively reassessing long-term career sustainability

Without meaningful change to workload, support, and pay alignment, the aged care sector risks losing experienced Care Managers at a critical time.

Addressing these challenges will be essential to improving retention, care quality, and leadership stability across aged care services.

We aim to run this survey again before the end of the year to increase state representation, track changes in satisfaction and burnout, and identify emerging retention risks.

The goal is to provide ongoing, actionable insight to support Care Managers - and the organisations that rely on them - across Australia.

