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Talent and technology  
bringing the healthcare  
workforce back to full strength



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Deloitte's global alliance partner ServiceNow is on a mission to use cloud platforms and digital technology to help healthcare workers manage their workload, job satisfaction and wellbeing goals.

# A system under pressure

As the demands on our health system continue to rise, the pressure on our healthcare workforce intensifies.

Clinicians and other healthcare employees are experiencing fatigue, while a complex regulatory environment and outdated work practices are adding to the strain. A rapidly changing technological landscape is also challenging the historical value proposition for generations looking to enter the workforce and choose a career in health.

With this backdrop, Deloitte is proud to release 'Australia's Health Reimagined: Voice of the Workforce', providing an overdue focus on the perspectives of our healthcare workforce. This report also reemphasises our commitment at Deloitte to reimagining modern healthcare in Australia and improving the health system through integrated and practical changes.

We undertook a survey of 385 clinicians nationally – a representative sample of doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals – supplemented by 42 interviews with senior healthcare executives. The aim? To discover their unique point of view on the critical challenges associated with healthcare.

The report identifies five key factors confronting the health workforce, and details a framework – what we call the 5Rs: **redesign, reengage, retain, reach, and reform** – to guide and empower leaders as they reimagine Australia's healthcare workforce. This framework provides a renewed focus for the healthcare system and its most important asset – **people**.

At the same time, Deloitte understands that healthcare leaders and front-line workers have an aspiration to co-design new ways of working and solutions, especially in the form of technology platforms and tools that can empower clinicians, employees and executive teams as they perform their daily duties.

This is where our global alliance partner, ServiceNow, can support. ServiceNow offers a cloud-based platform and solutions to help digitise and unify healthcare organisations so they can find smarter, faster and better ways to work. In this way, ServiceNow is positioned well to support the redesign of key workflows in healthcare

## Growing concerns: A snapshot of Australia's healthcare system



**2,112,600**  
Employed



**25.8%**  
Past growth



**15.8%**  
Future growth



**\$1,150**  
Weekly earnings



**15.3%**  
Workforce share



**56.9%**  
Full-time share



**76.2%**  
Female share



**41**  
Average age

# The findings

Australia's Health Reimagined: Voice of the Workforce identifies five key challenges that are testing the health workforce. In this section, we list those elements and outline some of the key pressure points in the system. In the second section, we explain how ServiceNow can help industry leaders and the workforce fight back.

## 1. Workload increasing

With more than three-quarters of survey respondents believing their workload had increased since March 2020, the pressures are pushing the healthcare system and its people beyond capacity. Frontline clinicians are struggling with an administrative burden and most respondents want these duties to be streamlined, allocated elsewhere, or avoided entirely to create more time for higher-value tasks.

The following factors are central to the crisis.

**Surging service demands** – the burden of disease, an ageing and growing population, and patient expectations for more personalised health support all contribute to an over-stretched health system.

**The COVID-19 aftermath** – the pandemic has disrupted the provision of healthcare and exacerbated workforce shortages, with the sector still reporting high staff absences due to sickness, as well as a reduction in international recruitment.

**Administrative overload** – scheduling, rostering and auditing work is weighing down staff, with two-thirds of respondents saying such duties could be avoided entirely to direct clinician time to higher-value tasks.

### The key numbers

# 76%

of respondents say their workload has increased since March 2020.

# 45%

attribute the increase to a change in demand for healthcare services

## 2. People moving on

Workforce supply – or a lack thereof – is a critical issue that underpins system-wide concerns and diminishes the ability to provide high-quality care. Tellingly, a quarter of respondents are looking to leave the profession and change careers, while the majority have at least considered cutting hours, or opting for part-time roles.

The following factors are exacerbating the problem.

**Staff feeling under appreciated** – nurses and midwives at the beginning of their careers are at the greatest risk of leaving the profession, and these workers are especially dissatisfied with the lack of recognition and appreciation they receive.

**Flexibility a work in progress** – in a post-COVID world where part-time and hybrid work is in favour, more focus is required on flexible schedules, shorter shifts, or job-sharing roles to improve the employee experience.

**Younger generations transient** – 30% of millennial and Gen Z employees plan to stay in their current workplace for less than two years, pointing to challenges around generational shifts that are centred on a desire for greater purpose and flexibility.

### The key numbers

# 71%

of frontline clinicians have considered changing their employment during the previous 12 months.

# 2 in 5

have thought about reducing their hours to part-time.



### 3. Psychological safety

Healthcare work is clearly taking its toll, with many survey respondents suffering physically and mentally because of high work demands and stressors. Those with less work experience, especially junior nurses, midwives and doctors, are affected to a greater extent in terms of their wellbeing and dissatisfaction.

The following factors are having an impact.

**Pandemic hangover** – the absence of suitable medical treatments and the ongoing risk and fear of infection have placed a huge strain on staff.

**High demands, low recognition** – excessive workloads rank as the top contributor to “unhelpful feelings of stress” as people do their work, followed by poorly managed work procedures and low levels of recognition and reward.

**Wellbeing fears** – younger health workers, including junior doctors, are especially susceptible to high fatigue and suicide rates. Many feel overworked and worry about a lack of employment security.

### 4. Engagement

A lack of consultation is a sticking point with clinicians, with almost two in three questioning executive leaders’ engagement on critical issues. To achieve purpose-led change, the healthcare sector must get the human factors right. For now, there is a lack of bespoke engagement and retention strategies that acknowledge the different motivators across generations, especially junior staff. One New Zealand case study highlights the value of communications campaigns through the ServiceNow portal that are designed to improve interaction between leaders and clinicians, with the satisfaction rate of employees jumping from 3.6 out of 10 to 9.4.

The following factors are in play.

**Inadequate listening and learning culture** – more can be done to develop regular opportunities for staff to be listened to, especially by senior leaders, including through staff engagement activities and career development conversations.

**Human touch lacking** – workplaces need to develop employee initiatives that reward and recognise staff, with a focus on the human factors that drive motivation and influence wellbeing.

**Digital deficit** – it is time to explore ways to modernise workplaces and improve the employee experience through more efficient and digitised people services.

#### The key numbers

1 in 2

frontline clinicians say work has negatively affected their mental health during the prior 12 months

70%

of junior doctors believe work is negatively affecting their mental and physical health

#### The key numbers

59%

of frontline clinicians disagree or are neutral that the executive leadership at their workplace consults employees about critical issues that concern staff

69%

feel valued by their workplace, but 62% with less than five years’ experience do not feel valued

## 5. Trust

Clinicians also disagree that the executive leadership at their workplaces can be trusted to tell things the way they are, pointing to cultural and leadership alignment gaps that need to be addressed. This is crucial because good leadership, the culture of an organisation and the delivery of high-quality care are inextricably linked.

The following factors having an impact.

**Empathy gap** – focusing on human skills such as empathy is especially important in today's digital society and is required to build psychological safety and trust for teams.

**Collaboration in short supply** – for greater trust and meaningful change to be achieved, there is a need for greater collaboration among all stakeholders to solve myriad tests facing the sector.

### The key numbers

63%

disagree or are neutral that their executive leadership can be trusted to tell things the way they are

67%

agree that they can discuss issues in the workplace with their manager in an open and honest way



# The 5Rs framework

The 5Rs – **redesign, reengage, retain, reach and reform** – can guide and empower leaders as they support Australia's healthcare workers.



## 1. Redesign Redesigning ways of working

Discover where immediate action should be taken to alleviate pressure, with a call to redesign healthcare service models through sustainable ways of working which unlock capacity

**Key stakeholders:**  
organisations and industry leaders

**Timeframes:**  
immediate



## 2. Reengage Prioritising wellbeing and the employee experience

Focus on reengaging the existing workforce by improving the employee experience, with a particular emphasis on mental and physical wellbeing.

**Key stakeholders:**  
organisations

**Timeframes:**  
immediate to short-term



## 3. Retain Focusing on sustainability, satisfaction and flexibility

Listen to, understand and address the evolving needs and wants of employees, especially younger generations, and the emerging workforce to create a sustainable workforce and avoid the cost of replacement, losing knowledge and skills, and impacting culture through high turnover.

**Key stakeholders:**  
organisations

**Timeframes:**  
short- to medium-term



## 4. Reach Prioritising investment in enhanced training models and career pathways

Develop an accessible, modern workforce by re-prioritising investments to enhance professional and industry capabilities, through training models, career pathways and redefined scopes of practice.

**Key stakeholders:**  
organisations, industry leaders and government, Higher education, Professional bodies, Recruitment agencies

**Timeframes:**  
medium- to long-term



## 5. Reform Transforming to new models of care, digitising an enhanced system, and improving culture and leadership across the healthcare system.

### Improving culture and leadership across the healthcare system.

The longer-term focus is to re-envision and reform the healthcare system more holistically, using the perspectives of the workforce to inform solutions that are designed based on human factors to increase efficiency and enhance the workforce and consumer experience.

**Key stakeholders:**  
organisations, industry leaders and government

**Timeframes:**  
medium- to long-term



# Here to help

## How ServiceNow can alleviate healthcare workers' headaches

### 1. Workload increasing

#### Using technology to reduce the administrative burden

ServiceNow believes in enabling clinicians to be clinicians, rather than administrative assistants. To that end, decisive action should be taken to **redesign** ways of working and make the growing workload easier to manage. ServiceNow's Healthcare and Life Sciences (HCLS) module streamlines workflows, removes paper-based forms and simplifies operations. In tandem with Deloitte's ConvergeCare offering, enabled by the ServiceNow platform, healthcare organisations can digitise many aspects of clinical and non-clinical administration, from clinical administration decision-support capability, rostering and shift management, and home-care solutions – letting clinicians focus on their patients. One client using ConvergeCare, enabled by ServiceNow, reports a saving of up to 100,000 hours of clinicians' time in its first year of use.

**The Deloitte view:**  
**Redesign** your organisation using technology purposefully to support decision-making and future-proof new ways of working.

### 2. People moving on

#### Understanding and developing talent to keep employees in the fold

The ServiceNow platform includes a dynamic, AI-powered approach for employee growth and skills development. It acts as an engagement layer that sits across other platforms which gives workers access to professional development and wellbeing programs that propel their career choices and make it easier for organisations to **retain** them. The platform uses comprehensive real-time workforce data and insights to monitor individual employees and **reengage** them in the workforce. In addition, the Alumni Service Centre provides a way for healthcare organisations to stay connected with former employees, volunteers and contractors and to reach them if they want to reconnect with the industry.

For team leaders and managers, the ability to **reach** teams and instigate conversations about work and wellbeing allows the organisation to head off unrest and minimise staff departures. For clients dealing with issues related to high staff turnover, ServiceNow can deploy its Listening Posts app, which can create simple pulse surveys to **reengage** with employees and capture their touch points, gain insights from employee feedback, and improve the overall employee experience.

ServiceNow is also investing in AI skills intelligence engines to deliver career development solutions that enhance employee retention.

**The Deloitte view:**  
**Retain** your staff by taking time to know them, and show you care by setting up modern structures and injecting flexibility into work.

### 3. Psychological safety

#### Putting mental health and wellbeing on the agenda

The ServiceNow portal enables a holistic approach to supporting employees physically and emotionally. Team leaders, who often require support to manage workforce mental health and wellbeing, can use an innovative Manager Hub feature to **reach** and **reengage** with workers, as well as generative AI capabilities that serve as a tutor or coach for managers. Leaders can also initiate private and safe conversations with employees about any issues relating to work stress and problems in their private life. Taking such a proactive approach allows staff to better cope with workplace difficulties.

Such actions are increasingly important in Australia on the back of new legislation requiring organisations to protect the psychological safety and mental health of employees, and to meet associated requirements around respect for people in the workplace. The ServiceNow platform has Employee Relations and Health and Safety modules that give employees the resources they need to report safety incidents, while workplace safety teams can access tools

to conduct investigations and automate compliance. The platform can also be used to educate staff on issues such as mental health, harassment and employee relations through personalisation of learning. Employees can raise concerns through the portal and seek out support without fear of retribution.

**The Deloitte view:**  
**Reengage** with staff by offering rewards, recognition and appreciation, and make sure you listen, hear and act.

## 4. Engagement

### Connecting with employees through better listening and learning

The ServiceNow portal offers a sophisticated way to deploy communication campaigns with employees, including sending out educational programs and soliciting feedback from workers. In particular, employee voice surveys give leaders the ability to **reach** their employees and get them to share suggestions, opinions, concerns and ideas for improving the business.

ServiceNow's Listening Posts are also an effective way to **reengage** with employees who may be concerned about a lack of communication from team leaders. Campaigns can be very targeted; for example, in the healthcare space, such an initiative could be directed only at junior doctors and younger employees who feel unhappy at work. This is relevant in the context of Deloitte's Australia's Health Reimagined: Voice of the Workforce report, which notes that 70% of junior doctors believe work is negatively affecting their mental and physical health, and 30% of millennial and Gen Z employees plan to stay in their current workplace for less than two years. Many other scenarios exist.

**The Deloitte view:**  
**Reach** staff by prioritising investment in enhanced training models and career pathways, and be bold and consider what is possible with smarter workforce planning.

## 5. Trust

### Building transparency and belief in a digital world

Cultural **reform** of an organisation can make a big difference to trust levels from within. With dispersed teams in the healthcare sector, the use of ServiceNow's digital platform – which employees can access via a mobile app – allows leaders to foster transparency through honest communication when it is not always possible to meet face to face.

Automating workflows, from task execution to employee requests, and communicating on a single platform ensures that all team members have access to the same information, which in turn builds greater trust and confidence in leadership.

**The Deloitte view:**  
**Reform** the culture of your organisation by nurturing the next generation of leaders in a way that generates trust and embeds compassionate leadership as the norm.





**Learn more**

To find out how Deloitte and ServiceNow can assist your healthcare organisation and its workers with smarter technology solutions, visit [www.deloitte.com/au/en/alliances/service-now](http://www.deloitte.com/au/en/alliances/service-now), or contact us below.

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