



ANZSCO 2515-11, 13 Hospital/Retail Pharmacist

Northern Territory June 2018

Current labour market rating: Shortage
Previous labour market rating (June 2017): Shortage

Comments

Employers are continuing to find it very difficult to recruit due to a lack of suitable applicants applying for hospital/retail pharmacists' vacancies in the Northern Territory.

Survey results¹

- The Department of Jobs and Small Business surveyed employers who had recently advertised for hospital/retail pharmacists and supplemented the survey through cold calling other employers in this field.
- The survey shows 57 per cent of vacancies were filled, a decrease compared to 73 per cent of vacancies filled in 2017.
 - Metropolitan areas attracting on average three applicants per vacancy, and less than one suitable applicant per vacancy;
 - Regional areas attracting on average less than one applicant per vacancy and less than one suitable applicant per vacancy.
- Employers were seeking fully qualified applicants registered with the Pharmacy Board of Australia. Some employers were seeking applicants with experience in working with remote communities and others were seeking Senior or Management experience.
- Employers advised that multiple recruitment rounds are conducted (up to three times - approx. 4 weeks to 3 months in length) before a suitable applicant may be found.
- Employers who only desired the minimum requirements were able to fill positions within two to six weeks.
- Both metropolitan and regional employers advised that locality and remuneration is a constant barrier for employers to receive experienced applicants. Some employers are able to provide temporary or permanent accommodation and/or flights to assist in the attractiveness of the position while others were able to apply higher wage packages to meet the needs of applicants.
- Regional employers explained the historical difficulty to recruit into regional locations and noted that where required they recruit locums on a temporary basis but generally for a maximum of three months.

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business - Document library, Australian Government](#) and can also be accessed by the QR code.



Unsuitable applicants

- The main reasons cited by employers for applicants being unsuitable were if they lacked:
 - Practical Experience. Some applicants were new graduates and did not have the level of experience required for the specific vacancy, in particular, management roles;
 - cultural experience and APRHA registration. Some applicants did not meet these requirements.
- Employers were not willing to compromise on experience for senior level positions or take on a graduate as they lack APRHA registration and this may take several months from graduation for registration to be granted.

Demand and supply

- Pharmacists are predominately employed in the Retail and Health Care and Social Assistance industries in the Northern Territory. Health Care and Social Assistance is the second largest employing industry in the Northern Territory and is projected to increase by 2000 people over the five years to May 2022. It is also considered to be the fastest growing industry in Australia and is expected to grow by approximately 250,500 over the same period. The Retail Industry is the fifth highest employing industry in the Northern Territory and is predicted to experience a growth of 300 people to May 2022.²
- Between the 2011 and 2016 ABS Census's, the number of people employed as hospital/retail pharmacists in the Northern Territory increased from 90 to 160 (12 per cent increase each year). The majority of the growth was in retail pharmacy, however hospital pharmacists did increase from 10 to 30.³
- In 2017, advertised vacancies for this occupation almost doubled (approximately 96.6 per cent increase) over the previous 12 months. The number of advertised vacancies for hospital/retail pharmacists remains at around the same level over the 12 months to June 2018.⁴
- The pathway to becoming a pharmacist is the completion of a Bachelor of Pharmacy with an educator approved by the Australian Pharmacy Council, the accreditation authority for Pharmacy.
- Charles Darwin University is approved to deliver this course in the Northern Territory.⁵
- Pharmacists must be registered with the Pharmacy Board of Australia and meet the Board's registration standards in order to practice in Australia.
- The Pharmacy Board of Australia registrant data shows 253 practitioners registered with their principal place of practice in the Northern Territory. Almost all registrants are currently practicing.⁶ The Northern Territory accounts for less than one per cent of all registered pharmacists in Australia and its workforce is 64.4 per cent female and 35.6 per cent male.
- The number of domestic students commencing pharmacy studies, while low have remained at relatively similar levels across from 2011 averaging 12 students compared to 25 students in the period 2007 to 2010. Completions in 2016 increased slightly from 2015 and 2014 but remain lower than the average of 37 achieved in 2011 – 2013.⁷

² Australian Government Labour Market Information Portal "Regional Projections – interactive tool"

³ ABS Census data 2011 and 2016

⁴ Department of Jobs and Small Business Internet Vacancy Index data, June 2018, 12 month moving average.

⁵ Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, Education Accreditation Authorities

⁶ Pharmacy Board of Australia registrant data, June 2018, published August 2018

⁷ Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2006 to 2016, customised tables