



# ANZSCO 2524-11 Occupational Therapist

## Queensland June 2018

**Current labour market rating:**

**No Shortage**

Previous labour market rating (June 2017):

Regional Recruitment Difficulty

### Comments

Metropolitan and regional employers both generally fill their advertised vacancies. Regional employers are experiencing an increase in the average number of applicants, and the number of suitable applicants is remaining steady.

### Survey results<sup>1</sup>

- In this year's survey, vacancies were sourced across a range of public and private sectors including hospitals, rehabilitation centres, allied health services, and aged care facilities who assist community, elderly clients and people with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>
- Overall, 75 per cent of advertised vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, compared with 80 per cent in 2017.
  - Metropolitan employers (88 per cent) filled their advertised vacancies at a higher rate than those in regional locations (50 per cent).
- There were 5.8 applicants per vacancy on average this year compared with 7.0 applicants per vacancy in 2017.
  - The average number of applicants in metropolitan areas dropped from 10.7 in 2017 to 5.9.
  - In contrast, regional areas reported an increase from 4.4 applicants in 2017 to 5.5 applicants.
- Overall, the average number of qualified applicants per vacancy was 4.0, compared with 5.1 in 2017.
  - Metropolitan employers reported a drop in the number of qualified applicants from 8.2 in 2017 to 4.4 this year.
  - Again, in contrast, regional employers reported an increase from 3.0 in 2017 to 3.3.
- While the average number of applicants (including qualified) in metropolitan areas declined from 2017, the number of suitable applicants remained steady (0.1 increase) in both metropolitan and regional areas, with 2.1 and 1.5 suitable applicants, respectively.

<sup>1</sup> 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 proportion of qualified applicants considered unsuitable increased marginally from 46 per cent in 2017 to 48 per cent.
- The most common factor rendering applicants unsuitable was the lack of direct experience in the area of practice required by employers, such as aged and community care, mental health or experience with specific caseloads.
  - Some employers advised they would consider new graduates if the talent pool of experienced applicants was low, while others deemed all new graduates as lacking essential experience.

## Demand and supply trends

- Demand for occupational therapists has increased, reportedly due to the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland from 2016.
- The Department of Jobs and Small Business's Internet Vacancy Index data shows that the number of internet vacancies for occupational therapists in Queensland have trended upwards during the period July 2014 (28) and June 2018 (100).<sup>3</sup>
- There were 3902 registered occupational therapists in Queensland as of March 2018, an increase of approximately 7.6 per cent from March 2017.<sup>4</sup>
- Entry to this profession is via a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy and registration with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia.
- The most recent figures from Department of Education and Training show that 373 students commenced a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy in Queensland during 2016, decreasing slightly by 3.8 per cent from the previous year (388).<sup>5</sup>
  - The number of new graduates entering the labour market in 2016 (208) also saw a 3.3 per cent decrease from the previous year (215) although remaining higher than the annual completion rates recorded between 2011 and 2014.<sup>6</sup>
- Data from the Department of Home Affairs show that temporary skilled migration is a minimal source of supply to this profession with an average of five or less (class 457 and 482) visas granted each year in Queensland since 2014.<sup>7</sup>

## Other indicators and issues

- Several employers reported an increase in demand for occupational therapists and surmised that it was due to the nationwide rollout of the NDIS and growth in the aged care sector.
- Private aged care industry employers also reported issues in recruiting, as they were unable to offer the same remuneration as some government positions.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index occupational data, Mar 2006 onwards

<sup>4</sup> Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, Statistics, Registrant data Mar 2018

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Department of Home Affairs, Temporary work skilled visas granted, 2017-18 to Mar 2018