

Labour Market Research – Health Professionals

Northern Territory

June quarter 2018

| ANZSCO Code | Occupations in cluster | Rating |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 2346-11 | Medical Laboratory Scientist* | No Shortage |
| 2512-11 | Medical Diagnostic Radiographer | Shortage |
| 2512-14 | Sonographer | Cannot Rate |
| 2514-11 | Optometrist* | Shortage |
| 2515-11,13 | Hospital/Retail Pharmacist | Shortage |
| 2524-11 | Occupational Therapist | Shortage |
| 2525-11 | Physiotherapist | Shortage |
| 2526-11 | Podiatrist* | No Shortage |
| 2527-12 | Speech Pathologist* | Shortage |

* Occupations assessed at the national level, separate rating not available for Northern Territory

Key issues

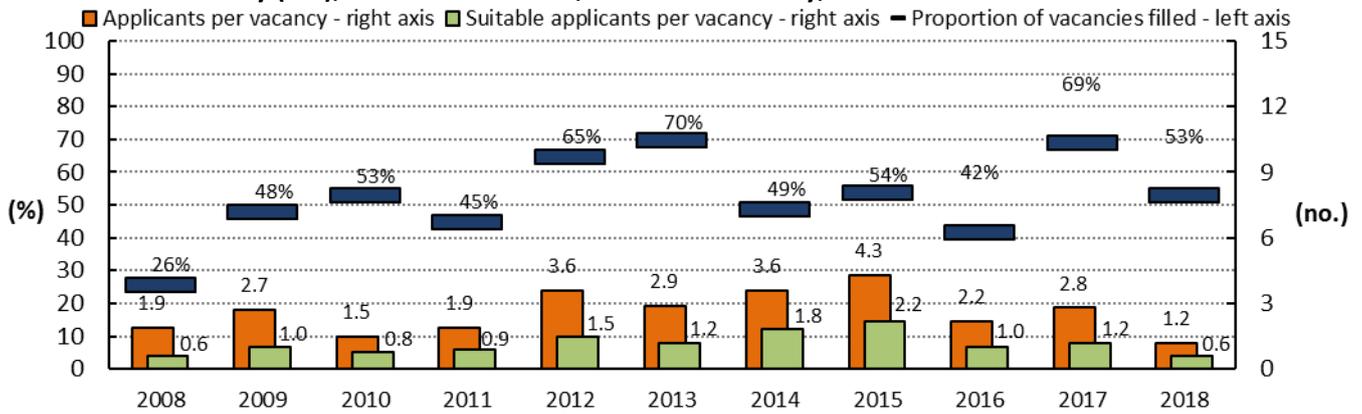
- The number of qualified and suitable applicants applying for positions in these occupations has decreased, almost halving over the 12 months to 2018.
- Although employers in metropolitan areas had a higher success rate in filling their vacancies compared to regional employers, overall there was less than one person per vacancy considered suitable in all occupations.
- Although, 67 per cent of metropolitan vacancies for medical diagnostic radiographers were filled, at least half of the surveyed employers noted their intention to recruit international applicants as they were unable to source qualified and experienced applicants to meet their needs.
- Regional employer's difficulties were even more challenging and they were having to rely on short term locums to continue to meet ongoing operational needs.
- Surveyed employers advertising for physiotherapists experienced the most difficulties, attracting very low numbers of applicants and very few applicants were considered suitable.

Survey results

- In 2018, across the eight occupations, 53 per cent of vacancies for health professions were filled compared to 69 per cent in 2017.
- The average number of qualified applicants decreased over the 12 months from 2.3 qualified applicants to less than one qualified and suitable applicant per vacancy. This is the lowest level since 2008.
- In the metropolitan region:
 - 57 per cent of vacancies were filled, up from 31 per cent reported in 2016.
 - There was one applicant per vacancy and less than one suitable (0.7) applicant per vacancy. Although a decrease in applicant numbers the number of applicants considered suitable remains the same as reported in the 2016 surveys.
- In regional areas:
 - 44 per cent of vacancies were filled, down from 56 per cent reported in 2016.
 - There were 1.8 applicants per vacancy and less than one suitable (0.6) suitable applicants per vacancy, a decrease in both applicant numbers and suitability from the 2016 surveys.
- At the occupational level, six of the eight occupations recorded one or less than one suitable applicant per vacancy. The exceptions were medical laboratory scientist and speech pathologist, both of which were assessed at the national level.

- All positions require qualifications, experience and professional registration with a relevant National Board for Health Practitioners.
- Physiotherapists and hospital/retail pharmacists attracted the lowest numbers of suitable applicants (0.4 and 0.6 respectively), down from 1.4 suitable applicants reported in 2017.
- The survey results show the difficulties employers continue to have in attracting and recruiting suitably qualified people for their vacancies.

Figure 1: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Health Professions, Northern Territory, 2007-2008 to 2017-2018



Source: Department of Jobs and Small Business, Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised

Unsuitable applicants

- The main reasons cited for applicants being considered unsuitable were if they lacked:
 - Australian recognized and approved qualifications and registration with the relevant National Board and Accreditation authority for health practitioners;
 - specialized skills or field experience;
 - experience working in remote locations and an awareness of Indigenous culture;
 - commitment to relocate to the Northern Territory.

Demand and supply trends

- People employed in these occupations generally work within four main industries:
 - Health Care and Social Assistance Industry,
 - Public Administration and Safety,
 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and
 - Retail.
- Currently the Public Administration and Safety industry is the largest employer with 22,100 employees in the Northern Territory. The Health Care and Social Assistance is the second largest employing industry and is projected to have the greatest growth over the five years to May 2022, increasing by 2000 people.¹ It is anticipated that 55 per cent of the jobs growth will occur in Darwin and 45 per cent in Outback NT, accounting for a growth of 900 jobs outside of Darwin.²
- Between the 2011 and 2016 ABS Census's, the number of people employed in these occupations grew by 32 per cent over the five years (5.7 per cent increase each year). There was increases in all occupations except medical diagnostic radiographers which remained at the same employment level.³ The biggest increases were in hospital/retail pharmacists.

¹ Employment Projections for the five years to May 2022, Regional employment by ANSIZ Industry, LMIP.gov.au

² Outback NT refers to any township outside of the Darwin/Palmerston region.

³ ABS Census data 2011 and 2016

- Demand for health professionals is primarily influenced by demographic trends and the utilisation of health care services. Over the past decade, Medicare data shows continuing increases in services for diagnostic imaging and allied health⁴ in the Northern Territory, with a 6.8 per cent increase over the 12 months to June 2018 in diagnostic imaging services, increasing from 144,062 to 153,853.⁵
- Online vacancies for this cluster of occupations has remained at similar levels over the 12 months to June 2018 and has steadily increased 7.8 per cent over the five years to June 2018.⁶
- All occupations except for physiotherapists and medical imaging professionals has seen an increase in the number of online advertisements over the year to June 2018.
- The number of advertisements for physiotherapists decreased by 10 per cent over the last 12 months, however physiotherapists continue to have the highest number of vacancies advertised, followed by occupational therapists.

⁴ Department of Human Services, Medicare Statistics, MBS category by group and sub-group. Allied Health, Category 8, M3 Services, Group Report. This group includes services provided under the occupations in this cluster.

⁵ Department of Human Services, Medicare Statistics, MBS category by group and sub-group, Group 5 Diagnostic Imaging Services.

⁶ Department of Jobs and Small Business Internet Vacancy Index, June 2018, 12 month moving average.