

# Labour Market Research – Nurses

## South Australia

June 2018

ANZSCO Code	Occupations in cluster	Rating
2541-11	Midwife	Regional Shortage
2544	Registered Nurse	No Shortage
4114-11	Enrolled Nurse	No Shortage

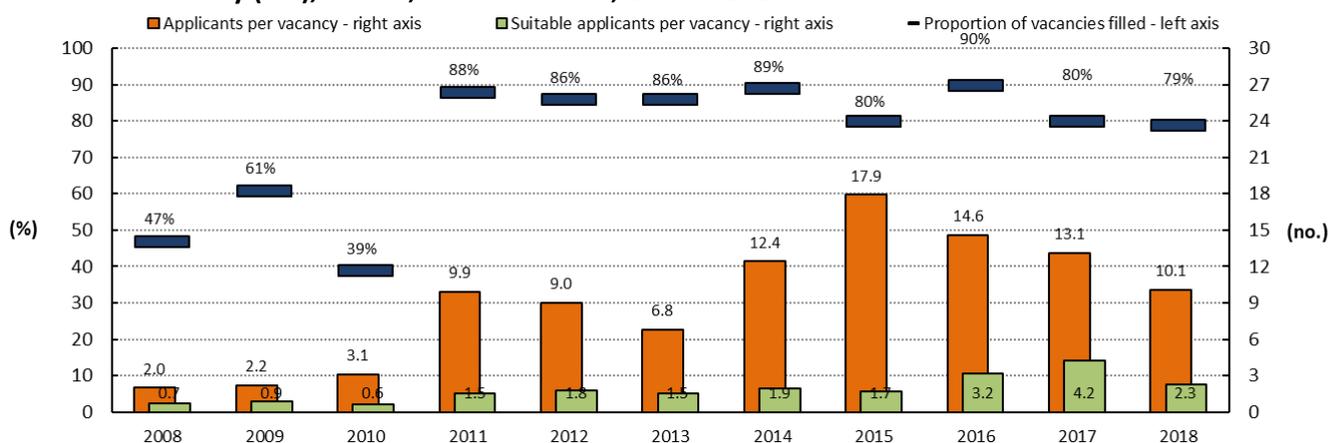
### Key issues

- Employers across a variety of health sectors, who were recruiting for enrolled and registered nurses, generally attracted a sufficient number of suitable applicants to fill vacancies.
- Metropolitan employers reported no recruitment difficulties, however regionally based employers often found it difficult to attract suitable applicants, especially dual qualified nurses and midwives.
- The proportion of nursing vacancies advertised and filled remained stable at 79 per cent, which is a very slight decrease from 80 per cent in 2017.
- There was no shortage of registered enrolled nurses in South Australia. However, employers in regional areas have difficulties recruiting midwives in comparison to metropolitan employers for four consecutive years.

### Survey results

- The proportion of nursing vacancies advertised and filled decreased to 79 per cent in 2018 compared with 80 per cent in 2017.
  - Historically, surveys have recorded the fill rate for nurses as between 80 and 90 per cent; this is the first year since 2011 where results have fallen below 80 per cent.
- The average number of applicants per vacancy decreased from 13.1 in 2017 to 10.1 in 2018 as did the number of suitable applicants per vacancy decreasing from 4.2 to 2.3 over the same period.

**Figure 1: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Nurses, South Australia, 2008 to 2018**

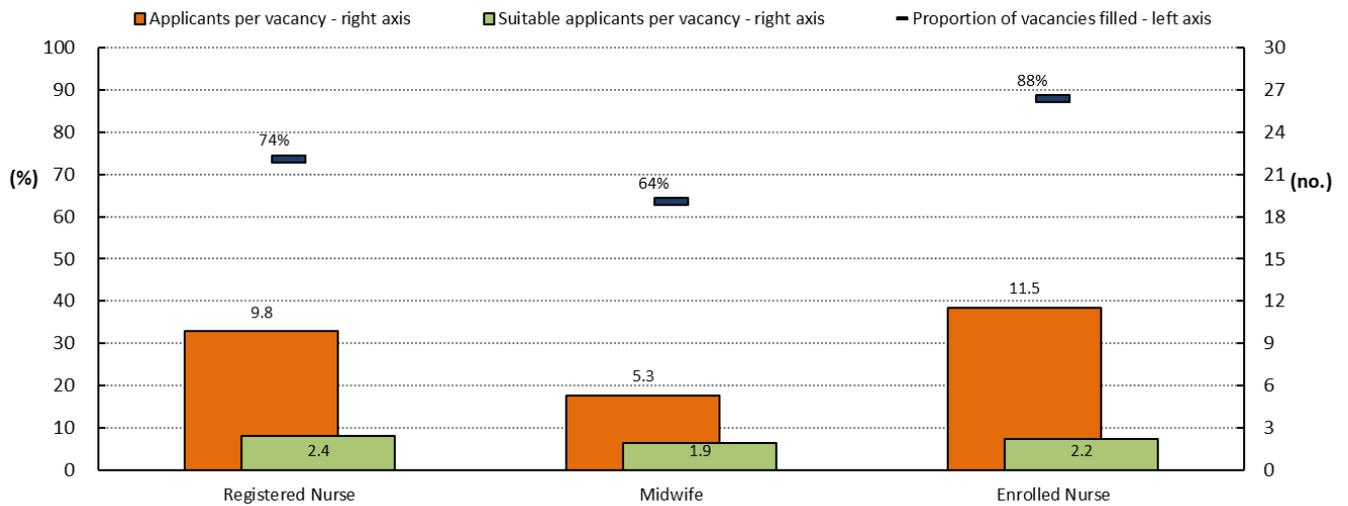


Source: Department of Jobs and Small Business, Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised.  
Note: Occupational coverage varies over time series.

- Vacancies in regional areas were generally more difficult to fill than vacancies in the Adelaide metropolitan area. The proportion of regional vacancies for all three nursing occupations filled was 60 per cent in comparison to 96 per cent for Adelaide.

- Adelaide vacancies attracted a considerably greater number of applicants, with 15 applicants per vacancy in comparison to 4.5 applicants per vacancy in regional areas.
- In metropolitan areas, there were 3.1 suitable applicants per vacancy compared to 1.3 suitable applicants in regional areas.
- The labour markets for enrolled and registered nurses (both in Adelaide and in regional areas) were rated as not being in shortage. This has remained the same for the past four years consecutively.
- However, in regional areas, employers have continued to have trouble in recruiting midwives, whereas Adelaide-based employers reported no significant difficulties.
- As was the case with previous surveys, metropolitan hospitals advertised for midwifery staff less frequently than rural hospitals.
  - Permanent positions were filled from casual pools or from registered midwives who cold called the hospital seeking midwifery employment.

**Figure 2: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Nurses, South Australia, 2018**



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

### Reasons applicants were unsuitable

- The number of suitable applicants per vacancy decreased in 2018. The average was 2.3 compared to 4.2 in 2017, which was at a ten year high.
- Nonetheless, while there were enough suitable applicants to fill the majority of surveyed vacancies, a significant number of applicants were rejected by employers
- Of the employers surveyed, 29 per cent of employers had unfilled vacancies and 21 per cent of applicants were unsuitable mainly due to lack of sufficient work experience
- All surveyed employers sought qualified nurses registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The majority of applicants met this criterion.
- In aggregate, employers considered applicants unsuitable for employment mainly because they lacked sufficient work experience, e.g. recent nursing graduates.
- Vacancies for midwives to work in regional areas often required dual registration as both a nurse and midwife but many applicants did not meet this criterion.
- In addition, employers frequently sought applicants with experience relevant to their industry sector. For example, employers in acute, aged care, pediatric or mental health settings considered applicants unsuitable unless experience specific to those sectors could be demonstrated.

## Demand and supply trends

- Overall demand for nurses was steady.
- Data from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) shows that the total number of practising South Australian nurses (including enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives) increased by 112 from March 2017 to March 2018 with a total number of all nurses of 33358. The overall increase was 0.3 per cent.<sup>1</sup>
- The Department Jobs and Small Business Internet Vacancy Index shows that job vacancies for registered nurses and enrolled nurses has increased from June 2017 to June 2018 and has remained the same for midwives.<sup>2</sup>
- South Australia is the principal place of practice for 12.4 per cent of all midwives in Australia and demographically the vast majority of nurses are female.<sup>3</sup>
- Longer term, the health and social assistance workforce is projected to expand with the growth and ageing of the population and rising demand for health services.<sup>4</sup>
- Overall, the supply of nurses to the South Australian labour market has been stable.
  - The number of domestic students completing a bachelor degree in general nursing from South Australian universities increased to an historical high of 935 in 2016.
  - The number of domestic students completing university midwifery qualifications in South Australia increased by around 40 per cent from 2015 (86) to (121) in 2016.<sup>5</sup>
- Pathways into enrolled nursing are available via numerous training providers, including TAFE SA and private Registered Training Organisations. The number of students in publicly funded training has decreased significantly from 2016 to 2017. South Australia reported the largest percentage decline in student numbers, with a decline of 11.2 per cent from 2016 to 2017 compared with all other states/territories.<sup>6</sup>
- Graduate nursing programs operate in several public and private sector hospitals across South Australia. Successful completion of the program does not guarantee permanent employment (which is subject to staffing budgets and other resource considerations).

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<sup>1</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia- Report-Registration-Data-Table

<sup>2</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index Detailed Occupation Data – March 2006 onwards

<sup>3</sup> Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority - Annual Report Summary 2016/17 – South Australia

<sup>4</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business, Labour Market Information Portal – Employment Projections

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Statistics Data Cube, 2016, domestic

<sup>6</sup> NCVET, VOCSTATS. Only includes data from the publicly funded vocational education and training sector