



ANZSCO 2544 Registered Nurse

Western Australia March 2014

Current labour market rating

Previous labour market rating (March 2013)

No shortage

Regional: Recruitment Difficulty

Metro: No Shortage

Comments

During this survey period (March 2014) there were no shortages evident for registered nurses within the state. A notable change was the experience of employers recruiting in regional areas where the average number of suitable applicants was about the same as in metropolitan Perth. Vacancies in the aged care and mental health sectors remained the most difficult to fill, while positions in Critical Care and Emergency were the most frequently advertised. The majority of employers wanted to fill their vacancies with experienced and senior registered nurses.

Survey results

- During the survey period there was a small difference between the recruitment experience of employers advertising vacancies for Registered Nurses (RN) in regional and metropolitan areas of WA. Employers in regional areas filled 83 per cent of their advertised vacancies, while those in the metropolitan area filled 79 per cent of their vacancies. Overall an average of about 80 per cent of all vacancies were filled, with the majority of employers reporting no significant problems filling their vacant positions within six weeks of advertising. The overall proportion of vacancies filled was lower than in 2013, when 95 per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled.
- There was approximately 20 percent more applications to fill advertised vacancies in regional areas when compared to the average number of applications in the metropolitan area. Overall there was an average of about 16 applications per vacancy with an average of approximately two qualified applicants considered suitable by employers.
- Vacancies were advertised for RNs across a variety of seniority levels and specialisations. The most frequently advertised vacancies were for RNs in Critical Care and Emergency.
- Employers advertising vacancies for RNs to work in aged care, community health and the mental health domains were the most difficult to fill.
- The majority of vacancies were in public hospitals, private hospitals and community based aged care facilities.
- Most vacancies were replacements for existing positions, with only about 20 per cent of positions being newly created.
- There were a high number of qualified applicants deemed unsuitable by employers because they did not have the level of experience required for the position.

Reasons for rating

- There were a high number of vacancies filled and most employers had a choice of qualified and suitable applicants from which to select person for their position.
- The average level of suitable applicants was approximately the same across the state.

Unsuitable applicants

- Applicants were deemed unsuitable for a variety of reasons with the most common being: lack of experience and specialised knowledge in a particular health domain. Often new graduates were rated as unsuitable for these reasons.

Demand and supply trends

- Demand for Registered Nurses (RNs) is driven by a number of factors including: population growth, advancements in medical technology, a greater number of people in the community with chronic health issues, such as and mental health problems, diabetes type 2, asthma, and obesity requiring regular access to health services.
- Census data indicates an increase overall of approximately 65 per cent between 2006 and 2011 in the number of employed RNs. The majority of RNs are employed in the metropolitan area working in large state government hospitals, private aged care facilities, mental health and community health services¹.
 - The top five health domains for employment of RNs remained the unchanged between the 2006 and 2011 census periods, but the proportion of RNs working within the domains changed.

Domain	ANZSCO	2011	2006	% change
Critical Care and Emergency	254415	1,540	819	42%
Aged Care	254412	1,430	1,719	-17%
Perioperative	254423	1,390	1,026	26%
Mental Health	254422	1,040	895	14%
Community Health	254414	950	897	6%

- In WA to become qualified as a registered nurse a student must complete a Bachelor of Science (Nursing) degree which is available at Edith Cowan, Murdoch, Notre Dame and Curtin universities. This undergraduate degree takes three or four years of full time study to complete and also includes professional clinical practice placements.
- There was an increase of about five per cent in student commencements to study nursing in 2012 compared to 2011 and an increase of about six per cent in completions of courses in 2012 than in the previous year².
- In December 2013, there were 33,375 RNs registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), of which there were 27,608 RNs with general registration. This number of general registrations represents an increase of approximately three per cent for 2012-13 compared to the previous year³.
- The Department of Employment Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) data shows that the number of advertised vacancies has remained reasonably stable for RNs over the 12 month period of January 2013 to January 2014⁴.
- There were about five per cent more student commencements to study General Nursing in 2012 compared to 2011 and about six per cent more completions of courses in 2012 than in the previous year.⁵

¹ ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2006 and 2011

² Department of Education, Higher Education-Commencements and Completions 2006-2012

³ Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency, December 2013

⁴ Department of Employment, Internet Vacancy Index, January 2014

⁵ Department of Education, Higher Education-Commencements and Completions 2006-2012

Other indicators and issues

- The Australian Nursing Federation reported that WA Health Department data shows that since 2010 the number of graduates applying for the government's graduate nursing employment program has grown by 67 per cent, while the number of places offered has only grown by 20 per cent⁶.
- The WA Health Budget is estimated to grow by seven per cent for hospital activity and overall expense growth of 4.5 per cent in the 2013-14 financial year. The model for funding of public hospitals is being transitioned to an activity based formula and the Budget has to provide funding for wage increases of 14 per cent over three years for RNs and Midwives. This is estimated to cost \$158.8 million over the term of the three year agreement.

⁶ Australian Nursing Federation, Newsletter