



# Occupational Therapist ANZSCO 2524-11

New South Wales  
June 2019

## Current labour market rating: Shortage

There is a shortage of occupational therapists in metropolitan and regional NSW. Employers were generally not able to fill vacancies.

## Key research findings

- Employers filled 50 per cent of vacancies with an average of 9.0 applicants per vacancy, 7.7 qualified applicants per vacancy and 2.7 suitable applicants per vacancy.
- Employers were surveyed across hospitals, private allied health services and rehabilitation clinics.
- Employers generally sought applicants with tertiary qualifications in occupational therapy, full registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA), memberships with professional bodies such as Occupational Therapy Australia, relevant and practical work experience in occupational therapy, working with children check clearance, drivers licence.
- The major reasons why applicants were found unsuitable was lack of relevant qualifications and registration with AHPRA, insufficient length of work experience in the occupation, a lack of specific industry experience, lack of technical skills and poor quality applications.

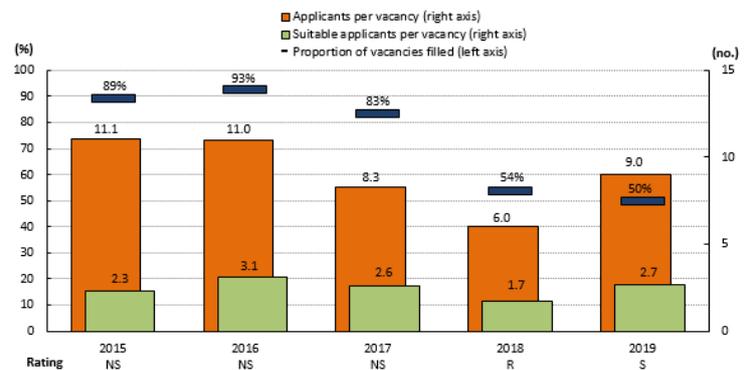
## Demand and supply

- Demand for occupational therapists has grown steadily in recent years due to the growth and ageing of the population, increased government expenditure on health, disability and aged care, and the increase role of the profession in patient care and rehabilitation.
- In March 2019, there were around 6027 registered and practicing occupational therapists in NSW. This was 6.1 per cent higher than in March 2018 and 36.9 per cent higher than in March 2014.
- Vacancies advertised on the internet for this occupation in NSW increased strongly over the year to May 2019, to the highest level since the Department's vacancy index began in 2006.

## 2019 Survey Results<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: Survey results, Occupational Therapist, 2015 to 2019



Key to ratings: S = Shortage; R = Regional shortage; NS = No shortage

- The number of domestic students competing a bachelor degree in occupational therapy in NSW universities averaged around 275 in the two years to 2017. This was higher than the average for the previous three years of 254 and the average over the past decade of 249.
  - The number of domestic students commencing a bachelor degree in occupational therapy in NSW universities averaged around 430 in the two years to 2017. This was above the average for the previous three years of 376 and the average over the past decade of 366.
- The number of temporary resident skilled visas granted to occupational therapists is very small compared to bachelor degree completions, with an average of nine visas being granted in NSW in the five years to 2017-18.

<sup>1</sup> The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology](#)

Additional Data Sources: AHPRA: Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, Registrant Data, various issues; Internet Vacancy Index, June 2019, 12 month moving average; Department of Education, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2017, customised tables; Department of Home Affairs, Temporary Resident (Skilled) Visas Granted