

ANZSCO 2541-11 Midwife

South Australia June 2018

Current labour market rating:

Regional Shortage

Previous labour market rating (June 2017):

Regional Shortage

Comments

Survey results were generally consistent with the findings in previous years. Employers in the Adelaide metropolitan area reported a more than adequate supply of suitable midwives. Most regional employers were unable to attract sufficient suitable applicants to fill their vacancies, however, the labour market appears to have eased slightly in regional South Australia, compared with last year.

Survey results¹

- Employers surveyed included public and private hospitals. Consistent with previous years, most vacancies surveyed were in regional areas.
- Employers in the Adelaide metropolitan area stated vacancies are not generally advertised as most positions are readily filled by graduate or Transition to Professional Practice for Registered Nurses and Midwives program² participants, and casual pool midwives.
- Regional employers filled 60 per cent of vacancies and attracted 3.8 applicants and 1.7 suitable applicants per vacancy.³ Regional labour market conditions appear to have eased in 2018, as last year regional employers filled only 17 per cent of vacancies and attracted 0.3 applicants and 0.2 suitable applicants per vacancy.
- The three education pathways by which midwives can enter the profession include direct entry midwifery (Bachelor of Midwifery), double degree (Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery) or postgraduate qualifications in midwifery following a nursing degree.⁴
- Regional employers sought dual qualified nurse midwives, mainly to offset midwifery with general nursing because birth numbers in smaller hospitals can be insufficient to justify midwife-only positions, and because direct entry midwives are not trained to manage some emergency situations that a nurse with dual qualifications can manage.
- Some regional employers indicated country hospitals were disadvantaged by the establishment of direct entry midwifery courses over 10 years ago.
- Most regional employers reported dual qualified midwives are in short supply because many are approaching retirement age and working part time.

¹ 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.

² Formerly called the SA Health Graduate Nurse/Midwifery Program.

³ The results were impacted by an employer with multiple filled vacancies. Excluding the employers results, a substantially lower proportion of vacancies were filled, and there were significantly fewer applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy.

⁴ Australian Government Department of Health, [Review of Australian Government Health Workforce Program](#), 2013.



- Metropolitan employers sought direct entry midwives and did not require dual qualifications. These employers reported an oversupply of midwifery graduates in metropolitan Adelaide, and the receipt of many unsolicited requests for work from recent graduates.

Unsuitable applicants

- Overall, regional employers stated direct entry midwives are unsuitable for smaller country health services as their qualifications are in midwifery only.
- Thirty-six per cent of applicants were unqualified and therefore unsuitable.
- Some applicants were determined unsuitable because they lacked specific experience, for example, small private hospital or regional hospital experience.
- Other applicants were unsuitable as they lacked experience in the occupation.

Demand and supply trends

- The most significant factor driving demand for midwives is the number of births.
- After decreasing by 3.9 per cent in 2015, the number of births registered in South Australia increased by approximately one per cent in 2016.⁵
- The number of dual qualified midwives registered in South Australia has decreased by an average of approximately five per cent each year since 2014, while the number of registered direct entry midwives has increased by an average of around 10 per each year over the period.
 - In 2018, the proportion of South Australian registered midwives with dual qualifications in nursing and midwifery reduced by approximately 2.5 per cent to 75 per cent.⁶
- The number of South Australian internet advertised vacancies for midwives was unchanged compared with 2017.⁷
- Following a slight decrease in 2015, the number of domestic students completing university midwifery qualifications in South Australia increased by approximately 40 per cent in 2016, to 859 undergraduate completions.⁸
- Graduate midwifery programs operate in several public and private sector hospitals across South Australia. Successful completion does not guarantee permanent employment, which is subject to staffing budgets and other resource considerations.
 - In 2016-2017, SA Health had approximately 50 positions for graduate midwives in metropolitan and country hospitals for the graduate Transition to Professional Practice Program, which was a decrease from the 52 positions offered in 2015-16.⁹

⁵ ABS, Births, Australia, 2016 (Cat. No. 3301.0)

⁶ Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Statistics, 2017 and 2018

⁷ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, May 2018, 12 month moving average

⁸ Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables

⁹ SA Health, [SA Health Transition to Professional Practice Program \(TPPP\) for Registered Midwives](#)