

<b>Hospital &amp; Retail Pharmacist</b>		<b>South Australia</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 2515-11, 2515-13	May 2009	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Hospital Pharmacist – Shortage; Retail Pharmacist – No Shortage	
<b>Comment</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

As at June 2008, there were 1469 practising pharmacists on the Pharmacy Board of South Australia register. This represented a 5.4 per cent increase compared to a year earlier. According to the 2006 ABS Census, around 11 per cent of pharmacists are hospital pharmacists and 85 per cent are retail pharmacists (the remainder are classified as industrial pharmacists). In December 2006, the South Australian Government agreed to participate in the Commonwealth Government's pharmaceutical reform in public hospitals. As a consequence, public hospitals have been advertising additional positions funded by this reform. This was reflected in DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index data which recorded a significant increase in newspaper vacancies in 2007 followed by a further substantial increase in 2008. Private sector employers reported no change in their workforce sizes over the past year, while there was a considerable increase in the number of employed pharmacists in large public hospitals. Although private sector employers had no plans to recruit additional staff in the short-term, the opposite was the case for public sector contacts.

### **Occupational supply**

The main source of supply is university training. The number of Australian students completing a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy degree averaged 69 per annum over the five years to 2008. The number of students commencing a pharmacy degree rose to 101 in 2007, compared with 94 the year before. Although there was a subsequent fall to 88 commencements in 2008, the upward trend in commencements to 2007 suggests supply is likely to increase over the medium term. In addition to local occupational supply, there was a net migration inflow of 55 pharmacists to South Australia in 2007-08, compared to 36 in 2006-07. The GCCA Graduate Destination Survey reported that 97 per cent of South Australian pharmacy graduates seeking full-time employment were successfully employed in 2008, slightly less than the 98 per cent recorded in 2007.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

A survey of hospital and community pharmacies showed that 53 per cent of all recently advertised pharmacist vacancies were filled within six weeks. However, while the vacancy filled rate for retail pharmacists was 100 per cent, for hospital pharmacist vacancies it was 33 per cent. Hospital-based vacancies received 0.6 suitable applicants per vacancy compared to a ratio of 1.3 for retail pharmacy vacancies. There were also greater difficulties in filling positions located in regional or remote localities. Most hospital pharmacist vacancies were difficult to fill because the positions required high levels of experience, including team leadership and provision of educational services to hospital staff. Community pharmacies contacted for this report were able to fill all of their recently advertised vacancies, although there was a limited choice of suitable applicants overall. Poor communication skills, inexperience and/or an inability to work the required hours were the main reasons for rejecting unsuitable applicants for these positions. The labour market for hospital pharmacists is rated as being in shortage but there appears to be no shortage of retail pharmacists.

### **Labour market outlook**

Demand for hospital pharmacists has grown over recent years due to the national health reforms and this may continue in the short-term. However, demand will eventually stabilise over the next 12 months and demand in the community pharmacy sector is expected to remain stable. Further, there is likely to be a steady increase in university pharmacy graduates over the next few years. Consequently, the current shortage of hospital pharmacists is unlikely to persist over the next 12 months.

