

Clinical Psychologist		Tasmania
ASCO Code: 2514-11	June 2008	
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Clinical psychologists are experts in human behaviour, and have studied the brain, memory, learning and human development. They assist people who are having difficulty controlling their emotions, thinking and behaviour, including those with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, serious and enduring mental illness, addictive behaviours and childhood behaviour disorders. As such, it is the frequency with which these conditions occur in the community which creates demand for their services.

ABS 2006 Census data show that there were 194 clinical psychologists employed in Tasmania. This reflects a 64 per cent increase on the 118 recorded in 2001. It is interesting to note the number of psychologists who are registered in the state (Psychologist Registration Board of Tasmania) stands at 459. Registration is not limited to clinical psychologists, it also includes the areas of health, education, sports, organisational and forensics. These classifications are also used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in the Census which helps to explain why there is a greater number of registrations compared with the total number of people classified as clinical psychologists by the ABS. Demand for clinical psychologists in the private sector has increased due to the Medicare rebate scheme which commenced in November 2006. Not only is demand for services greater, but private practice is a more attractive option for many clinical psychologists due to higher patient numbers with a greater capacity to pay.

Occupational supply

Clinical psychologists work in private practice, hospitals, universities, general medical practices, community health centres and mental health services. The training for psychologists in Tasmania is conducted by the University of Tasmania. The first three years of training can be done in either Hobart or Launceston as a Bachelor of Psychology with the Masters qualification in clinical psychology only being offered at the Hobart campus. Masters graduates meet the academic requirements for registration as a psychologist, membership of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and, following two years of supervised professional experience, membership of the APS College of Clinical Psychologists. The most up to date data for graduates from the masters course is from 2006 when there were three completions. There was also one doctorate awarded. The University commented that there are 22 new students enrolled in the masters program this year which indicates an increase in potential supply.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

During the lead up to the report there were no advertised positions for clinical psychologists. According to industry sources, there appears to be a shortage of clinical psychologists in the public sector due to the Medicare rebate making private practice more attractive. The Education Department requires that their psychologists also have the appropriate educational qualifications to practise in schools. Contacts in the education sector report it is almost impossible to attract clinical psychologists as they cannot compete with private sector wages and conditions.

There were also comments suggesting it is more difficult to recruit in the north and north-west, than in the south of the State.

Labour market outlook

Shortages are expected to continue for at least the next 12 months.