

<b>Dental Specialist, Dentist</b>		<b>New South Wales (NSW)</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 2523-11, 12	July 2009	
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	Metropolitan recruitment difficulty Regional shortage	
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Shortages of dental specialists and dentists are mainly evident in regional NSW.</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

The demand for dentist and dental specialist has increased moderately in recent years due to population growth and ageing, the reduction in tooth loss (which increases the number of teeth requiring treatments) and the greater demand for complex procedures such as root canal therapy, tooth restorations and crown and bridge work. ABS Census data indicate that the number of persons employed as dentists in NSW grew by 1.7 per cent a year from 2001 to 2006 and it is likely that modest employment growth has continued since then.

### **Occupational supply**

DEEWR estimates that supply from university completions averaged 55 a year in the two years to 2008, which was above the average of 42 a year for the previous two years. However, the training rate (completions of entry-level courses as a percentage of employed dentists) remains low at 1.4 per cent per annum based on estimated employment of 3700 dental specialists and dentists. Net immigration of dentists to NSW from overseas has increased markedly since 2003-04, averaging about 120 a year over the five years to 2007-08. Although not all overseas-trained dentists who migrate to NSW gain registration and practice in the profession, it is likely that supply from net-immigration outstrips that from local graduations. The NSW Department of Health (NSW Health) also provides supervised training and experience in regional NSW to 10 overseas-trained dentists a year under its International Dental Graduate Program.

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

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for dentists showed that 65 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of the surveyed advertisements. This was similar to the success rate in 2007 (67 per cent). The recruitment experience of employers, however, varied significantly. All the surveyed private sector employers who advertised positions based in Sydney and Newcastle were able to attract applications from qualified dentists. In most cases, these employers were able to fill positions with little difficulty, choosing the best of several suitable applicants. In a minority of cases, however, vacancies remained unfilled because the employer and the suitable applicant were unable to reach agreement over hours and conditions of employment. Employers noted that advertisements also attracted a large number of applicants with poor communication skills and many newly-registered dentists who were unsuitable for positions requiring them to work independently on complex treatments. Positions based in regional NSW proved more difficult to fill as they generally attracted fewer applicants and, in some cases, successful applicants eventually decided not to relocate in order to take up the position.

NSW Health reported that shortages of dental specialists and dentists in the public sector in Sydney had eased recently following a 15 per cent pay increase in October 2008. However, recruitment difficulties remained in some specialisations with a more general shortage in regional NSW.

### **Labour market outlook**

The trends driving the increase in underlying demand for dental services should continue over the short term and therefore demand for dentists is likely to remain firm. Course completions are projected to increase further over the next two years but this is unlikely to be sufficient to meet current shortfalls of dental specialists and dentists in regional NSW. The first completions from Charles Sturt University's new dental school are expected in 2013.

<b>Dentist and Dental Specialist</b>		<b>Victoria</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code: 2523-11, 12</b>		June 2009
<b>Labour market rating:</b>	No shortage	
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Private and/or metropolitan dental services appear to be adequately supplied to meet underlying demand whereas public and/or rural services experience difficulty</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Dentists diagnose and treat teeth and gums, undertake preventative procedures and conduct surgery. Dental specialists are experts in their field of dentistry and provide patients with highly complex dental treatment. Dentists normally require a five year Bachelor of Dental Science degree and specialists require an additional three year Masters in Dental Science. Both must be registered with the Dental Practice Board of Victoria. Dental services are provided from private practice and public dental clinics and demand is broadly in line with the population growth rate.

### **Occupational supply**

The number of dentists practicing in Victoria has risen due to a number of factors. Net migration into Victoria has increased every year for each of the last 4 years; 146 practitioners entered Victoria in 2007-08 which was double that recorded in 2004-05. Tempering this trend, as the proportion of migrants sourced from countries other than New Zealand and Great Britain has declined, the pass rate in the required examinations has declined to less than 50 per cent.

The number of university graduates has also increased over time with 88 persons completing the bachelor degree in 2007. The number of registrants from this cohort will be somewhat less due to international students who will not take up residency. In the largest dental school in the state 34 per cent of enrolled students were international students.

Dental registration board data show that in the period 2002-08 the number of dentists increased by over 14 per cent and the number of dental specialists increased by over 22 per cent; in 2008 there were 2542 registered dentists and 360 dental specialists. A complicating factor is that the distribution of dentists across the state is uneven. 2006 ABS Census data show there were 43.5 dentists (both public and private practice) per 100 000 population but that the rate across Victoria varied from less than 7 per 100 000 population in one rural region to over 24 per 100 000 in a metropolitan region. This indicates that, rather than a skills shortage, there is a maldistribution of dentists. Data on the working hours of dentists show a neutral relationship between the per capita incidence of dentists and hours worked. Thus in regions where the distribution of dentists is below the average, underlying demand for dental services may not be met with increased hours of practice.

One study found that a large proportion of dental graduates initially chose to work in the public sector and rural areas on graduation, primarily as a means of consolidating their clinical skills. However same study also found the retention rate declines rapidly with time with only 10 per cent still working in the public sector and only 20 per cent still working in rural areas when both were measured 3 years later. The Victoria state government has funded several initiatives to address distribution issues including scholarships for students to pursue a career in public clinics and rural public clinics.

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

This SERA found that 100 per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled with 3.5 suitable applicants per vacancy. Anecdotal evidence from some survey respondents supported other data indicating there is a maldistribution of dentists across the state where an underlying unmet demand for dental services exists in some regions but this unmet demand is expressed in prolonged waiting lists rather than as vacancies and is therefore not revealed in the survey data itself.

### **Labour market outlook**

The labour market rating is not expected to change over the outlook period.

<b>Dentist/Dental Specialist</b>	<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 2523-11,13	June 2009
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage
<b>Comment:</b>	

### **Occupational demand**

Dentists diagnose and treat teeth and gums, undertake preventative procedures and conduct surgery. With further study, dental graduates can become Endodontists, Periodontists, Prosthodontists, Paediatric Dentists, Oral/Maxillofacial Surgeons and Orthodontists. Most dental professionals work in private practice, but there are also public sector employment opportunities. Demand for these professions has strengthened in line with the State's population growth and economic, social and technological changes making dental care more appealing and accessible. Demand is best indicated by data from the Private Health Insurance Administration Council which show privately funded dental services increasing by 9.2 per cent or by 461 323 services over the year to March 2009. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' Skilled Vacancy Index for Queensland shows newspaper advertisements for dental professionals growing by 37 per cent over the year to May 2009.

### **Occupational supply**

Practicing as a dentist or dental specialist in Queensland requires the completion of a five-year Bachelor of Dental Science program or the combination of a three-year Bachelor of Oral Health in Dental Science and a two year Graduate Diploma in Dentistry. Registration with the Dental Board of Queensland is mandatory. Data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations indicate the average annual number of students entering dental programs each year between 2003 and 2006 was 53, but that has doubled since that time. Completions have averaged 42 since 2003, but this number is expected to strengthen in line with the growing enrolments, with the first boost to supply anticipated at the end of 2010. A new program commenced in the Far North in 2009 with supply expected to strengthen further at the end of 2013. Department of Immigration and Citizenship arrivals and departures data show that overseas migration may be providing some support to supply for these professions as 106 self-identified dental practitioners migrated to Queensland in 2007-08.

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

This year, only 17 per cent of vacancies for dental professionals were filled within six weeks of advertising. Employers considered 71 per cent of the applicants as unsuitable because they were unlicensed or they had limited experience. Regional employers were specifically seeking experienced dental professionals who could provide a full range of services in either isolation or under very limited supervision and this effectively excluded new graduates. Most respondents reported that apart from emergency care, dental visits are often one of the first health care service casualties of any economic downturn and the last six to twelve months have been no exception as demand progressively eased. Nonetheless, regional and public sector employers reported that they could not fill vacancies and they continue to experience difficulties attracting and recruiting suitable applicants. These employers attribute their inability to fill vacancies to a state-wide shortage of dental professionals but are hopeful that the growth in student numbers will help in bolstering supply. Public sector contacts maintain that demand in the public sector has not been met because remuneration and professional development opportunities are well below that offered in the private sector.

### **Labour market outlook**

In 2008, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare forecast that demand for dental services in Australia is expected to grow on average by 2.2 per cent each year until 2020. When combined with Queensland's ongoing population growth, demand for dental professionals looks set to strengthen. Although student numbers are increasing, any significant aid to supply is not likely to occur until the end of 2010. In the meantime, the Queensland labour market for dental professionals is in shortage and it is likely to remain that way for the next eighteen months.

<b>Dental Specialist and Dentist</b>		<b>South Australia</b>
ANZSCO Code: 2523-11 & 12	May 2009	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment		

### Occupational demand

Demand for dental services depends on demographic factors such as the size and age of the population, the general economic climate, and the extent of private health cover. Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates show that South Australia's population growth rate has increased from an average of around 0.6 per cent per annum in 2002 to 2004, to 1.1 per cent per annum in 2007 and 2008. Statistics from the Australian Government's Private Health Insurance Administration Council recorded a 4.9 per cent increase in the provision of dental services in 2007-08 among private health insurance members. This compares with a 3.8 per cent increase in 2006-07. As at June 2008, there were 1034 dentists and 140 dental specialists on the Dental Board of South Australia register. Compared to a year earlier, the number of registered dentists increased by 21 per cent and the number of registered dental specialists increased by two per cent. Dental specialists and dentists predominantly work in the health care and social assistance industry. These figures suggest there has been an increase in demand over the past year. This is confirmed by DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index which recorded an increase in newspaper vacancies in 2008 following a two year period of lower vacancy levels. Many of the employers contacted reported increasing the size of their workforce over the previous 12 months. However, most of the vacancies surveyed were for replacement staff and employers noted that staff turnover tends to be high. Nonetheless, a majority of employers had no plans to recruit additional staff in the short-term.

### Occupational supply

The main source of supply comes from university training. Up to 2005, there was an average of 40 new commencements per annum in the five-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree. However, the number of students commencing the dentistry degree course rose to 80 in 2005, though it fell back to an average of 57 per annum in the subsequent three years. As a consequence of the upward trend in commencements, the supply of graduates is likely to increase over the medium term. Skilled migration is a potential source of additional occupational supply. Australian government data show that there was a net migration inflow of 47 dentists to South Australia in 2007-08, compared to 36 in 2006-07. The GCCA Graduate Destination Survey reported that 90 per cent of South Australian dentistry graduates seeking full-time employment were successfully employed in 2008, slightly less than the 95 per cent recorded in 2007.

### Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of recently advertised dentistry vacancies showed that 73 per cent were filled within six weeks, compared to 57 per cent two years ago. On average, there were four applicants per vacancy but since many of these were rated as unsuitable, the ratio of suitable applicants was 1.5 per vacancy. There were greater difficulties in filling positions located in regional or remote localities compared to those in the Adelaide metropolitan area. Positions in the public sector were also more difficult to fill than private sector positions due to differences in wages and conditions. Overall, however, there does not appear to be a shortage of dentists and dental specialists.

### Labour market outlook

Current trends suggest demand for dental services will continue to rise over the foreseeable future. Most employers did not believe that the recent economic downturn was likely to have an adverse impact on demand for their services. At the same time, the supply of dentists from university training is expected to increase over the medium term. Consequently, a shortage of dentists or dental specialists is unlikely to emerge over the next year.

<b>Dentist</b>		<b>Western Australia</b>
ANZSCO Code: 2523-12		June 2009
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment :		

### Occupational demand

According to the Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health (ARCPOH) demand for dentists is determined by the size and age of the population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that the population in WA has increased by three per cent for the year ending in December 2008. ABS data also indicate the number of people who are aged 60 years and over living in WA has increased. According to the 2006 ABS census, the majority (over 96 per cent) of dentists in WA work in the major industry division of Health Care and Social Assistance and the number of dentists in WA has increased by 10 per cent between 2001 and 2006, to 836.

To practice as a dentist in WA, registration with the Dental Board of WA is required. There were 1371 registered dentists at June 2008, 1266 at June 2007, 1206 at June 2006 and 1142 at June 2005. This is an average increase of six per cent per year over this period. The Dental Board of WA has indicated that the majority of dentists are self-employed.

### Occupational supply

The University of Western Australia (UWA) is the only local training institution for dentists offering a five year full time Bachelor of Dental Science. The graduate numbers of domestic students of this course in recent years have been 10 in 2007 and 14 in 2006. Overseas migration to WA has provided a net gain of 63 dentists in 2007-08, which was an increase from 55 in 2006-07.

### Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for dentists found that 57 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks following advertising. There were approximately seven applicants per vacancy of whom less than three per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable. The data was skewed by one employer receiving a large number of applications for one position and deeming all applicants to be suitable. This contrasted with the experiences of most employers who indicated difficulties in recruitment.

Employers indicated the main reason advertised vacancies were not filled was that applicants lacked experience. Surveyed employers from private practices in metropolitan areas who advertised for part-time workers (two-three days per week) reported that they had no problem with recruitment. They said that most of the candidates were experienced and were either working part time for another practice and were looking for extra hours or were returning to the work force and only wanted part time work.

Employers in regional and remote areas reported difficulty in attracting applicants. Some employers in regional areas also indicated their services were fully booked for months ahead and reported shortages of dentists. Large employers in private practice who were looking for full time workers also reported shortages in metropolitan and regional areas. They said that even though they employed recent graduates they could not attract enough people to fill their requirements. Some employers said that they looked to recruit from the United Kingdom which has reciprocal registration requirements with Australia. A spokesperson for the WA Health Department indicated there was a shortage of dentists in WA especially in regional and remote areas. He added that they mainly recruit through the "Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme" which encourages dentists from overseas to work in remote and regional areas.

### Labour market outlook

Labour market information indicates a shortage of dentists in the medium to long term with shortages most evident in regional and remote areas.

<b>Dentist</b>		<b>Northern Territory</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code:</b> 2523-12		May 2009
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data show there were 58 dentists employed in the NT in 2006, a similar level of employment to that recorded in 2001. Employment for the occupation is too small in the NT for the ABS Labour Force data to provide a meaningful indicator of employment growth for the period following the 2006 Census. Employers commented that demand for dentists in the NT had been growing in line with the increasing population. The Australian Government Private Health Insurance Administration Council reported 37 354 dentist general treatments were claimed in the NT through private health insurance in the March 2009 quarter and the number of treatments claimed has increased significantly since June 2002.

### **Occupational supply**

There are currently no dental schools in the Northern Territory. Attracting dentists from interstate and overseas is therefore required for retaining and increasing the dentist labour market. However, ABS Census data indicate that over the five years to 2006 there was less interstate migration of dentists to the NT than for professional roles overall (30 per cent of employed NT dentists from interstate compared to 36 per cent of employed professionals overall).

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

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for dentists was undertaken for this report. Employers indicated they struggled to fill advertised vacancies for permanent roles but were able to fill short-term locum positions. Unsuitable applicants lacked clinical competencies or did not suit conditions at remote locations. Some employers said they thought the current competitive market for dentists made it harder to attract applicants to the NT, which is often perceived as a less desirable location because of its small size and relative isolation, when there are alternative options. It was particularly difficult to attract candidates to regional areas.

Recruits are mainly from overseas or interstate; when attempting to recruit, employers go to great lengths to attract applicants to dentist vacancies. Advertising in local and national papers, dental journals and using recruitment agencies is the standard approach. Employers surveyed said there were wage pressures in attracting dentists to consider relocation from interstate, and the public sector struggled to compete with private sector employers when trying to fill roles.

When vacancies arise some practices rely on covering them with short-term locums. It is often easier to find a dentist willing to fill a locum role than it is to attract dentists to relocate for a longer term placement. Visiting dentists will often be happy to fill a locum position as part of a working holiday. Some dental practices in Darwin recognised there was sufficient demand for expansion, however tended to concentrate on retaining their current capacity due to the difficulties in filling dental roles. Employers reported dentists are typically keen to learn new technologies and so are attracted to private practices with the latest equipment in addition to the highest remuneration. Just under half of the employers surveyed ran a graduate recruitment program.

### **Labour market outlook**

The labour market for dentists is not expected to change over the coming year, with vacancies being difficult to fill. The occupation is, therefore, expected to remain in shortage.

<b>Dentist and Dental Specialist</b>		<b>Australian Capital Territory (ACT)</b>
<b>ANZSCO Code: 252311 and 252312</b>	May 2009	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Dentist: Shortage. Dental Specialist: Too small to rate.	
<b>Comment</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data show there are around 160 to 170 dentists and dental specialists in the ACT and that employment has remained relatively stable from 2001 to 2006. More recent Labour Force Survey (LFS) data suggest employment levels continue to be relatively unchanged. Census data for the ACT show most dentists and all dental specialists work in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. Around four per cent of dentists are employed in Public Administration and Safety.

### **Occupational supply**

ABS census data indicate about 90 per cent of dentists in the ACT hold only a bachelor degree and the remainder have completed post-graduate studies. This compares with about 90 per cent of ACT dental specialists having completed postgraduate qualifications. Qualifications in dentistry can be obtained by completing an undergraduate bachelor degree. An accredited university course for this occupation is not available in the ACT and therefore new supply to the ACT dental labour force is dependent on graduates moving to the ACT from other locations. Dentists in the ACT must be registered with the ACT Dental Board. To become a dental specialist, dentists need to have a minimum of two years work experience and undertake post-graduate studies. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) data indicate the net inflow of self identifying migrant dentists to the ACT is minimal in any given year.

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

A survey of employers who recently advertised for dentists was undertaken for this report. Vacancies were difficult to source and a number of employers were cold canvassed for their experiences. Around a third of the surveyed vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, although a small number of employers successfully filled their positions after this time. Most vacancies were suitable for graduates. Employers attracted an average of 1.5 suitable applicants per vacancy, little changed from the last time the occupation was assessed in 2007. However, experiences were varied with some attracting multiple applicants and others attracting none at all. Some cold canvassed employers indicated they had been approached by dentists seeking work. None of the surveyed vacancies related to dental specialists and employers could not provide any information in relation to recent recruitment experiences for specialists. Employers generally suggested there had been a fall in demand for dental services with most indicating they are unlikely to recruit dentists in the near future.

### **Labour market outlook**

Shortages may ease in the medium term with the reported fall in demand for dental services.