

<b>Student Counsellor</b>		<b>Victoria</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 2513-19	April 2007	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	No shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Student counsellors are responsible for providing guidance to students, parents and teachers over a wide range of matters, including students' personal problems, learning difficulties, careers advice and special requirements. With the increase in overseas students, demand has risen for student counsellors. In 2004, the Victorian Department of Education and Training introduced the first of three phases of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative, a four year \$49.5 million program which provides support to students who are at-risk of disengagement from school and who are not reaching their educational potential. Through this initiative, the equivalent of 256 full time primary welfare officer positions have been funded in 450 Victorian schools identified as having high needs. This initiative will also be extended for an additional four years, at a cost of \$80 million.

### **Occupational supply**

ABS Education and Work figures suggest approximately 36 per cent of employed counsellors nationally have bachelor degrees. DEEWR estimates the number of persons who completed tertiary education in the field of counselling in 2005 fell significantly, approximately 22 per cent compared to completions of 2004. Supply to the profession from net immigration has decreased by almost half compared to last year. Net immigration to Victoria during 2005-06 was approximately seven student counsellors.

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

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found all of the vacancies were filled. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 3.8 and approximately 5.1 applicants per vacancy were deemed unsuitable. The majority of employers surveyed stated the main reasons applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable were a lack of suitable experience, and inadequate qualifications. Most employers were looking for candidates with practical experience in a school environment and degree qualifications in either psychology or counselling. According to employers, there is a lack of suitable student counselling courses offered at tertiary institutions, leading to fewer qualified people entering the profession.

Approximately 80 per cent of employers commented that there is a fairly low turnover of existing employees in the occupation due to long term stability and job satisfaction. Many employers are able to retain staff for long periods by offering good conditions and a good working environment. Employers commented that while the demand for student counsellors is increasing, the ageing workforce is not being replaced by younger candidates.

### **Labour market outlook**

The relatively balanced labour market for student counsellors in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months.