

<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.