

Clinical Psychologist		Australia
ASCO Code: 2514-11	June 2007	
Labour market rating	Regional Shortage	
Comment		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who advertised for clinical psychologists was undertaken for this report. A number of the vacancies surveyed were for forensic psychologists, health psychologists and clinical neuropsychologists. Around 35 per cent of the vacancies surveyed were located in regional areas, with around half were identified by employers as new positions.

Employers reported filling around 70 per cent of the surveyed vacancies. Vacancy fill rates were consistently higher than 75 per cent across the larger states, but employers in Tasmania and the Northern Territory reported significantly lower fill rates. Unfilled vacancies were generally in regional locations and employers often identified location as a principal factor contributing to their difficulty filling vacancies. A small number of employers who did not fill their positions did not receive any interest from suitable applicants.

A number of non-government organisations contacted believed they experienced difficulty recruiting as they were unable to match the pay and conditions offered by government employers. This observation is not immediately supported by the results of this survey, with approximately half the unfilled vacancies being in the public sector compared with approximately one third of public and private sector vacancies remaining unfilled.

On average, employers reported receiving three applications per vacancy, with one applicant considered by employers to be suitable. Employers in New South Wales and Western Australia received higher numbers of both applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy than other employers. Unsuitable applicants were often considered by employers to lack experience in specialised fields, lack experience in psychology or lack appropriate registration. The small number of employers who reported that they did not receive any applications for their vacancies were all seeking to fill positions in regional areas. Further, a small number of employers who attracted some interest in response to their advertisements did not receive applications from suitable applicants. Many of these employers, some of whom were in regional areas, noted applicants who would have been suitable were seeking remuneration packages which the employer was unable to provide.

Some employers contacted identified recent Medicare reforms as a factor contributing to the difficulties they were experiencing when recruiting for clinical psychologists. These employers commented that the reforms have led to a reduction in the number of clinical psychologists applying for vacant roles, as many are now looking to work in their own practices. In some cases, employers noted contracting the services of clinical psychologists working in private practices. However, generally this was not seen by employers as a viable option. Employers in Queensland and Victoria noted significant increases in demand for skills in this occupation, primarily as a result of increases in government funding in the area.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest the labour market for clinical psychologists will change significantly over the next six months.