

<b>Student Counsellor</b>		<b>Tasmania</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 2513-19	May 2007	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

In Tasmania guidance officers perform the role of student counsellor. Guidance officers, who are usually educational psychologists and social workers are employed to provide counselling services to students and their families on a range of issues. It is difficult to estimate the number of people engaged in these activities due to the number of different terms used to describe them. For example, at the 2001 Census, there were 27 educational psychologists recorded, 54 student counsellors, 230 social workers, and 32 education professionals not further defined. It is possible there are people working as student counsellors in all these occupations, and perhaps others as well.

### **Occupational supply**

In the public education system, student counsellors are employed under the teaching award, and therefore require a teaching qualification. Until quite recently it was possible to study education and psychology in the one degree. Following changes to the psychology degree, however, students must complete at least a 4 year psychology degree, then a two year teaching degree, followed by 2 years work under supervision before becoming a student counsellor. An alternative is to do a masters degree in clinical psychology, a six year course which means graduates are eligible for registration as a psychologist. However, those who go down this path are paid \$15,000 per year less than teachers, as they lack a teaching qualification, and most pursue more lucrative careers elsewhere. In the private system, there is less emphasis on teaching qualifications, and requirements can vary from school to school.

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

The only employer to advertise a position for a student counsellor was unable to fill their position. Other industry sources confirmed that it was difficult to recruit people to these positions. Incentive packages and relocation assistance have been used to persuade people to relocate to the State, or particular areas of the State. Rural and regional areas have particular difficult recruiting. Better career options and remuneration available elsewhere are the main reasons cited for these difficulties.

### **Labour market outlook**

There are ongoing discussions among the relevant stakeholders to address the inequities in the public sector which act as disincentives for people with relevant qualifications to work as guidance officers. This may alleviate shortages in the longer-term, but it is unlikely to have an effect for at least a couple of years.