

Psychologists

2017 Factsheet



Australian Government
Department of Health

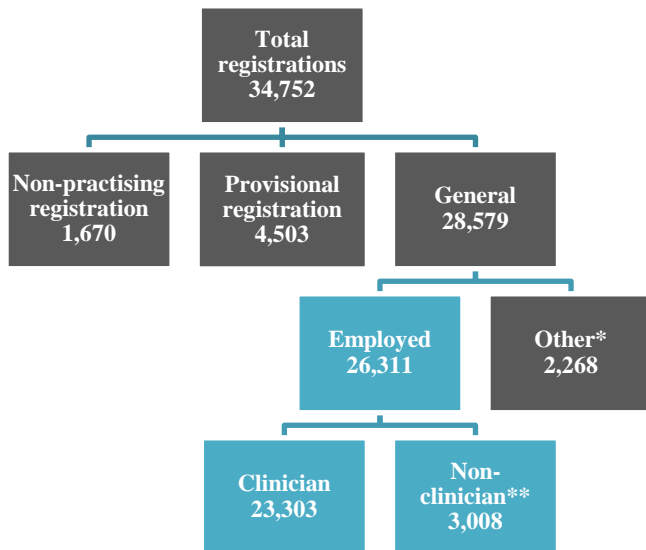
Psychologists are registered healthcare practitioners trained in human behaviour and study the brain, memory, learning and processes around human development. Psychological treatments can be used to help individuals, families, groups and organisations.

To gain registration as a psychologist, practitioners must complete a minimum four year program of study approved by the Psychology Board of Australia, followed by further approved postgraduate study and/or internship.

The following analysis of the psychology workforce is drawn from the number of psychologists with general registration who were employed (26,311 in 2017) unless otherwise stated.

Workforce

Figure 1: Psychology registrations, 2017



Other includes: working but on long leave, working outside the profession, looking for work, overseas, and retired.

**Non-clinician* includes roles reported by survey respondents that did not fit predefined survey categories.

The number of registered psychologists increased by 10.4% from 31,489 in 2014 to 34,752 in 2017 (an average annual increase of 3.3%).

Table 1: Psychologists, 2014-2017

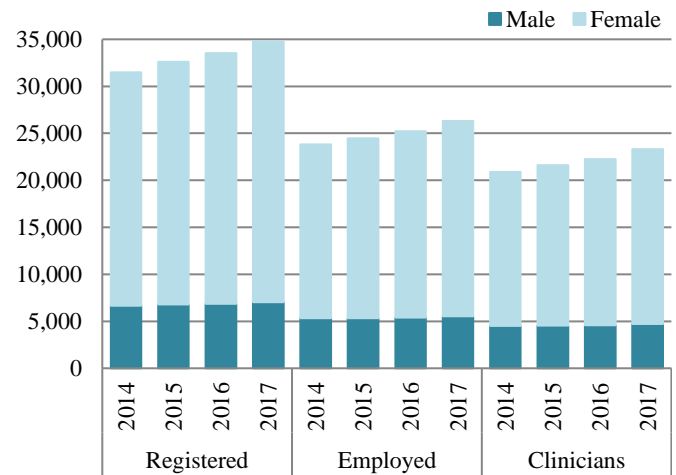
	2014	2015	2016	2017	Avg. annual growth
Registered	31,489	32,602	33,546	34,752	3.3%
Employed	23,810	24,474	25,219	26,311	3.4%
Clinicians	20,877	21,596	22,269	23,303	3.7%

The number of employed psychologists ('workforce') increased by 10.5% from 23,810 to 26,311 over the same period (an average annual increase of 3.4%).

Demographics

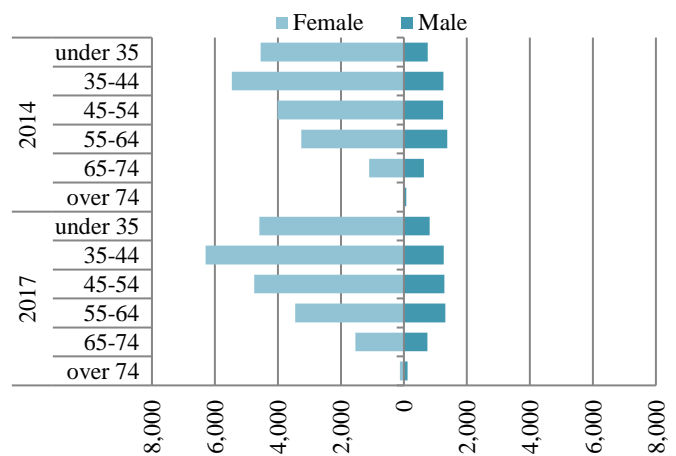
In 2017, female psychologists comprised 78.9% of the workforce, an increase from 77.6% in 2014.

Figure 2: Gender distribution, 2014-2017



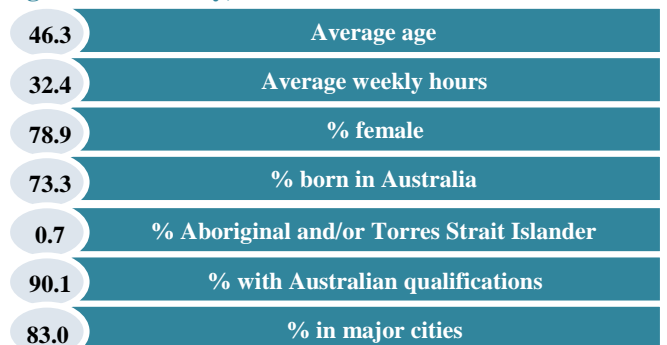
In 2017, the average age of the workforce was 46.3 years, an increase from 45.9 years in 2014. Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion aged 65 years and over has increased from 7.6% of the workforce in 2014 to 9.6% in 2017.

Figure 3: Age and gender distribution, 2014 and 2017



Quick Facts - 2017

Figure 4: Summary, 2017



Replacement Rate

In 2017, there were 2.0 new registrants for every psychologist that did not renew their registration from 2016.

Hours Worked

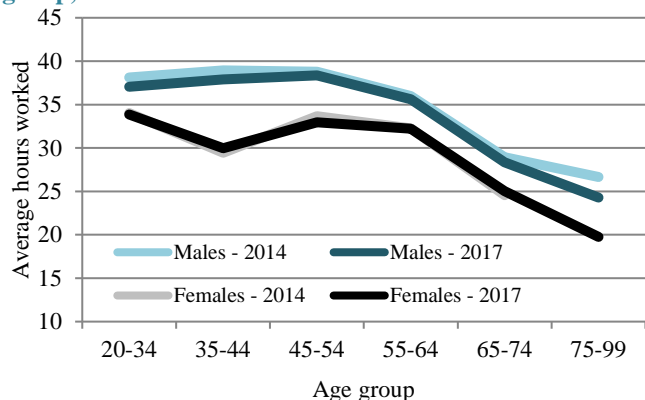
In 2017, psychologists worked an average of 32.4 hours per week in total, and worked an average of 8.7 hours per week in non-clinical roles.

Table 2: Average hours per week, 2014-2017

Average hours worked	2014	2015	2016	2017
Clinical	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6
Non-clinical	9.2	8.9	9.0	8.7
Total	32.8	32.4	32.6	32.4

In 2017, female psychologists worked an average of 31.5 hours per week, a decrease from 31.6 hours in 2014. Male psychologists worked an average of 35.8 hours per week, decreasing from 36.7 hours in 2014. In 2017, males in the 45-54 age group worked the most hours, at 38.4 hours per week on average.

Figure 5: Average hours per week by gender and age group, 2014 and 2017



Job Role

Principal role

In 2017, 88.6% of psychologists worked as a clinician in their principal role, an increase from 87.7% in 2014.

Table 3: Principal role, 2014 and 2017

Principal role	2014		2017	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Clinician	20,877	87.7	23,303	88.6
Administrator	1,003	4.2	1,082	4.1
Teacher or educator	752	3.2	746	2.8
Researcher	914	3.8	901	3.4
Other	264	1.1	279	1.1
Total	23,810	100	26,311	100

Second job role

In 2017, 21.2% of the workforce reported a second job role in psychology, a decrease from 22.2% in 2014.

Table 4: Second job role, 2014 and 2017

Second job	2014		2017	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Clinician	3,529	14.8	3,871	14.7
Administrator	325	1.4	340	1.3
Teacher or educator	678	2.8	657	2.5
Researcher	509	2.1	530	2.0
Other	244	1.0	192	0.7
Total	5,285	22.2	5,590	21.2

Area of Practice Endorsement

To be eligible to apply for an area of practice endorsement, a psychologist must undertake advanced training (an accredited qualification in the area of practice followed by a period of supervised practice).

In 2017, 38.6% of the workforce held at least one area of practice endorsement, increasing from 36.5% in 2014. The most common area of practice endorsement was Clinical psychology, which was held by 29.0% of the workforce while all other endorsements were held by less than 4% of the workforce.

Table 5: Area of practice endorsement, 2014 and 2017

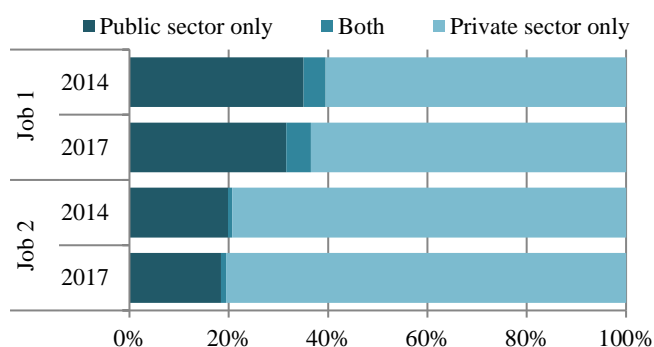
Area of practice endorsement	2014		2017	
	Head-count	%	Head-count	%
Clinical psychology	6,344	26.6	7,623	29.0
Counselling psychology	888	3.7	889	3.4
Clinical neuropsychology	521	2.2	591	2.2
Educational and developmental psychology	554	2.3	589	2.2
Forensic psychology	499	2.1	526	2.0
Organisational psychology	431	1.8	465	1.8
Health psychology	291	1.2	293	1.1
Sport and exercise psychology	84	0.4	86	0.3
Community psychology	54	0.2	50	0.2
Total	8,700	36.5	10,146	38.6

Principal Work Sector

In 2017, 31.6% of the workforce reported that in their principal role, they worked only in the public sector, a decrease from 35.1% in 2014.

Of those psychologists reporting a second job role in 2017, 80.5% reported they worked only in the private sector, an increase from 79.3% in 2014.

Figure 6: Sector in which clinical hours were worked, 2014 and 2017



Note: 'Not applicable' responses are excluded from the chart

Principal Work Setting

In 2017, 40.2% of psychologists worked in a Solo or Group private practice setting in their principal role, an increase from 36.8% in 2014, and 10.4% worked in a School setting, a decrease from 10.6% in 2014.

In 2017, psychologists working in the Defence forces (included in 'Remaining work settings') reported the highest average weekly hours (35.8) and those in GP practices reported the lowest average weekly hours (28.7).

Table 6: Principal work setting, 2014 and 2017

Principal work setting	2014		2017	
	Principal role	Second job	Principal role	Second job
Solo private practice	5,453	1,647	6,042	1,719
Group private practice	3,312	1,087	4,536	1,344
School	2,512	238	2,728	265
Community mental health service	1,984	261	2,106	283
Hospital	1,579	417	1,779	451
Tertiary educational facility	1,498	793	1,440	819
Other gov dept	1,354	177	1,382	195
Commercial/business service	1,037	159	1,063	156
Other community health care service	922	170	882	176
Other	818	203	764	228
General practitioner (GP) practice	635	237	684	282
Other private practice	555	262	619	283
Remaining work settings	2,151	310	2,286	362
Total	23,810	5,961	26,311	6,563

Note: In this instance the principal work setting headcount for the reported second job does not equal the principal role for the reported second job. This occurs when the survey respondent indicates a second job work setting but not a second job principal role.

Principal Job Area

In 2017, almost half (42.1%) of the psychology workforce reported that the principal area of their main job was Counselling and over a quarter (26.6%) reported Mental health intervention.

Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion of psychologist reporting Mental health intervention as the principal area of their main job increased by 21.6%, while those working in the areas of Training for work purposes and Consulting / advising for work decreased by over 18%.

Table 7: Principal job area, 2014 and 2017

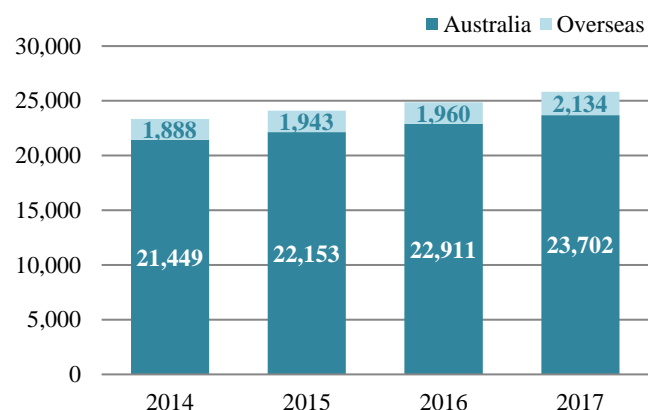
Principal job area	2014		2017		Growth 2014 to 2017
	Head-count	%	Head-count	%	
Counselling	10,245	43.0	11,066	42.1	8.0%
Mental health intervention	5,758	24.2	6,999	26.6	21.6%
Neuropsych/cognitive assessment	1,113	4.7	1,258	4.8	13.0%
Psychology management / admin	944	4.0	1,057	4.0	12.0%
Consulting/ advising for work	869	3.6	1,031	3.9	18.6%
Other	783	3.3	781	3.0	-0.3%
Research and projects	801	3.4	769	2.9	-4.0%
Behavioural assessment	743	3.1	751	2.9	1.1%
Organisation practices	756	3.2	738	2.8	-2.4%
Teaching/ supervision	657	2.8	699	2.7	6.4%
Physical health/rehab	335	1.4	297	1.1	-11.3%
Medico-legal assessment	214	0.9	257	1.0	20.1%
Personal development / coaching	199	0.8	220	0.8	10.6%
Recruitment	116	0.5	133	0.5	14.7%
Training for work purposes	133	0.6	108	0.4	-18.8%
Community engagement	92	0.4	100	0.4	8.7%
Health promotion	52	0.2	47	0.2	-9.6%
Total	23,810	100	26,311	100	10.5%

Initial Qualification

The workforce survey asks psychologists where they obtained their initial qualification. In 2017,

90.1% of the workforce obtained their initial qualification in Australia and 8.1% obtained their initial qualification overseas.

Figure 7: Initial qualifications, 2014-2017

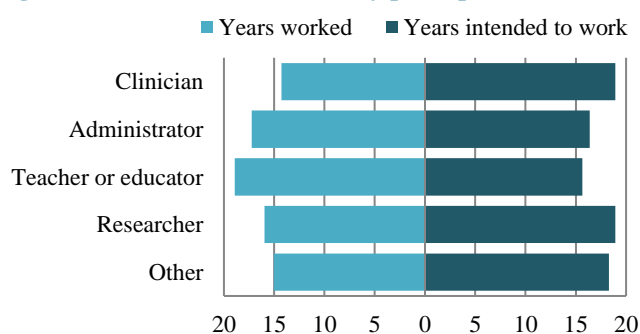


Note: 'Not stated/Unknown' responses are excluded from this chart

Working Intentions

In 2017, psychologists had, on average, worked 15 years in the profession and intended to work for another 19 years. In 2014, psychologists had worked 14 years on average, and had intended to work for another 19 years.

Figure 8: Workforce intentions by principal role, 2017



Distribution

State and Territory

In 2017, the jurisdictions with the most full-time equivalent psychologists per 100,000 population (FTE rate) were ACT and VIC. Between 2014 and 2017 the total FTE rate increased from 87.5 to 91.1. However, during this period, the number of psychologists in the NT decreased from 189 to 182 and correspondingly the FTE rate in the NT decreased by -6.6.

In 2017, psychologists in NT worked the most hours per week on average (36.7 hours) and those in VIC worked the fewest (31.6 hours).

Table 8: Distribution by state/territory, 2017

State / Territory	Headcount	Total FTE	Avg. total hours	² FTE rate per 100,000 population
NSW	8,682	7325.3	32.1	93.2
VIC	7,354	6119.0	31.6	96.8
QLD	4,738	4226.5	33.9	85.7
SA	1,370	1160.3	32.2	67.3
WA	2,770	2340.2	32.1	90.9
TAS	457	390.2	32.4	74.7
ACT	741	658.1	33.8	159.9
NT	182	175.8	36.7	71.0
Total	26,311	22,410.7	32.4	91.1

Note: 'Not stated/Unknown' are excluded from this table but are included in the total

Remoteness Area

In 2017, 95.3% of psychologists worked in either major cities or inner regional locations, compared to 95.1% in 2014.

Between 2014 and 2017, the largest shift in average hours worked was in remote areas, decreasing from 35.4 hours per week in 2014 to 33.3 hours in 2017. Subsequently, the FTE rate in remote areas decreased by -1.7.

Table 9: Distribution by remoteness area, 2017

Remoteness Area	Headcount	Total FTE	Avg. total hours	² FTE rate per 100,000 population
Major cities	21,849	18,550.5	32.3	105.0
Inner regional	3,214	2,735.3	32.3	62.3
Outer regional	1,059	956.0	34.3	46.7
Remote	124	108.8	33.3	37.2
Very remote	54	49.4	34.8	24.6
Total	26,311	22,410.7	32.4	91.1

Note: 'Not stated/Unknown' are excluded from this table but are included in the total

Other Work Location Outside Major Cities

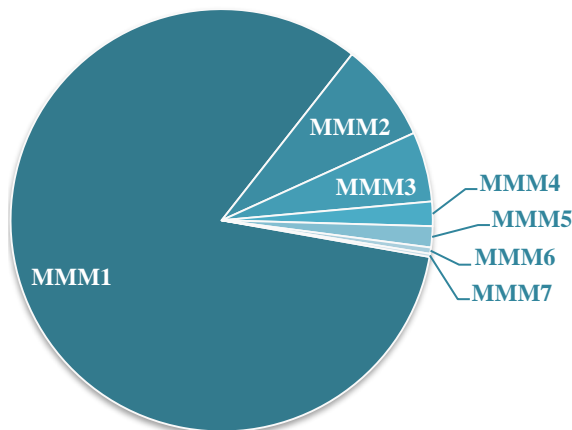
In 2017, 6.2% of the psychology workforce reported that they had worked in a regional, rural or remote location, in addition to their principal or second job location. Of these respondents, 72.0% had worked in an inner regional or outer regional location, and 10.3% had worked in either remote or very remote locations.

Modified Monash Model

In 2017, the majority (82.8%) of FTE psychologists were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification system, an increase from 82.6 % in 2014.

(See www.doctorconnect.gov.au for more information on the MMM).

Figure 9: FTE distribution by MMM, 2017



MMM1 locations had the highest FTE rate of psychologists (105.6) followed by MMM3 (76.7). The lowest FTE rate was in MMM5 locations (20.0).

Tele-Health

The workforce survey asks psychologists to report their hours practiced via tele-health in psychology in the previous year.

Note: Tele-health is the use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance.

A total of 3,357 psychologists (12.8%) provided a response to the Tele-Health question in 2017. On average, these respondents practiced via Tele-Health for 3.5 hours per week, with the majority (82.5%) of Tele-Health services provided by practitioners based in a major city.

Table 9: Tele-Health psychologists by remoteness location, 2017

Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
82.5%	11.2%	5.3%	0.7%	0.3%

Note: The tele-health workforce remoteness location refers to the location of the Practitioner, not the location of the person receiving the service.

References

- 1) National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS): Allied Health Practitioners 2014-2017.
- 2) ABS - 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016-17, Released 31/08/18.

Notes

- 1) 'NP' denotes figures that are not published (suppressed) for confidentiality reasons
- 2) The 2013-2016 NHWDS have been revised due to an error in recoding the missing values for job role. As such the figures may not match those that were previously published.
- 3) FTE number measures the number of standard-hour workloads worked by employed health practitioners. The FTE number provides a useful measure of supply because it takes into account both the number of practitioners who are working and the hours that they work. FTE number is calculated based on the total hours worked in a 'standard working week'. The standard working week is assumed to be 38 hours, equivalent to 1 FTE for all practitioners with the exception of medical practitioners where it is assumed to be 40 hours.

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