

# 2019

## Nurses and Midwives



All nurses and midwives must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and meet the NMBA's registration standards in order to practise in Australia.

There are three divisions of registration: Registered Nurse (RN), Midwife and Enrolled Nurse (EN).

Eligible practitioners may register in one or multiple divisions. Those who are registered as both a nurse and midwife are considered to hold dual registration.

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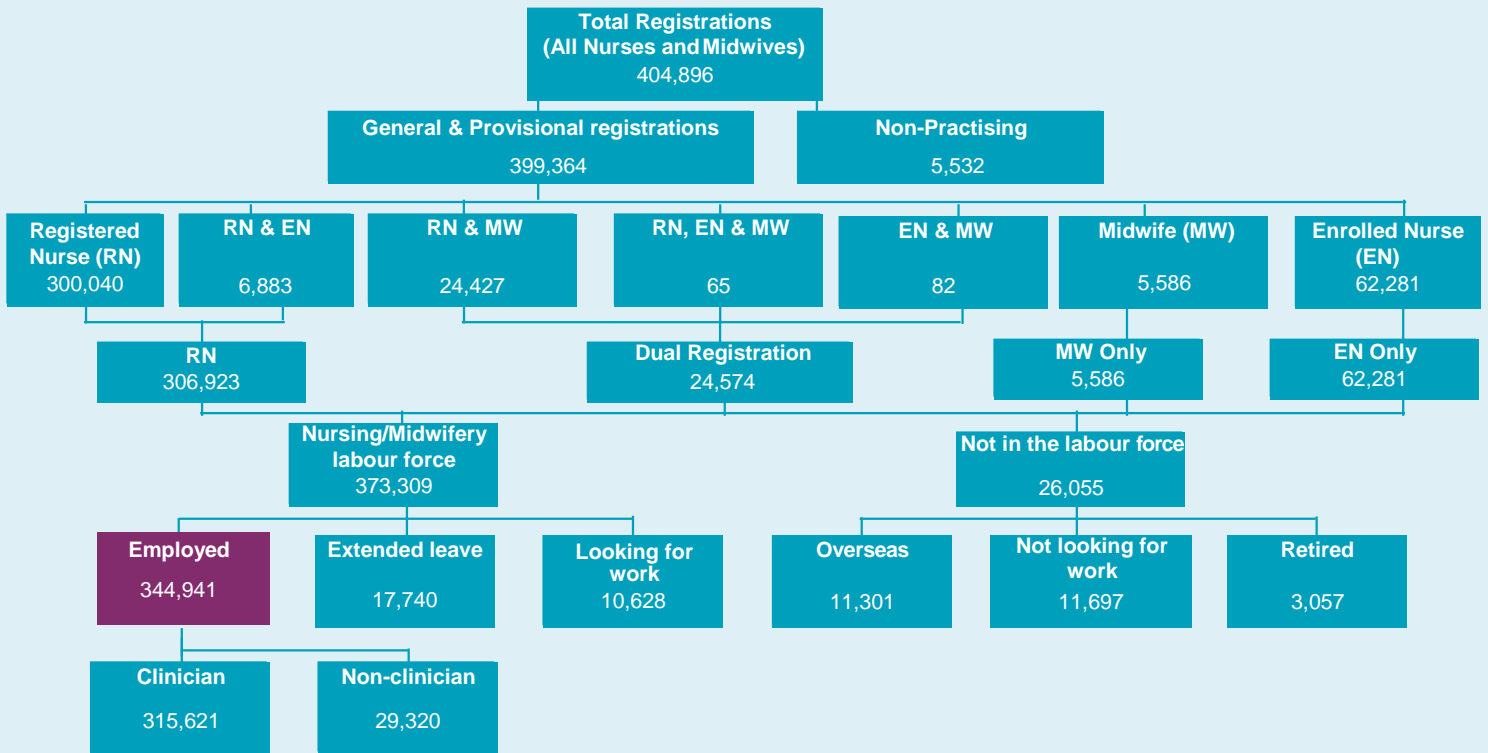
Note: There are 4 factsheets in this series: 1 Nurses and Midwives, 2 Registered Nurses, 3 Midwives, 4 Enrolled Nurses. This factsheet is based on the total headcount, whereas the headcount in the individual fact sheets in this series are based on a job role or hours worked in the profession. This means, if a practitioner has a job role or worked hours in more than one profession, they will be counted in each profession's factsheet, but only once in this factsheet. Hence, when the individual factsheets in this series are added together, the total will vary from this factsheet.

# 2019 Nurses and Midwives



## 1 Workforce

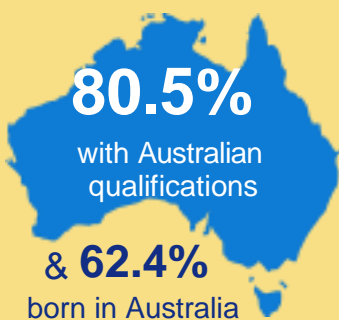
Figure 1: Nurses and midwives: workforce status, 2019



### Quick facts - 2019

Quick facts for the nursing and midwifery workforce

Figure 2: Summary



**72.6%**  
in metropolitan areas (MM1)



**88.7%**  
female



**33.5**  
average weekly hours



**43.6**  
average age



**1.3%**  
identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



Between 2015 and 2018, the total number of students commencing a general nursing course leading to initial registration increased by 20.7% from 22,056 to 26,626 (a compound annual growth rate of 6.5%). The number of students completing these courses increased 26.8% from 12,009 to 15,225 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 8.2%).

Between 2016 and 2019, the total number of nurses and midwives with general or provisional registration increased by 9.5% from 364,632 to 399,364 (a compound annual growth rate of 3.1%). The number of employed nurses and midwives ('workforce') increased 9.4% from 315,164 to 344,941 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 3.1%).

The number of employed nurses and midwives who worked as clinicians increased 11.0% from 284,393, to 315,621 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 3.5%). Clinicians are nurses and midwives who indicated that the principal role of their main job was clinician (nurses / midwives, including managers and supervisors, involved in direct patient care). Non-clinicians are nurses and midwives who indicated that the principal role of their main job was administrator, teacher, educator, research or other.

Between 2016 and 2019, the Australian population increased by 4.9% (a compound annual growth rate of 1.6%). Comparatively, the nursing graduates are increasing at five times the rate of the population and the nursing and midwifery workforce is increasing at almost two times the rate of the population.

The nursing and midwifery unemployment rate has remained stable at 2.8% of the labour force since 2016.

The following analysis of the Nursing and Midwifery 'workforce' is drawn from the number of employed nurses and midwives (344,941 in 2019 as indicated by maroon shading in figure 1) unless otherwise stated.



**Table 1. Students commencing and completing general nursing courses required for initial registration**

Type	Citizenship	2015	2016	2017	2018
Commencements	Domestic	18,935	20,206	20,553	21,868
	Overseas	3,121	3,405	3,777	4,758
	Total	22,056	23,611	24,330	26,626
Completions	Domestic	9,794	11,030	11,531	12,469
	Overseas	2,215	2,408	2,474	2,756
	Total	12,009	13,438	14,005	15,225

Data is for nursing course only, that leads to general registration as a registered nurse.

Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment - Higher Education Statistics Data Cube (uCube) which is based on the student and staff data collections.

**Table 2: Nurses and midwives by division, 2016 and 2019**

Division	2016	2019	Annual growth (%)
Registered Nurse	236,931	265,335	3.8%
Enrolled Nurse only	51,454	53,219	1.1%
Dual Registration*	23,377	21,656	-2.5%
Midwife only	3,402	4,731	11.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315,164</b>	<b>344,941</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019

\*Changes in the recency of practice requirements, which came into effect on 1 June 2016, has led to a decrease in the number of nurses and midwives holding dual registration and the number of employed dual registrants

**Table 3: Nurses and midwives by age and gender, 2016 and 2019**

Year	Age Group	Female	Male	Total
2016	Under 25	15,098	1,308	16,406
	25-34	60,566	8,898	69,464
	35-44	59,606	8,590	68,196
	45-54	72,485	8,268	80,753
	55-64	62,650	6,245	68,895
	65-74	10,235	870	11,105
	75-99	321	24	345
2019	Under 25	17,989	1,844	19,834
	25-34	74,168	11,152	85,323
	35-44	64,110	9,485	73,596
	45-54	71,203	8,937	80,140
	55-64	65,299	6,315	71,614
	65-74	12,681	1,226	13,907
	75-99	489	38	527

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019

Total excludes unknown age or gender



**Table 4: Average hours per week, 2016 - 2019**

Average weekly hours	2016	2017	2018	2019
Clinical hours*	29.5	29.5	29.7	29.8
Non-clinical hours^	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.6
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>33.5</b>

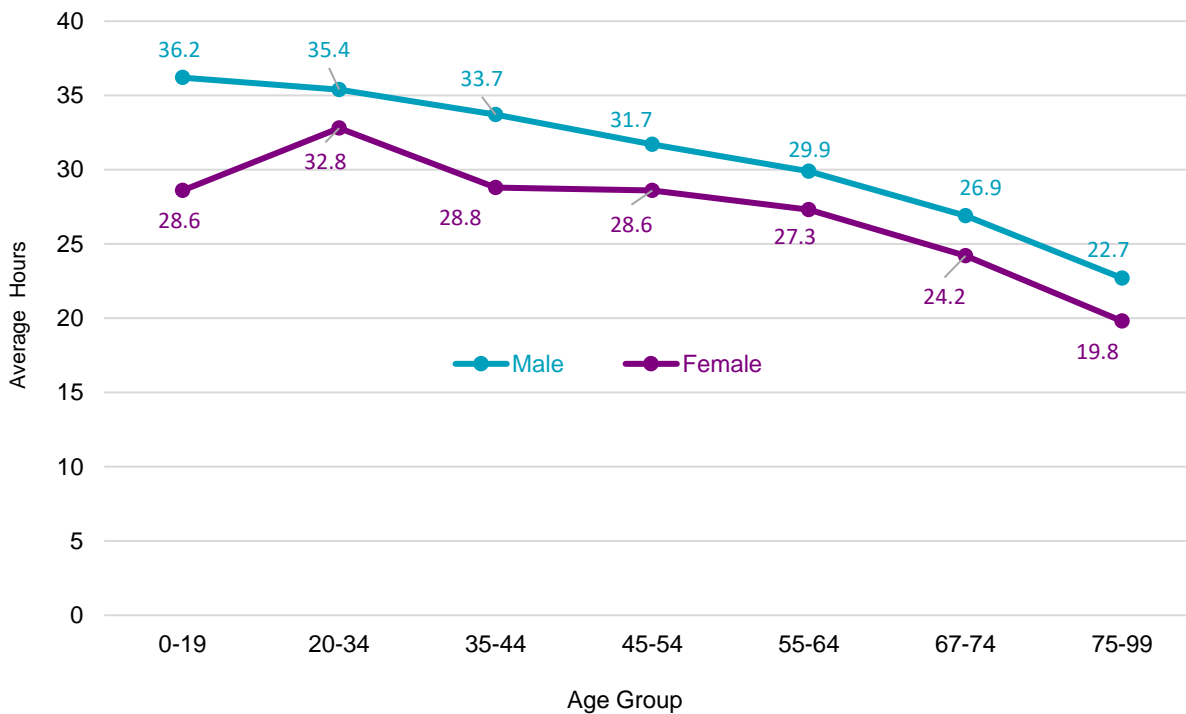
Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 - 2019

Due to rounding figures may not sum to the expected total

\* Clinical hours are the reported weekly hours worked in clinical roles (nurses / midwives, including managers and supervisors, involved in direct patient care).

^ Non-clinical hours are the reported weekly hours worked in non-clinical roles (including teacher, researcher, administrator or other).

**Figure 2: Average hours per week by gender and age group, 2019**



Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2019



**Table 5: Principal role, 2016 and 2019**

Principal Role	2016	2019
Clinician	284,393	315,621
Administrator	14,161	14,601
Teacher or educator	9,549	9,955
Researcher	2,565	2,487
Other	4,496	2,277
<b>Total</b>	<b>315,164</b>	<b>344,941</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019

**Table 6: Sector in which clinical hours were worked, 2016 and 2019**

Sector	2016	2019
Public sector only	176,926	194,556
Private sector only	108,016	118,865
Both	9,594	10,416
Non response	20,628	21,104
<b>Total</b>	<b>315,164</b>	<b>344,941</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019

Includes nurses and midwives who reported working hours in public and / or private sectors in their clinical roles



**Table 7: Principal area, 2016 and 2019**

Principal area	2016 Headcount	2016 Average weekly hours	2019 Headcount	2019 Average weekly hours	Change
Aged Care	45,440	33.0	48,955	33.2	3,515
Medical	30,120	33.4	34,177	33.5	4,057
Peri-operative	26,067	33.3	29,408	33.3	3,341
Surgical	24,557	33.1	26,000	32.8	1,443
Mental health	21,531	36.4	24,059	36.1	2,528
Mixed medical/surgical	21,208	32.6	22,639	32.7	1,431
Emergency	17,933	34.5	21,068	34.5	3,135
Other	18,660	33.3	20,594	33.3	1,934
Critical care	17,630	34.7	19,427	34.9	1,797
Practice nursing	13,181	29.1	14,786	30.5	1,605
Community nursing	12,597	32.1	14,245	32.1	1,648
Rehabilitation and disability	10,188	33.4	10,706	33.5	518
Management	9,053	39.0	8,730	39.0	-323
Paediatrics	7,003	32.4	7,693	32.4	690
Education	6,449	34.2	6,845	34.0	396
Antenatal, Intra-partum and Post-partum care	4,996	34.2	5,724	34.2	728
Neonatal care	4,945	33.2	5,384	32.7	439
Child and family health	4,170	31.4	4,590	31.6	420
Postnatal care	3,751	30.6	3,582	30.5	-169
Palliative care	3,460	32.4	3,651	32.8	191
Care during labour and birth	3,067	33.0	2,911	32.8	-156
Maternity care	2,193	35.8	2,359	34.5	166
Research	2,076	32.9	2,147	33.0	71
Drug and Alcohol	1,839	34.9	2,049	35.0	210
Antenatal care	1,403	31.6	1,599	31.3	196
Health promotion	1,165	29.7	1,073	30.6	-92
Policy	482	37.2	539	35.1	57

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019



**Table 8: Principal work setting, 2016 and 2019**

Principal work setting	2016 Headcount	2016 Average weekly hours	2019 Headcount	2019 Average weekly hours
Hospital	193,833	33.8	211,516	33.8
Residential health care facility	41,233	33.1	44,179	33.3
Community health care service	23,486	33.6	25,136	33.5
General practitioner (GP) practice	11,624	28.6	13,162	29.3
Outpatient service	10,490	33.2	12,352	33.2
Other	10,410	33.5	9,984	33.5
Independent private practice	-	-	6,350	29.4
Other private practice	7,193	29.6	4,350	30.9
Tertiary educational facility	3,607	35.0	3,793	34.2
Other government department or agency	3,050	35.2	3,213	35.6
Correctional service	1,631	37.8	2,029	37.7
School	1,501	28.9	1,624	29.5
Aboriginal health service	1,505	38.4	1,683	38.0
Commercial/business service	1,454	33.1	1,374	33.1
Defence forces	1,277	36.9	1,429	36.9
Other educational facility	930	32.4	975	32.2
Group midwifery practice / caseload	852	37.5	971	37.5
Hospice	725	31.2	639	31.4
Specialist (O&G) practice	182	28.3	181	28.1
Locum private practice	181	31.2	-	-

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019





**Table 9: Years worked and years intending to remain in nursing and midwifery workforce, 2019**

Division	Gender	Average Years Worked	Average Years Intended
Nursing and Midwifery	Male	13.1	17.8
	Female	16.0	17.4

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2019

**Table 10: Initial qualification country, 2016 and 2019**

Division	Year	Initial Qualification Australia%	Initial Qualification Overseas/not stated
Nursing and Midwifery	2016	80.8	19.2
	2019	80.5	19.5

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2016 and 2019



**Table 11: Distribution by state and territory, 2019**

State and Territory	Headcount	FTE	Average weekly hours	FTE per 100,000 population
NSW	95,806	87,631.9	34.8	1,083.2
VIC	94,129	79,922.5	32.3	1,211.7
QLD	72,064	63,988.1	33.7	1,256.0
SA	29,816	25,051.3	31.9	1,429.9
WA	34,241	29,860.0	33.1	1,139.0
TAS	8,551	7,363.7	32.7	1,377.8
ACT	5,859	5,437.0	35.3	1,274.2
NT	4,343	4,336.3	37.9	1,763.2
<b>Australia</b>	<b>344,941</b>	<b>303,722.6</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>1,197.4</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2019

ABS Estimated resident population, June 2019 (preliminary) Australia includes unknown state / territory  
Full time equivalent (FTE) based on 38 hours per week



**Table 12: Distribution of full time equivalent (FTE) nurses and midwives by Modified Monash Model (MMM 2019), 2019**

Modified Monash Model	FTE	Population	FTE per 100,000 population
MM1 - Metropolitan	220,666.3	18,003,544	1,225.7
MM2 - Regional centres	30,221.2	2,215,430	1,364.1
MM3 - Large rural towns	24,024.6	1,575,836	1,524.6
MM4 - Medium rural towns	10,898.3	962,453	1,132.3
MM5 - Small rural towns	11,195.6	1,740,415	643.3
MM6 - Remote communities	3,838.9	282,646	1,358.2
MM7 - Very remote communities	2,764.1	212,536	1,300.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>303,722.6</b>	<b>24,992,860</b>	<b>1,215.2</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2019  
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/modified-monash-model-fact-sheet>  
 ABS Estimated resident population by MMM (2018 preliminary unpublished)  
 Total includes unknown MMM  
 Full time equivalent (FTE) based on 38 hours per week

**Table 13: Tele-health workforce by Modified Monash Model (MMM2019), 2019**

Modified Monash Model	Percentage*
MM1 - Metropolitan	72.9%
MM2 - Regional centres	9.9%
MM3 - Large rural towns	7.9%
MM4 - Medium rural towns	3.6%
MM5 - Small rural towns	3.9%
MM6 - Remote communities	1.1%
MM7 - Very remote communities	0.7%

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2019  
 MMM breakdown for tele-health refers to the location of the nurse or midwife, not the location of the person receiving the service  
 \* Percentage based on the total number of employed nurses and midwives who reported practising via tele-health in 2019



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## References

- 1) National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS) Nurses and Midwives 2016-2019 (<http://hwd.health.gov.au>)
- 2) ABS - 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3218.0>)
- 3) Department of Education, Skills and Employment - Higher Education Statistics Data Cube (uCube) which is based on the student and staff data collections.