



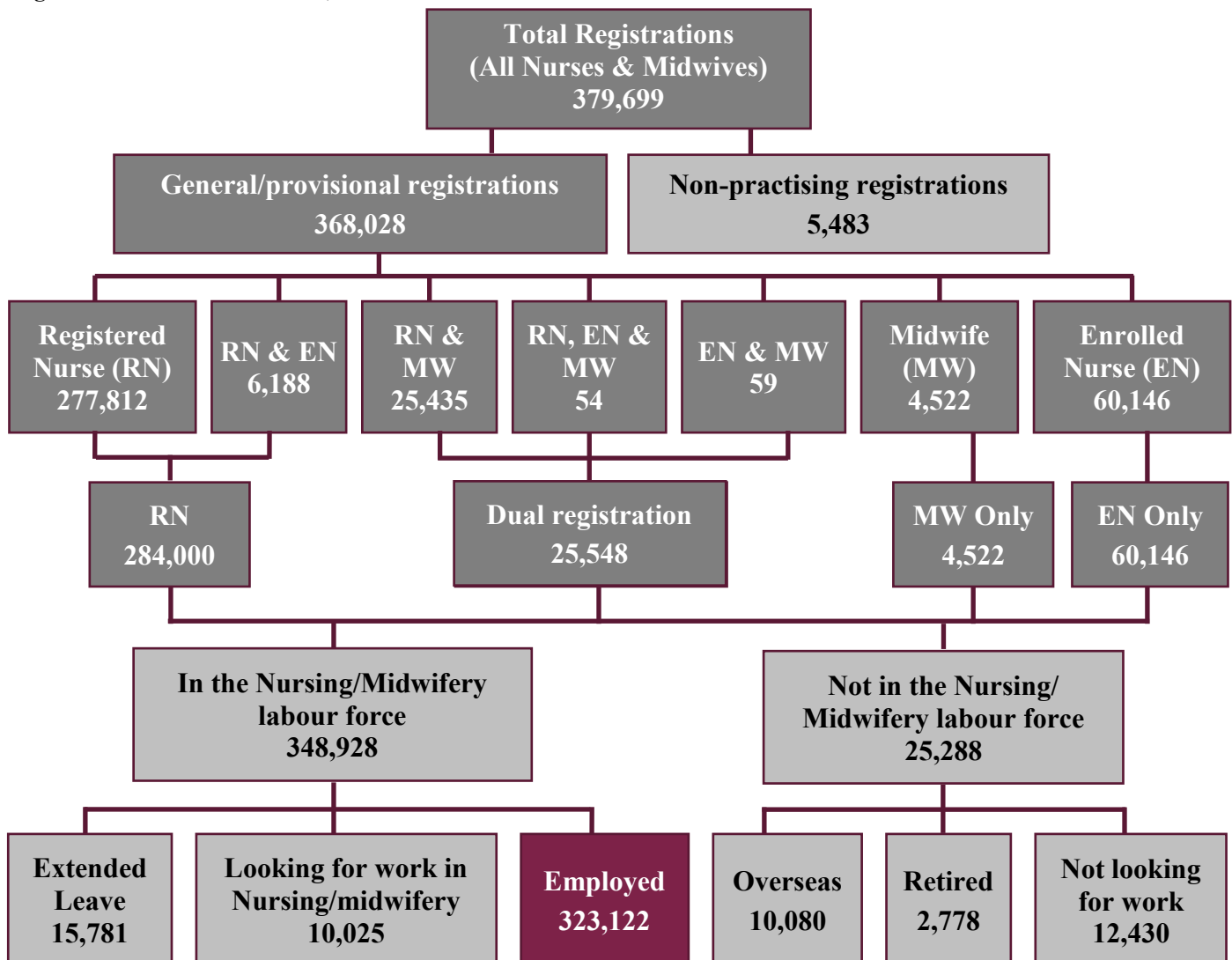
Nurses and Midwives

2017 Factsheet

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: Enrolled Nurse (EN), Registered Nurse (RN), and Midwife (MW). 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.

The Workforce

Figure 1: Nurses and Midwives, 2017



Between 2014 and 2017, the total number of nurses and midwives with general or provisional registration increased by 7.4% from 348,444 to 374,216 (an average annual growth of 2.4%). The number of employed nurses and midwives ('workforce') increased 7.7% from 300,077 to 323,122 over the same period. The nursing and midwifery unemployment rate has remained stable at approximately 3.0% of the labour force since 2014.

The following analysis of the nursing and midwifery 'workforce' is based on the number of employed nurses and midwives as indicated by the maroon shading in Figure 1 (323,122 in 2017) unless otherwise stated.

Quick facts — 2017

Figure 2: Summary, 2017

| | |
|------|--|
| 44.1 | Average age |
| 33.4 | Average weekly hours |
| 89.0 | % female |
| 63.9 | % born in Australia |
| 1.1 | % Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |
| 80.4 | % with Australian qualifications |
| 72.3 | % in major cities |
| 1.7 | Replacement rate |

Table 1: Nurses and midwives by division, 2014 and 2017

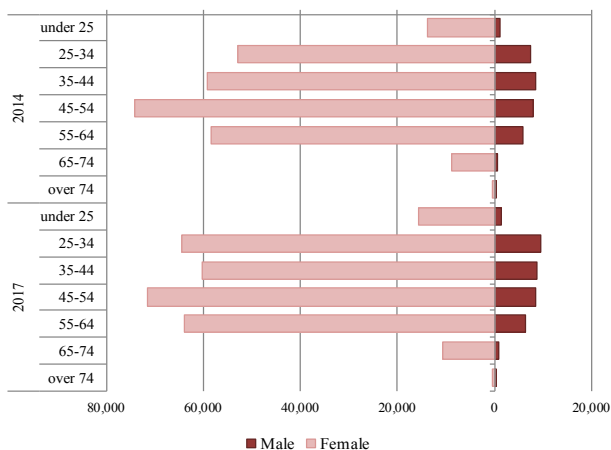
| Division | 2014 | 2017 | Average annual growth |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Registered Nurse | 221,567 | 245,269 | 3.4% |
| Enrolled Nurse only | 50,737 | 51,478 | 0.5% |
| Dual registration | 25,077 | 22,568 | -3.5% |
| Midwife only | 2,696 | 3,807 | 12.2% |
| Total | 300,077 | 323,122 | 2.5% |

The number of nurses and midwives holding dual registration has decreased 9.6% from 28,266 in 2014 to 25,548 in 2017. This is most likely due to recency of practice requirements. In line with this, the number of dual registrants who were employed has decreased 3.5% from 25,077 to 22,568 over the same period.

Demographics

In 2017, 89.0% of the nursing and midwifery workforce was female. Since 2014, the number of males in the workforce has increased by 3,706 and they now comprise 11.0% of the workforce.

Figure 3: Age and gender distribution, 2014 and 2017



The average age of the workforce has decreased from 44.5 years in 2014 to 44.1 years in 2017. The proportion of nurses and midwives in the largest group (those aged 45-54 years) has decreased from 27.7% in 2014 to 24.9% in 2017.

Replacement rate

In 2017, there were 1.7 new registrants for every nurse and midwife that did not renew their registration from 2016. In 2016, the replacement rate was 1.8.

Note: the replacement rate differs to previously published figures as a large number of 'new registrants' had been omitted due to data extraction dates.

Hours worked

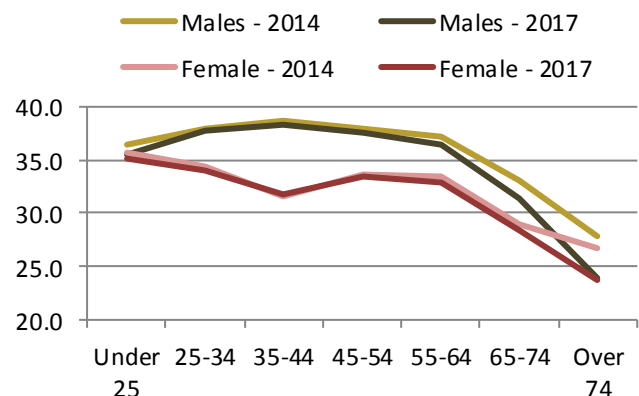
Since 2014, the number of average hours worked per week has decreased by 0.3 hours to 33.4 hours in 2017. The majority of these hours were worked in a clinical role (average 29.5 hours per week).

Table 2: Average total hours per week, 2014-2017

| Average hours worked | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Clinical | 29.4 | 29.4 | 29.5 | 29.5 |
| Non-clinical | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Total | 33.7 | 33.5 | 33.4 | 33.4 |

In 2017, male nurses and midwives worked more hours per week on average than females (37.3 hours vs 32.9 hours). The disparity in hours worked has decreased from an additional 4.6 hours for males in 2014 to 4.4 hours in 2017. The 35-44 year age group reported the largest difference with males working an average of 6.5 hours more than females.

Figure 4: Average total hours per week by gender and age group, 2014 and 2017



Males in the 35-44 age group worked the most hours, at 38.2 hours per week on average. Among females, the most hours were worked by the under 25 years age group at 35.0 hours per week on average.

Job Role

In 2017, 90.5% of nurses and midwives worked as clinicians - a small increase in comparison with 2014 (89.6%)

Table 3: Principal role, 2014 and 2017

| Job role | 2014 | 2017 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Clinician | 268,807 | 292,351 |
| Administrator | 14,446 | 14,322 |
| Teacher or educator | 9,604 | 9,953 |
| Researcher | 2,656 | 2,603 |
| Other | 4,562 | 3,892 |
| Total | 300,075 | 323,121 |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been excluded

Principal work sector

In 2017, 60.1% of nurses and midwives worked only in the public sector, 36.6% only in the private sector and 3.3% in both.

Table 4: Sector in which clinical hours were worked, 2014 and 2017

| Employment sector | 2014 | 2017 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Public sector only | 168,972 | 181,685 |
| <i>Proportion (%)</i> | <i>60.4</i> | <i>60.1</i> |
| Private sector only | 101,534 | 110,475 |
| <i>Proportion (%)</i> | <i>36.3</i> | <i>36.6</i> |
| Both | 9,377 | 9,971 |
| <i>Proportion (%)</i> | <i>3.4</i> | <i>3.3</i> |
| Non response | 20,194 | 20,991 |
| Total | 300,077 | 323,122 |

Principal area of practice

The workforce survey asks nurses and midwives the principal area of their main job, which may be in either nursing or midwifery. The 'principal area of practice' response items are different in the surveys for nurses and for midwives. For the purpose of this factsheet these responses have been combined into one list.

In 2017, ten principal areas of practice accounted for 75.1% of the nursing and midwifery workforce. In 2014, these same 'top ten' areas of practice also accounted for 75.1% of the workforce.

Between 2014 and 2017, the number of nurses and midwives reporting that their principal area of practice in Medical increased 15.6%, Peri-operative increased 15.1% and Aged care increased 4.7%.

In 2016, there was a change to the response options in the principal area of practice question in the survey ('continuum of care' was renamed 'antenatal, intra-partum and post-partum care').

Consequently, there are large changes between 2014 and 2017 in the number of nurses and midwives who reported working in the Maternity care area of practice (decreased by 25.9%) and the number working in the Antenatal, intra-partum and post-partum, and neonatal care areas combined (increased by 190.5%).

Table 5: Principal area of practice, 2014 and 2017

| Principal area of practice | 2014 | | 2017 | | Change |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|--------|
| | Head-count | Average Total Hours | Head-count | Average Total Hours | |
| Aged care | 43,878 | 32.8 | 45,943 | 33.0 | 2,065 |
| Medical | 27,193 | 33.7 | 31,436 | 33.5 | 4,243 |
| Peri-operative | 23,509 | 33.2 | 27,052 | 33.2 | 3,543 |
| Surgical | 23,477 | 33.1 | 24,872 | 33.0 | 1,395 |
| Mental health | 20,557 | 36.5 | 22,123 | 36.2 | 1,566 |
| Mixed medical/surgical | 20,561 | 32.5 | 21,502 | 32.6 | 941 |
| Other | 19,447 | 33.7 | 19,036 | 33.3 | -411 |
| Emergency | 16,507 | 34.6 | 18,855 | 34.5 | 2,348 |
| Critical care | 17,809 | 34.8 | 18,136 | 34.8 | 327 |
| Practice nursing | 12,313 | 29.1 | 13,836 | 28.9 | 1,523 |
| Community nursing | 12,300 | 32.2 | 13,046 | 32.2 | 746 |
| Rehabilitation and disability | 9,663 | 33.7 | 10,383 | 33.4 | 720 |
| Management | 8,888 | 40.0 | 9,180 | 38.9 | 292 |
| Paediatrics | 7,498 | 32.3 | 7,159 | 32.3 | -339 |
| Education | 6,732 | 34.8 | 6,571 | 34.3 | -161 |
| Neonatal care | 1,061 | 36.6 | 5,082 | 32.8 | 4,021 |
| Antenatal, Intra-partum and Post-partum care | 2,436 | 37.3 | 5,076 | 34.2 | 2,640 |
| Child and family health | 4,399 | 32.8 | 4,298 | 31.5 | -101 |
| Postnatal care | 4,489 | 33.1 | 3,773 | 30.6 | -716 |
| Palliative care | 3,305 | 32.7 | 3,425 | 32.7 | 120 |
| Care during labour and birth | 4,073 | 35.3 | 3,122 | 33.2 | -951 |
| Maternity care | 2,855 | 39.8 | 2,115 | 35.8 | -740 |
| Research | 2,117 | 33.3 | 2,091 | 33.2 | -26 |
| Drug and Alcohol | 1,704 | 35.3 | 1,916 | 34.6 | 212 |
| Antenatal care | 1,617 | 32.9 | 1,455 | 31.2 | -162 |
| Health promotion | 1,225 | 31.1 | 1,124 | 29.5 | -101 |
| Policy | 464 | 36.6 | 515 | 36.0 | 51 |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been excluded; table sort order = 2017 headcount

In 2017, nurses and midwives whose principal area of practice was Management reported the highest average hours per week (38.9 hours) and those working in the Mental Health area of practice reported the second highest average hours worked per week (36.2 hours). Nurses and midwives in almost all principal areas reported working 30 hours per week or more on average except those in Practice nursing (28.9 hours) and Health promotion (29.5 hours).

Principal work setting

In 2017, 61.4% of nurses and midwives worked primarily in a Hospital setting. Residential health care facilities were the next most common setting (12.9%) followed by Community health care services (7.3%). These were also the most common work setting in 2014.

Table 6: Principal work setting, 2014 and 2017

| Principal work setting | 2014 | | 2017 | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|
| | Head-count | Average Total Hours | Head-count | Average Total Hours |
| Hospital | 182,765 | 34.1 | 198,287 | 33.8 |
| <i>FTE Clinical hours - public*</i> | 112,544.5 | | 121,410.8 | |
| <i>FTE Clinical hours - private*</i> | 37,111.9 | | 40,304.8 | |
| Residential health care facility | 39,569 | 33.0 | 41,587 | 33.2 |
| Community health care service | 23,185 | 34.0 | 23,609 | 33.6 |
| General practitioner (GP) practice | 10,794 | 28.7 | 12,208 | 28.7 |
| Outpatient service | 9,594 | 33.6 | 11,033 | 33.3 |
| Other | 11,279 | 34.3 | 9,971 | 33.6 |
| Independent private practice | - | - | 5,694 | 29.5 |
| Other private practice | 6,778 | 29.7 | 3,776 | 30.6 |
| Tertiary educational facility | 3,424 | 35.5 | 3,709 | 34.5 |
| Other government department or agency | 3,284 | 36.8 | 3,109 | 35.3 |
| Correctional service | 1,437 | 38.4 | 1,720 | 37.6 |
| Aboriginal health service | 1,511 | 39.4 | 1,597 | 38.2 |
| School | 1,398 | 29.9 | 1,545 | 29.5 |
| Defence forces | 1,152 | 37.3 | 1,341 | 37.4 |
| Commercial/business service | 1,462 | 33.6 | 1,308 | 32.7 |
| Other educational facility | 1,011 | 32.2 | 957 | 32.3 |
| Group midwifery practice / caseload | 282 | 32.6 | 794 | 38.3 |
| Hospice | 798 | 31.3 | 715 | 31.2 |
| Specialist (O&G) practice | 162 | 30.1 | 162 | 29.0 |
| Locum private practice | 191 | 30.8 | - | - |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been excluded; table sort order = 2017 headcount
*The hospital setting FTE has been calculated based on clinical hours worked in the private or public sector.

Between 2014 and 2017, the number of nurses and midwives working in Hospital settings increased by 8.5%, Residential health care facilities increased by 5.1% and Community health care services increased by 1.8%.

There have been changes to the response options in the principal work setting question in the survey ('independent private practice' was added in 2017,

and 'private midwifery practice' was renamed 'group midwifery practice/caseload' in 2016). Consequently, there are changes between 2014 and 2017 in the number of nurses and midwives who reported working in Other, Other private practice and Group midwifery practice/caseload settings.

Working Intentions

In 2017, nurses and midwives had worked 16 years on average and intended to stay in the workforce for another 17 years. There were some gender differences: males reported having worked fewer years than females (13 years vs 16 years).

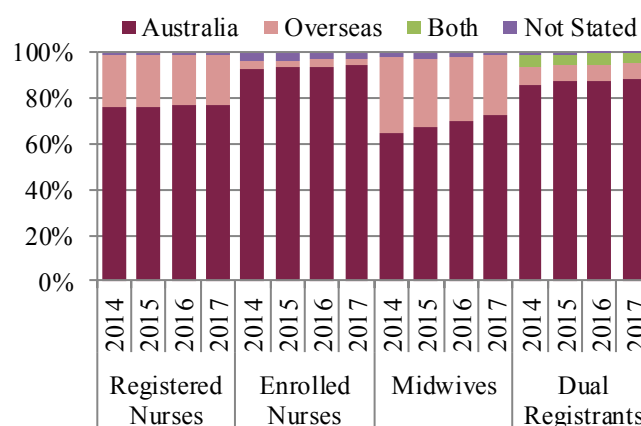
Figure 5: Workforce intentions, 2017



Initial qualification

The workforce survey asks where nurses and midwives obtained their initial qualification. In 2017, 80.4% obtained their initial qualification(s) in Australia, 17.8% obtained their initial qualification(s) overseas and 0.4% obtained both Australian and overseas qualifications.

Figure 6: Initial qualification by division, 2014-2017



Distribution

State and territory

In 2017, more than three quarters (75.9%) of the workforce was located in three states: NSW (28.1%), VIC (27.2%) and QLD (20.6%).

In 2017, the highest rate of nurses and midwives per 100,000 population were in the NT and SA while NSW and WA had the lowest rates. Between 2014 and 2017, QLD had the largest rate increase (111.7), conversely SA had the largest rate decrease (27.0).

From 2014 to 2017, the average hours worked per week decreased across all States and Territories. In 2017, nurses and midwives in the NT worked the highest average hours per week (38.2 hours) and those in SA worked the fewest hours (31.8 hours).

Table 7: Distribution by state/territory, 2017

| State & Territory | Headcount | Total FTE | Average total hours | ² Rate per 100K population |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| NSW | 90,833 | 82,852 | 34.7 | 1,155.4 |
| VIC | 87,737 | 74,383 | 32.2 | 1,387.9 |
| QLD | 66,448 | 59,144 | 33.8 | 1,348.1 |
| SA | 28,116 | 23,531 | 31.8 | 1,631.2 |
| WA | 32,473 | 28,261 | 33.1 | 1,260.9 |
| TAS | 7,892 | 6,769 | 32.6 | 1,511.4 |
| ACT | 5,442 | 4,981 | 34.8 | 1,321.9 |
| NT | 4,087 | 4,104 | 38.2 | 1,651.4 |
| Australia | 323,122 | 284,120 | 33.4 | 1,313.6 |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been included in the Australia total.
²ABS - 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016-17

Remoteness area

In 2017, 72.3% of nurses and midwives worked in Major cities, 17.8% in Inner regional, 7.9% in Outer regional and 2.0% in Remote/Very remote locations.

In 2014, the proportions of the workforce across remoteness areas were similar, with 71.7% working in Major cities, 18.1% in Inner regional, 8.1% in Outer regional and 2.1% in Remote/Very remote locations.

Table 8: Distribution by remoteness area, 2017

| Remoteness Area | Headcount | Total FTE | Average total hours | ² Rate per 100K population |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Major cities | 233,571 | 205,505 | 33.4 | 1,322.1 |
| Inner regional | 57,518 | 49,321 | 32.6 | 1,310.1 |
| Outer regional | 25,561 | 22,803 | 33.9 | 1,248.2 |
| Remote | 4,079 | 3,949 | 36.8 | 1,396.6 |
| Very remote | 2,350 | 2,502 | 40.5 | 1,171.6 |
| Australia | 323,122 | 284,120 | 33.4 | 1,313.6 |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been included in the Australia total.
²ABS - 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016-17

In 2017, the average hours worked generally increased with remoteness, from 32.6 hours in Inner regional to 40.5 hours in Very Remote areas.

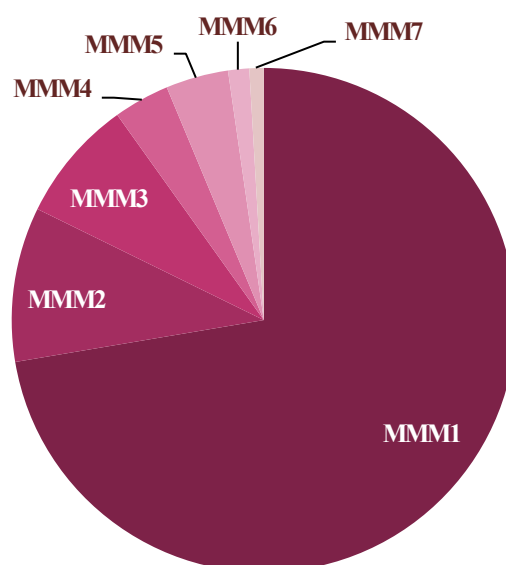
Between 2014 and 2017, there was a decrease in average hours worked across all remoteness areas.

Modified Monash Model

In 2017, the majority of FTE Nurses and midwives (72.3%) were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification system, a small increase from 71.9% in 2014.

Note: See www.doctorconnect.gov.au for more information

Figure 7: FTE Distribution by MMM, 2017



Tele-Health

The workforce survey asks nurses and midwives to report hours practiced via tele-health in nursing, midwifery, or both in the previous year. Responses have been combined to provide an average for the workforce.

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

In 2017, 6.3% (20,220) of the workforce responded to the tele-health question. On average respondents practiced via tele-health 12.1 hours per week.

Remoteness area breakdown for tele-health refers to the location of the nurse or midwife, not the location of the person receiving the service.

Table 9: Tele-health workforce remoteness location, 2017

| Major cities | Inner regional | Outer regional | Remote | Very remote |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------|-------------|
| 63.5% | 17.8% | 11.9% | 3.6% | 3.3% |

Note: Not stated/Unknown has been excluded

Note: There are 5 factsheets in this series: 1 Nurses and Midwives, 2 Registered Nurses, 3 Midwives, 4 Enrolled Nurses, 5 Nurse Practitioners.

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.

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References

- 1) Registered and employed workforce data, National Health Workforce Dataset 2014—2017 (<http://hwd.health.gov.au>)
Note: These numbers have changed due to an error in the NHWDS for 2013-2016 and won't match the previous years figures in the 2016 factsheets.
- 2) ABS - 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3218.0>), released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 31/08/2018