ANZSCO 2541-11
Midwife
Northern Territory
June 2018

Current labour market rating: Shortage
Previous labour market rating (June 2017): No shortage

Comments
Employers experienced difficulties in attracting qualified and experienced midwives to take up positions in the Northern Territory.

Survey results¹
- The Department of Jobs and Small Business surveyed employers who had recently advertised across public hospitals and community clinics. The survey was supplemented by cold canvassing of employers in the health field.
- The Northern Territory Government is the largest employer of midwives and has recently changed its recruitment processes with vacancies expressed as an online ‘expression of interest’. It should be noted that the data relating to government positions do not show by regional and metropolitan positions.
- The survey shows 33 per cent of vacancies were filled across the Territory. This is a significant decrease on the 100 per cent of vacancies filled across the Territory in 2017.
- There were on average 1.5 applicants per vacancy a slight decrease compared to 2.1 applicants per vacancy reported in 2017.
- On average there was less than one person considered suitable per vacancy, down from 1.1 suitable applicants per vacancy reported in 2017.
- Some vacancies remained unfilled for between two to four months, with regional areas experiencing much longer periods of up to 12 months, with some positions remaining unfilled.
- Employers preferred to employ midwives with dual qualifications as registered nurses.

Unsuitable applicants
- While all applicants were qualified midwives, employers considered 52 per cent unsuitable for the positions.
- Employers cited reasons for this as applicants:
  - were unwilling to relocate;
  - lacked cultural/remote experience and knowledge; and
  - expectations around remuneration levels.

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business - Document library, Australian Government and can also be accessed by the QR code.
Demand and supply trends

- Demand for midwives is dependent on birth rates. In 2016 the Northern Territory recorded 3927 registered births, compared to 4004 in 2015, a decline of 77 births over the twelve months, a 1.9 per cent decrease. The Northern Territory has the youngest mothers at 29.6 years and the second highest Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of any State or Territory (1.92 babies per woman).²

- The majority of midwives are employed in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry, which is projected to increase by 2000 people in the Northern Territory to May 2022. It is considered to be the fastest growing industry in Australia and is expected to grow by approximately 250,500 over the five years to May 2022.³

- Formal entry to this occupation is through the completion of a three year Bachelor of Midwifery or for registered nurses, completion of an approved program of study.⁴

- Since the introduction of a Bachelor of Midwifery at Charles Darwin University in 2012, figures from the Department of Education and Training show a steady increase in commencements at the undergraduate level from 46 in 2012 to 86 in 2016 and 30 students graduating as midwives in 2016.⁵

- All midwives must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia and meet the Board’s registration standards in order to practice in Australia.

- Data from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia shows a 12 per cent increase in the number of midwives registered with the Northern Territory as their principal place of practice over the 12 months to March 2018 (89 compared to 80). There was a slight decrease (1.78 per cent) in the number of nurses with dual registration, down from 505 in 2017 to 496 in 2018. Overall, the total number of practitioners remains unchanged at 585.⁶

- There were 52 vacancies for midwives in the Northern Territory to June 2018, the same number of vacancies advertised in the previous 12 month period.⁷

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³ Australian Government Labour Market Information Portal “Regional Projections – interactive tool”
⁴ Charles Darwin University offers Bachelor of Midwifery and Bachelor of Science (Honours). A list of approved programs can be found on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.
⁵ Department of Education and Training, Higher Education, Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables, commencements and completions, includes course specialisations
⁷ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, June 2018, 12 month moving average