

Skills Priority List Findings

Health Professionals

ANZSCO Sub-Major Group 25

Occupations in Shortage

Of the 77 Health Professional occupations assessed for the 2021 Skills Priority List (SPL), 29% were found to be in shortage, compared with 19% for all occupations (Table 1). Among the Minor Groups, Medical Practitioners had the highest proportion of occupations in shortage (38%), followed by Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professionals (33%), and Health Therapy Professionals (31%). Only 6% of Midwifery and Nursing Professional occupations were identified as being in shortage.

Table 1: Occupations in shortage, Health Professionals Sub-Major Group and Minor Groups

ANZSCO Group		No. reviewed	% of reviewed in shortage
251	Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professionals	15	33%
252	Health Therapy Professionals	13	31%
253	Medical Practitioners	32	38%
254	Midwifery and Nursing Professionals	17	6%
25	Health Professionals	77	29%
	All occupations	799	19%

Future Demand

All Health Professional occupations are projected to have either strong or moderate future demand, with 19% projected to have strong demand, compared with 33% for all occupations (Table 2). Strong future demand is projected for 87% of Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professional occupations, with 15% of Health Therapy Professional occupations projected to

have strong future demand. All Medical Practitioners and Midwifery and Nursing Professional occupations are projected to have moderate future demand.

Table 2: Future demand, Health Professionals Sub-Major Group and Minor Groups

ANZSCO Group		No. of occupations reviewed	Future demand ratings (% of reviewed occupations)		
			Strong	Moderate	Soft
251	Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professionals	15	87%	13%	0%
252	Health Therapy Professionals	13	15%	85%	0%
253	Medical Practitioners	32	0%	100%	0%
254	Midwifery and Nursing Professionals	17	0%	100%	0%
25	Health Professionals	77	19%	81%	0%
	All occupations	799	33%	60%	7%

Of the Health Professional occupations reviewed, six were found to be in shortage with strong future demand:

- Sonographer
- Optometrist
- Orthoptist
- Hospital Pharmacist
- Retail Pharmacist
- Speech Pathologist.

Results by State and Territory

The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of Health Professional occupations assessed in shortage (64%), with the Australian Capital Territory having the lowest proportion in shortage (10%). Most of the remaining states had 29% of Health Professional occupations in shortage, apart from Queensland with 27%. It should be noted that the variation across the states and territories, at least in part, reflects differences in the stakeholder input received.

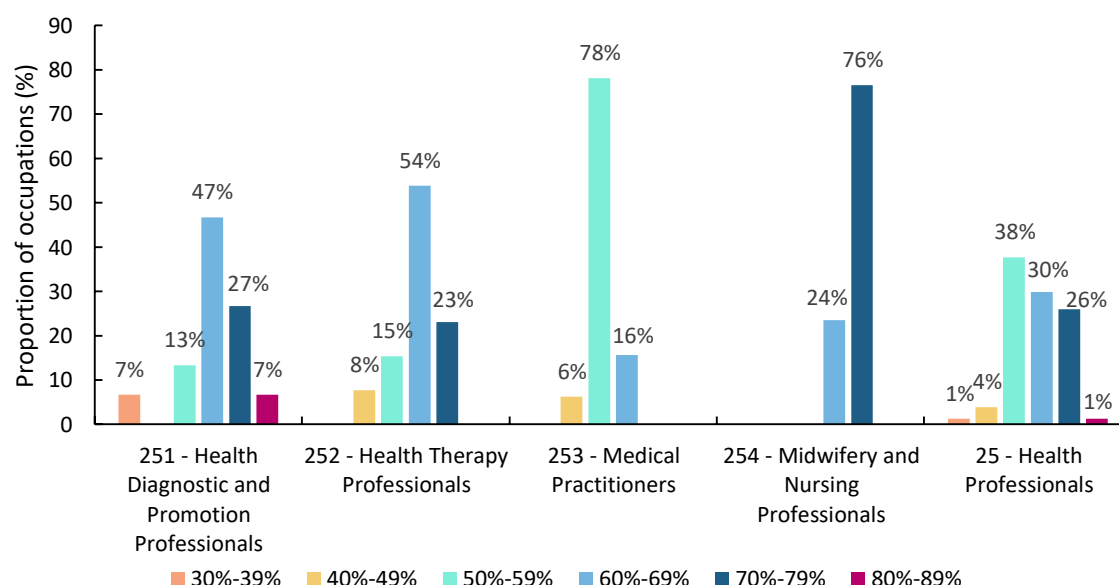
Predicted Fill Rates

Incorporating many labour market indicators, including data from the NSC's Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) where available, the predicted fill rate has

been formulated by the NSC to predict the percentage of vacancies filled by employers for a particular occupation over the 12 month research period.

The predicted vacancy fill rates for Health Professional occupations fall within a relatively wide range of 50% to 89% (Figure 1). Medical Practitioner occupations tend to have low fill rates (50%-59%), while Midwifery and Nursing Professionals have higher fill rates (70% to 79%). Roughly half of the predicted fill rates for Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professional occupations and Health Therapy Professional occupations are in the 60% to 69% range.

Figure 1: Health Professionals, predicted fill rate ranges



Survey of Employers

The Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) is a key component of the SPL analysis. Between July 2020 and April 2021, the NSC contacted employers who had advertised vacancies across 26 Health Professional occupations, to ask about their recent recruitment experience. In aggregate, employers filled most of their vacancies (67%) and received an average of 7.9 applicants per vacancy, including 2.8 suitable applicants per vacancy.

The most common reason applicants were found unsuitable when applying for Health Professional vacancies was a lack of general experience in the occupation (mentioned by 63% of employers). Other reasons included insufficient specific skills or experience (39%), and lack of qualifications or registration (39%). Additionally, around a third of employers mentioned applicants being unsuccessful at various stages of the recruitment process (e.g. written application, interview, reference check, etc.).

Having qualifications is very important for Health Professional occupations, with almost 100% of employers requiring applicants to hold a formal qualification, usually at the bachelor degree level or higher. Employers received an average of 5.3 qualified applicants per vacancy. Almost half (47%) of qualified applicants, however, were unsuitable.

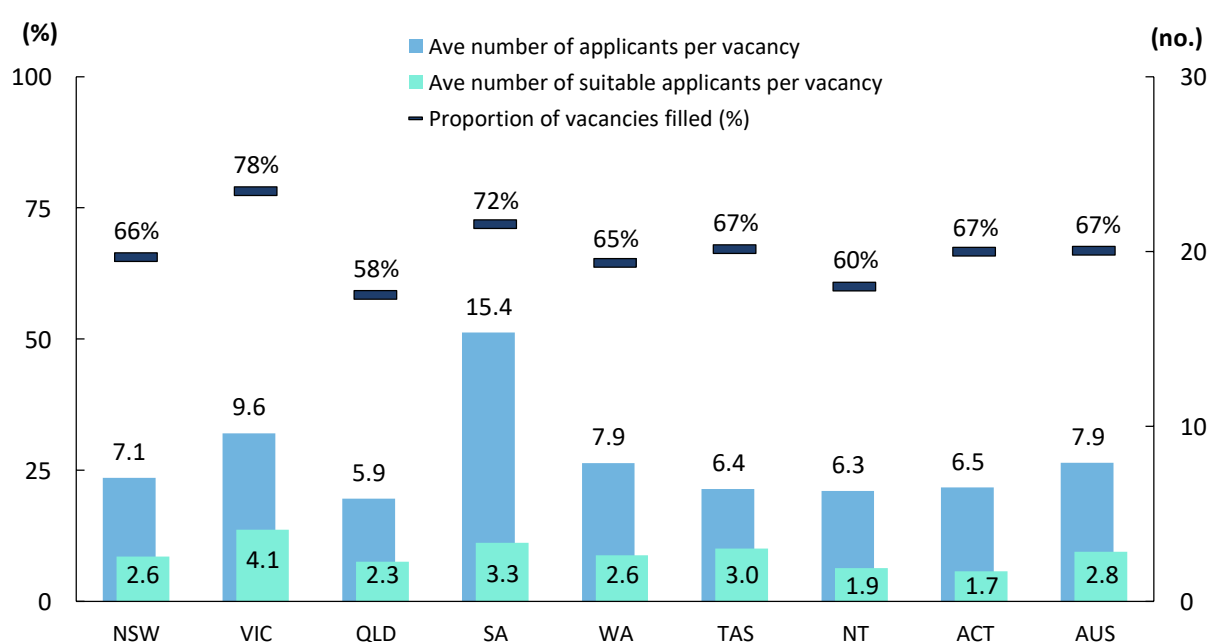
In addition to qualifications, the requirement to have relevant work experience was mentioned by 79% of employers. On average, employers sought applicants with just over two years of experience.

Around 30% of employers had unfilled vacancies, with 15% of employers receiving no suitable applicants.

Employers in regional areas generally experienced more recruitment difficulties than metropolitan-based employers. Regional employers filled 61% of their vacancies and received an average of 2.3 suitable applicants per vacancy, compared with 71% and 3.1, respectively, for metropolitan employers. In addition, regional employers were more likely to have unfilled vacancies (35%) than metropolitan employers (26%).

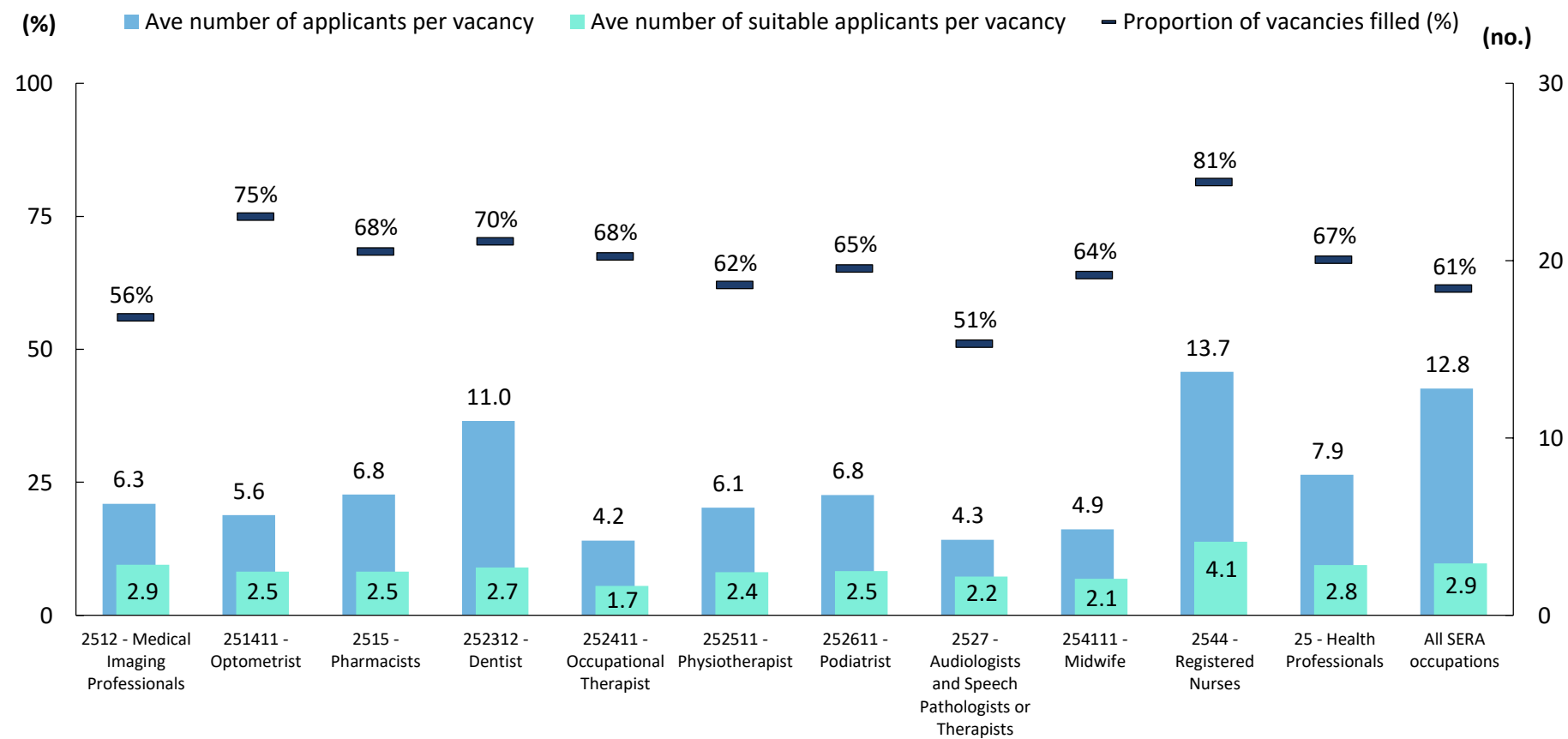
Among the states and territories, employers in Victoria filled the highest proportion of Health Professionals vacancies (78%) (Figure 2), and received the highest average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (4.1). Employers in Queensland filled the lowest proportion of vacancies (58%), while employers in the Australian Capital Territory attracted the lowest average number of suitable applicants per vacancy (1.7).

Figure 2: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), surveyed Health Professionals, by State and Territory, July 2020 - April 2021



Of the surveyed Health Professional occupations, employers recruiting for Registered Nurses filled the largest proportion of vacancies (81%) (Figure 3). Audiologists and Speech Pathologists or Therapist occupations had the lowest proportion of vacancies filled (51%), followed by Medical Imaging Professional occupations (56%). Vacancies for Occupational Therapist positions had the lowest number of suitable applicants per vacancy (1.7), followed by Midwife (2.1).

Figure 3: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Health Professional occupations, Australia, July 2020 to April 2021



Stakeholder Engagement

Health Professional occupations were mentioned by a number of stakeholders throughout the engagement process, where various representative bodies responded to surveys, met with the NSC, or provided other submissions. For Health Professional occupations, this included many regional representative bodies, who often reported difficulty securing workers in regional and remote locations. Overall, stakeholders frequently reported difficulty recruiting in non-metropolitan areas across the country, with additional stakeholders reporting difficulty across both regional and metropolitan areas.

Occupations most often mentioned included Registered Nurses, particularly those specialised in Aged Care, and General Practitioners. Most stakeholders expected recruitment difficulties to worsen over the next 12 months, or to persist. A number of stakeholders reported difficulty primarily in recruiting experienced workers, however a similar number reported no difference recruiting across levels of experience. The reason for recruitment difficulty was most often due to a lack of suitable or experienced applicants, lack of applicants overall, or the regional or remote job location. The most frequently mentioned challenge facing recruitment in these occupations in the future is the lack of a locally trained workforce, and the ageing workforce. Contributing to a training initiative, including training someone internally, and increasing wages were the most common steps taken to attract employees to vacancies.

Demand and Supply

The demand for Health Professionals has strengthened considerably in recent years. The number of advertised vacancies for these workers has increased significantly since early 2020, almost doubling to be at an historical peak in June 2021.¹ Employment of these workers has also increased strongly in recent years to an historical high in May 2021.²

New supply to Health Professional occupations is primarily through higher education, with most employers requiring a bachelor's degree or higher. The number of people completing higher education qualifications in Health increased by 35% over the five years to 2019, strengthening supply to this labour market.³

Temporary skilled migration is also a source of supply for a range of Professional occupations, including Health Professional occupations. The number of temporary skilled

¹ National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, June 2021, trend

² ABS, Labour Force, May 2021, National Skills Commission trend

³ Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Higher Education Statistics, 2001-2019, uCube

visa holders in the Professionals major group has fallen since early 2020, down by more than a quarter, limiting supply to this labour market.⁴

⁴ Department of Home Affairs, Temporary resident (skilled) visa holders in Australia, June 2021 (subclasses 457 and 482)

Appendix – SPL Findings for Health Professional Occupations

Occupation		Current Labour Market Ratings and Future Demand Rating									
ANZSCO	Occupation	National Labour Market Rating	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	National Future Demand
251111	Dietitian	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
251112	Nutritionist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
251211	Medical Diagnostic Radiographer	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
251212	Medical Radiation Therapist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Strong
251213	Nuclear Medicine Technologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Strong
251214	Sonographer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Strong
251311	Environmental Health Officer	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
251312	Occupational Health and Safety Adviser	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
251411	Optometrist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	NS	Strong
251412	Orthoptist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	NS	Strong
251511	Hospital Pharmacist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Strong
251512	Industrial Pharmacist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Strong
251513	Retail Pharmacist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Strong
251911	Health Promotion Officer	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
251912	Orthotist or Prosthetist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
252111	Chiropractor	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
252112	Osteopath	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252211	Acupuncturist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252212	Homoeopath	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252213	Naturopath	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252214	Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252311	Dental Specialist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
252312	Dentist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
252411	Occupational Therapist	S	S	S	NS	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
252511	Physiotherapist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
252611	Podiatrist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
252711	Audiologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Strong
252712	Speech Pathologist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Strong
253111	General Practitioner	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253112	Resident Medical Officer	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253211	Anaesthetist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate

Occupation		Current Labour Market Ratings and Future Demand Rating									
ANZSCO	Occupation	National Labour Market Rating	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	National Future Demand
253311	Specialist Physician (General Medicine)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
253312	Cardiologist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253313	Clinical Haematologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253314	Medical Oncologist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253315	Endocrinologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253316	Gastroenterologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253317	Intensive Care Specialist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253318	Neurologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253321	Paediatrician	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
253322	Renal Medicine Specialist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253323	Rheumatologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253324	Thoracic Medicine Specialist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253411	Psychiatrist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
253511	Surgeon (General)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253512	Cardiothoracic Surgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253513	Neurosurgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
253514	Orthopaedic Surgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253515	Otorhinolaryngologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253516	Paediatric Surgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253517	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
253518	Urologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253521	Vascular Surgeon	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
253911	Dermatologist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
253912	Emergency Medicine Specialist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
253913	Obstetrician and Gynaecologist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253914	Ophthalmologist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253915	Pathologist	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Moderate
253917	Diagnostic and Interventional Radiologist	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
253918	Radiation Oncologist	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
254111	Midwife	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	S	NS	Moderate
254211	Nurse Educator	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254212	Nurse Researcher	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
254311	Nurse Manager	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate

Occupation		Current Labour Market Ratings and Future Demand Rating									
ANZSCO	Occupation	National Labour Market Rating	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	National Future Demand
254411	Nurse Practitioner	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254412	Registered Nurse (Aged Care)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254413	Registered Nurse (Child and Family Health)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
254414	Registered Nurse (Community Health)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Moderate
254415	Registered Nurse (Critical Care and Emergency)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254416	Registered Nurse (Developmental Disability)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254417	Registered Nurse (Disability and Rehabilitation)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254418	Registered Nurse (Medical)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254421	Registered Nurse (Medical Practice)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254422	Registered Nurse (Mental Health)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254423	Registered Nurse (Perioperative)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254424	Registered Nurse (Surgical)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate
254425	Registered Nurse (Paediatrics)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	Moderate

Ratings: S – Shortage; R – Regional Shortage; NS – No Shortage