

# The Nursing and Midwifery Workforce in Australia – an overview

This document contains key information about the nursing and midwifery workforce in Australia including employment and demographic data and the number of nursing and midwifery students commencing and completing courses.

Information is also provided on the total number of nurses and midwives registered or enrolled by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). Under the National Law<sup>1</sup> all nurses and midwives must be registered in order to practice.

The information below includes:

## 1. Workforce data and demographics

- The number of nurses and midwives in the nursing workforce nationally and by State and Territory over the last 5 years
- The number of employed nurses and midwives 2016 to 2021
- The number of employed nurses and midwives including full time equivalent (FTE) numbers, average age and average hours worked, both nationally and by State and Territory, 2021
- Location of nurses and midwives across metropolitan, regional, rural, remote or very remote regions, 2021
- The work settings of employed nurses and midwives, 2021
- Demographic data, employed nurses and midwives 2021

## 2. Registration

- Total number of nurses and midwives registered in Australia, nationally and by State and Territory
- Total number of nurses and midwives registered in Australia, by registration type, nationally and by State and Territory

## 3. Students

- The number of students commencing and completing nursing/midwifery courses, (2012 to 2020) nationally and by State and Territory
- The number of students commencing and completing programs leading to registration as an enrolled nurse (2015 to 2020) nationally and by State and Territory

## 4. Wages data

- Nursing and midwifery wages data in the public sector, aged care and private hospitals

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<sup>1</sup> The National Scheme is governed by a nationally consistent law passed by each state and territory parliament – the health Practitioner Regulation National Law. <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/about-ahpra/what-we-do/legislation.aspx>

## 1. Nursing and Midwifery workforce - data and demographics

Not all nurses and midwives registered with the NMBA are in the workforce. Nurses and midwives may be temporarily out of the workforce for a range of reasons but can still be registered or enrolled if mandatory registration requirements are met.

The workforce data provides information specific to nurses and midwives in the workforce and employed in their profession. It is collected at the point of registration through a workforce survey and published by the Australian Government Department of Health.<sup>2</sup>

### How many nurses and midwives are in the workforce?

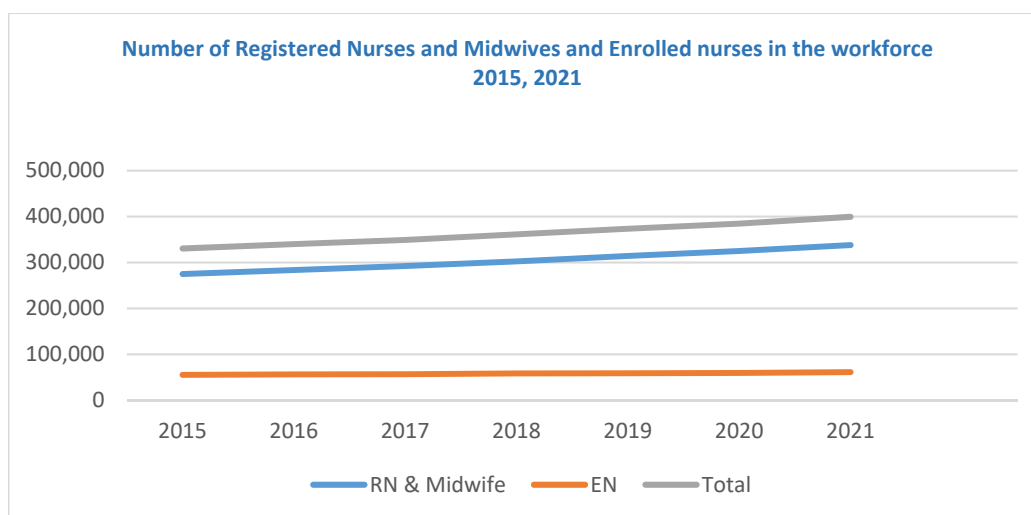
Workforce numbers include registered nurses and midwives who are:

- Employed
- On extended leave
- Looking for work in nursing/midwifery

Table 1 below provides the total number of nurses and midwives, and enrolled nurses registered and in the workforce for the years 2015 to 2021.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Number of registered nurses and midwives, and enrolled nurses in the workforce 2015, 2021**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
RN & Midwife	274,996	283,703	292,318	302,606	314,473	324,980	337,996
EN	55,533	56,549	56,838	58,683	59,041	59,796	61,429
Total	330,529	340,252	349,156	361,289	373,514	384,776	399,425



<sup>2</sup> Australian Government Department of Health, Health Workforce Data <https://hwd.health.gov.au/>

<sup>3</sup> Note the number is a combined total for RNs and Midwives. Information accessed 19.01.2022

**Table 2: Number of Registered Nurses, Midwives and Enrolled nurses in the workforce 2015, 2021 by State/Territory**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New South Wales	92,597	95,273	97,505	99,970	10,3097	105,585	109,233
Victoria	89,891	92,205	94,889	98,794	10,2106	105,649	109,090
Queensland	65,763	68,978	71,780	75,093	78,220	81,175	84,838
South Australia	30,454	30,605	30,670	31,358	32,180	32,765	33,866
Western Australia	34,057	34,857	35,388	36,395	37,406	38,402	40,095
Tasmania	7,985	8,131	8,375	8,782	9,130	9,438	9,906
Northern Territory	4,143	4,306	4,423	4,610	4,685	4,754	4,947
Australian Capital Territory	5,422	5,680	5,896	6,034	6,360	6,678	7,096
Other Territories	38	38	38	41	6	30	354
Overseas/Unknown	179	179	192	212	324	300	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>330,529</b>	<b>340,252</b>	<b>349,156</b>	<b>361,289</b>	<b>373,514</b>	<b>384,776</b>	<b>399,425</b>

NA = Not available

### How many nurses and midwives are employed?

The following Tables 3-5 providing employment and demographic data for nurses and midwives are taken directly from the Department of Health summary statistics available on the website.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3: Registered and Employed in Australia 2016, 2021**

Profession/Division	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Registered Nurse	236,931	245,269	254,650	265,335	271,009	286,149
Enrolled Nurse only	51,454	51,478	52,944	53,219	52,342	54,193
Dual Registration	23,377	22,568	22,135	21,656	21,256	20,990
Midwife only	3,402	3,807	4,241	4,731	4,982	5,364
Total	315,164	323,122	333,970	344,941	349,589	366,696

**Table 4: Registered and Employed in Australia, 2021**

Profession	Headcount	Total FTE	Average Age	Average Total Hours
Registered Nurse	303,440	267,509	42.9	33.5
Enrolled Nurse	54,193	45,357	44.5	31.8
Midwifery	26,350	14,244	46.7	20.5
Total	366,696	327,176	43.1	33.9

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Summary Statistics Nursing and Midwifery Professions <https://hwd.health.gov.au/resources/data/summary-nrmw.html>

**Table 5: State and Territory, Registered and Employed in Australia, 2021**

State	Headcount	Total FTE	Average Age	Average Total Hours
NSW	100,770	92,958	43.3	35.1
VIC	99,977	86,481	42.4	32.9
QLD	77,740	69,727	43.0	34.1
SA	31,130	26,539	44.1	32.4
WA	36,744	32,632	43.6	33.7
TAS	9,189	8,112	44.4	33.5
ACT	6,395	5,955	41.3	35.4
NT	4,540	4,560	42.1	38.2
Unknown	211	212	43.2	38.2
Australia	366,696	327,176	43.1	33.9

Table 6 below shows the geographic distribution of nurses and midwives using the Modified Monash Model (MMM) which defines whether a location is a city, rural, remote or very remote. For more information go to: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm>

**Table 6: Modified Monash Model (MMM), Registered and Employed in Australia, 2021**

Modified Monash Model	Headcount	Total FTE	Average Age	Average Total Hours
1 - Metropolitan	266,490	237,600	42.3	33.9
2 – Regional	37,429	33,530	43.4	34.0
3 – Large rural towns	28,647	25,578	44.9	33.9
4 – Medium rural towns	13,414	11,637	46.3	33.0
5 – Small rural towns	13,947	11,981	47.7	32.6
6 – Remote communities	4,019	3,927	43.9	37.1
7 – Very remote communities	2,564	2,736	47.1	40.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>366,696</b>	<b>327,176</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>33.9</b>

Approximately 60 percent of employed nurses and midwives work primarily in a Hospital setting. Table 7 below provides the number employed and average hours worked per week across the different work settings in 2021.

**Table 7: Employed Nurses and Midwives by principal work setting - 2021**

Principal work setting	Headcount	Average weekly hours
Hospital	219,187	34
Residential health care facility	44,119	34
Community health service	30,617	34
Other	14,156	34
General practitioner (GP) practice	13,467	30
Outpatient service	12,682	33
Other private practice	6,022	31
Independent private practice	5,240	30
Other government department or agency	4,627	36
Tertiary education facility	3,742	34
Correctional service	2,347	38
Commercial/business service	1,972	33
Aboriginal Community Controlled health service	1,626	38
Defence forces	1,618	38
School	1,590	30
Group midwifery practice/caseload	1,103	38
Hospice	1,040	33
Other educational facility	879	32
Other Aboriginal health service	544	38
Specialist (O&G) practice	118	28
Not stated	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>366,696</b>	<b>34</b>

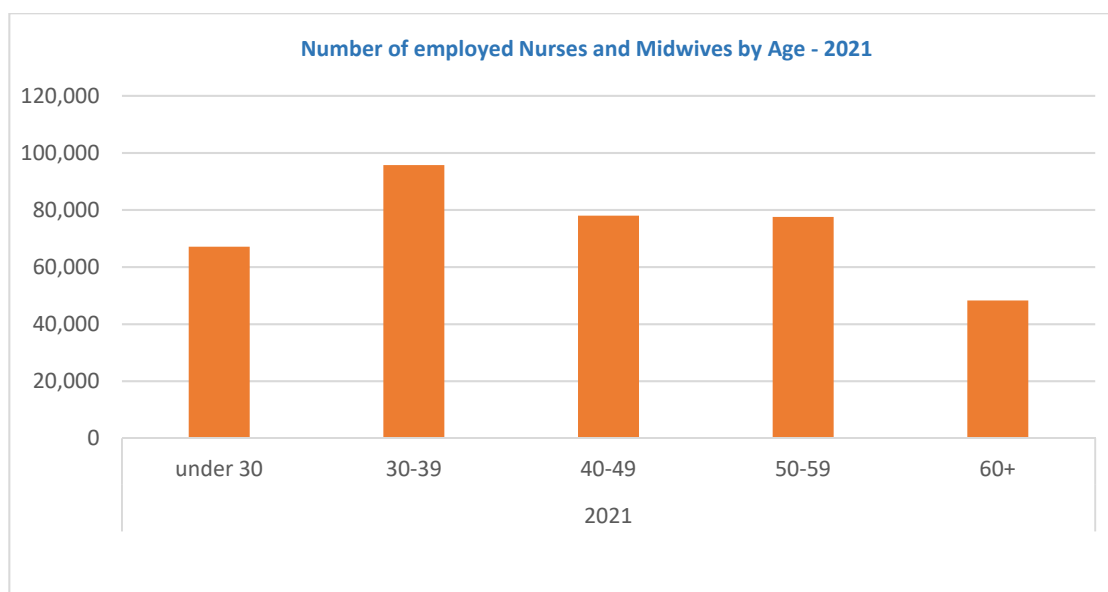
Source: Health Workforce Data Tool. National health Workforce dataset (NHWDS) 2021.

### 2021 demographic data – employed nurses and midwives

88.4% of employed nurses and midwives identify as female and 11.6% male.

1.4% identify as Indigenous and Australian born.

Average age nationally – 43.05 years. The number of nurses and midwives within the listed age ranges are shown below.



### Sector in which clinical hours were worked - 2021

Sector	2021
Public sector only	203,350
Private sector only	129,094
Both	10,740
Not stated	23,512
<b>Total</b>	<b>366,696</b>

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2021

## 2. Registration statistics

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) provides information on the number of nurses and midwives registered to practice in Australia. Data is published quarterly and covers all nurse divisions including Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses, Midwives and dual registrants.

The tables below are extracted from the latest NMBA statistical report. Please go to the NMBA website for full details via the following link: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx>

The latest quarterly report, (1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022), states there are 477,147 nurses and midwives registered. This includes General, Non-practising and Provisional registration. Table 8 provides the total number of registrants in each State and Territory.

**Table 8: Number of Registrants by State and Territory**

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP*	TOTAL
8,140	126,591	5,384	99,873	39,760	11,674	125,263	46,866	13,596	477,147

\*PPP is principal place of practice

**Table 9: Number of nurse and midwife registrants by Registration type and by State and Territory**

Profession	Registration Type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
Nurse	Total General Nurse	7,272	114,490	4,726	90,669	36,296	10,726	113,743	42,690	12,065	432,677
	Total Non-practising Nurse	135	2,615	49	1,627	762	211	1,782	696	1067	8,944
	Total Provisional Nurse	5	63	4	61	31	4	77	24	1	270
<b>Total Nurse</b>		<b>7,412</b>	<b>117,168</b>	<b>4,779</b>	<b>92,357</b>	<b>37,089</b>	<b>10,941</b>	<b>115,602</b>	<b>43,410</b>	<b>13,133</b>	<b>441,891</b>
Nurse and Midwife	Total General Nurse and Midwife	462	7,389	479	5,711	1,752	650	7,849	2,887	224	27,403
	Total Non-practising Nurse and Midwife	24	268	8	111	57	12	137	44	28	689
	Total Provisional Nurse and Midwife	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
<b>Total Nurse and Midwife</b>		<b>486</b>	<b>7,657</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>5,822</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>7,987</b>	<b>2,933</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>28,095</b>
Midwife	General	237	1,731	117	1,668	844	70	1,638	511	187	7,003
	Non-practising	5	34	1	26	17	1	34	12	24	154
	Provisional	0	1	0		1	0	2	0	0	4
<b>Total Midwife</b>		<b>242</b>	<b>1,766</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>1,694</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>7,161</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8,140</b>	<b>126,591</b>	<b>5,384</b>	<b>99,873</b>	<b>39,760</b>	<b>11,674</b>	<b>125,263</b>	<b>46,866</b>	<b>13,596</b>	<b>477,147</b>

Source Tables: Extracted from: Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Registrant data, Reporting period 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2022.

The NMBA also publishes nursing and midwifery summary data as part of their Annual Report. Find the 2020 – 2021 summary data and spreadsheets here: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/News/Annual-report.aspx>

### 3. Student statistics – Courses leading to initial registration as a nurse and Enrolled nurse programs

Data available in the **ANMF Graduate Data Set - Nurses and Midwives**

### 4. Wage data

Wage rates for nurses and midwives under State/Territory public sector Agreements or Award in NSW and estimated average wage data in residential aged care and private hospitals.

#### Nurses and Midwives' Paycheck