

The psychologist population

Introduction

In the main, data in this report have been compiled from surveys of psychologists conducted in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory in 2003. Surveys were also conducted in New South Wales and Queensland in 2000 and these data are included. Information from administrative records of the state and territory psychology registration boards has been used to estimate psychologist population figures from the survey data (see Explanatory notes) and to provide some overall figures for jurisdictions which did not conduct the psychologist survey. In order to provide a broad-level, national dimension to the AIHW psychology labour force data, also included in this report are National Health Survey data and Labour Force Survey data from the ABS surveys of the general population, plus higher education administrative data from DEST.

Size and composition of the psychology labour force

Psychologists registration board data

Data from the administrative records of the psychologist registration boards have been provided by most jurisdictions from 1999–00 to 2004–05 (except the Northern Territory). In 2004–05 there were 22,175 psychologists registered in total (excluding the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory). Figures provided show an increase in the number of registrations over the period 1999–00 to 2004–05 in all jurisdictions (Table 1), ranging from 20.2% in Western Australia to 58.5% in New South Wales. The relatively large rise in New South Wales is attributable to a jump between 2002–03 and 2003–04 (up by 1,319 psychologists).

Over the most recent period (from 2003–04 to 2004–05), increases ranged from 0.6% in Western Australia to 13.1% in Tasmania.

Table 1: Psychologist registrations, states and territories, 2000 to 2005

	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT ^(a)	NT ^(b)
1999–00	5,449 ^(c)	4,267	2,637	1,805	810	n.a.	450	n.a.
2000–01	5,590	4,556	2,854	1,872	838	n.a.	497	n.a.
2001–02	6,309	4,813	3,073	1,949	871	n.a.	554	n.a.
2002–03	6,774	5,290	3,008	2,071	922	n.a.	615	n.a.
2003–04	8,093	5,692	3,579	2,156	952	359	660	n.a.
2004–05	8,636	6,096	3,859	2,169	1,009	406	n.a.	n.a.
% change from 1999–00 to 2004–05	58.5	42.9	46.3	20.2	24.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
% change from 2003–04 to 2004–05	6.7	7.1	7.8	0.6	6.0	13.1	n.a.	n.a.

(a) Figures for Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory are as at 31 December within the financial year.

(b) Registration data for the Northern Territory are unavailable.

(c) Includes an estimate only, for probationary psychologists.

Sources: State and territory psychologist registration boards.

Estimates from the AIHW survey and the ABS labour force survey

The AIHW survey targets psychologists via registration administrative records (see Explanatory notes) and this approach results in multiple registrations being recorded when psychologists register in more than one jurisdiction. Survey data are used to estimate multiple registrations and, after accounting for these, the number of registered psychologists in the jurisdictions that participated in the 2003 survey totaled 16,094.

The survey data are then weighted to match the available registration data (see Explanatory Notes on page 20).

The AIHW survey showed that the majority of registered psychologists were employed in the profession (the psychology workforce), ranging from 89.6% in Victoria to 85.3% in South Australia (Table 2). In 2003, employed psychologists numbered 14,073 across the AIHW surveyed jurisdictions and clinical psychologists numbered 9,694 (Table 2).

For the same jurisdictions, the ABS Labour Force survey, which identifies clinical psychologists only, reported 12,256 employed clinical psychologists in 2005.

Comparisons with ABS Labour Force Survey data

Because of differences between the AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey and the ABS Labour Force Survey, it is not possible to make comparisons between the two below a national level. The main differences are that the ABS survey is a sample survey and intended to provide broad-level, national estimates only and, being a sample survey, estimates are subject to sampling variability. The AIHW survey is conducted as a census of psychologists within each participating jurisdiction, but is subject to non-response.

Another limitation with comparing AIHW data and ABS data at the state level is that, in the compilation of ABS data, psychologists are assigned to their jurisdiction of residence (that is, where they were surveyed) whereas in the AIHW data psychologists are assigned to the jurisdiction in which they did most work (see Table 5, page 5).

The ABS survey is not designed to estimate occupations at a fine level whereas the AIHW survey targets psychologists directly from the registration boards. Further, the data collection periods vary across the two collections, limiting comparability between them.

Nevertheless, the ABS data are more recent (available for 2005) and can add a broad-level, national dimension to supplement the AIHW data.

Table 2: Registered psychologists: labour force status, 2003

Labour force status	NSW	Vic	Qld ^(a)	SA	ACT	Total
Psychology labour force ^(b)	5,842	4,840	2,568	814	519	14,584
Working in psychology	5,589	4,671	2,535	769	509	14,073
Clinical psychologist	3,996	3,067	1,793	516	323	9,694
Non-clinical psychologist	1,593	1,605	742	253	186	4,379
Not working in psychology	253	168	n.a.	46	10	511
On extended leave	102	46	34	37	n.p.	222
Looking for work in psychology	151	122	n.a.	8	8	289
Not in psychology labour force ^{(a)(b)}	620	303	43	78	48	1,092
Overseas	185	38	43	4	5	275
Not looking for work in psychology	434	265	n.a.	74	43	817
Looking for work status not known	21	69	317	9	n.p.	419
Total registered psychologists	6,483	5,212	2,928	901	569	16,094
Multiple registrations	291	78	80	21	46	515
Total registrations^(c)	6,774	5,290	3,008	922	615	16,609

(a) Excludes 'whether looking for work' because this was not collected in the Queensland survey.

(b) Excludes 'looking for work' not known.

(c) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2003.

Clinical psychology is one of many specialist branches of psychology and is concerned with the development, prevention and treatment of emotional problems in children, adolescents and adults. Clinical psychologists are specialists in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of psychological problems and mental illness. They also design and implement a wide range of prevention and mental health promotion programs (APS, 07/06/06).

In 2005 the ABS national estimate of the number of employed clinical psychologists was 13,939, a rise of 50.5% from the estimate for 2000 (9,260) (Table 5). Similarly, over a comparable period, the number of psychologists registered with the psychology boards (for those jurisdictions with data available) rose by between 20.2% and 58.5% (Table 1).

The AIHW survey found that most employed psychologists were practising in the field of clinical psychology while around a third were employed in non-clinical fields (ranging from 28.5% in New South Wales to 36.6% in the Australian Capital Territory) (Table 2). The proportion of registered psychologists looking for work in psychology was small (2.3% in New South Wales, 2.4% in Victoria, 0.9% in South Australia and 1.3% in the Australian Capital Territory). In New South Wales, the age and sex distributions of psychologists in the workforce were similar to psychologists looking for work in psychology (45.3 years, on average, and 29.4% male, respectively; and 45.6 years and 30.7% male, respectively) (Table 3).

Defining clinical psychologists

The AIHW survey scope is registered psychologists, that is, those meeting the minimum legal qualification and practice requirements for registration with the psychology boards. The ABS Labour force survey relies entirely on those who self-report their occupation.

In the AIHW and the ABS surveys, estimates of clinical psychologist numbers are based on psychologists who self-report that they are clinical psychologists. The AIHW questionnaires in some states and territories, but not all, indicated that this work involved direct patient care. No other guidance was provided to respondents on the definition of 'clinical psychologist'.

Self-reported clinical psychologists would be a broader group than membership of the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) College of Clinical Psychologists (CCP), which requires a minimum of six years' university training, including approved postgraduate clinical studies and placements in psychiatric settings, plus two years of further approved supervision in the clinical field. Members are also required to maintain a program of on-going professional development (APS 2006).

Neither the AIHW nor the ABS surveys can separately identify the subset of psychologists with APS CCP membership or eligibility for membership. The AIHW will seek opportunities with the jurisdictions to address this problem by adding a question on the form.

Table 3: Registered psychologists: selected characteristics, 2003

Labour force status/characteristic	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT
In the psychology labour force					
Employed in psychology ^(a)					
Number	5,589	4,671	2,535	769	509
Per cent male ^(b)	29.4	26.3	32.1	39.7	28.5
Average age	45.3	43.9	41.5	46.9	45.4
Looking for work in psychology ^(c)					
Number	151	122	n.a.	8	8
Per cent male	30.7	16.4	n.a.	45.4	31.6
Average age	45.6	38.3	n.a.	45.7	37.8
Not in the psychology labour force ^(d)					
Number	434	265	n.a.	74	43
Per cent male	25.2	25.8	n.a.	30.7	45.1
Average age	48.1	46.3	n.a.	48.0	48.6

(a) Excludes psychologists on extended leave.

(b) Sex not known for 38% of Queensland registrations.

(c) 'Looking for work' not collected in Queensland survey.

(d) Excludes psychologists overseas.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2003.

1. See 'Field of psychology' in the Explanatory notes.

2. Non-clinical fields include administration, teaching/education, research, professional supervision, and other.

Employed psychologists

Workforce size

Queensland and New South Wales were the only two states for which data were available from the AIHW survey between 2000 and 2003. Employed psychologists (the psychology workforce) rose by 21.2% and 33.9% in those two states, respectively (Table A.4). Clinical psychologists, who are of interest because they provide direct patient care, rose by 11.9% and 31.3%, respectively, reflecting the registration increases over a similar period (tables 4 and 1).

Table 4: Employed clinical psychologists, 2000 and 2003

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT
2000	3,571	..	1,366
2003	3,996	3,067	1,793	516	323
Change (%)	11.9		31.3		

Sources: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Surveys, 2000 and 2003.

ABS Labour Force Survey data showed a 50.5% national rise (Table 5) in employed clinical psychologists, which aligns with the 20.2%–58.5% rise (Table 1) in registered psychologists in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia

In the absence of AIHW survey data for all states, the ABS data provide a national picture. However, estimates at the state level show considerable movement over the period and sizeable differences in the 2000 estimates for New South Wales and Queensland (the only overlapping data from the two sources) (tables 4 and 5). This is likely because the 2000 and 2005 survey samples varied, combined with the fact that psychologists are a comparatively small population for the ABS survey to target, given its design (see box on page 3).

Table 5: Employed clinical psychologists, states and territories, 2000 and 2005

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
2000	2,984	2,977	1,919	616	288	205	248	24	9,260
2005	3,660	4,852	2,140	1,273	1,163	225	442	186	13,939
Change (%)	*22.7	*63.0	*11.5	*106.6	*303.6	*9.4	*78.0	*691.5	50.5

* Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should therefore be used with caution.

Sources: ABS Labour Force Surveys, 2000 and 2005.

Demographic characteristics

Although there are variations across time and jurisdictions between estimates from the ABS and AIHW surveys, a comparison of the demographic profiles of employed clinical psychologists shows similar distributions in the two surveys (figures 1 and 2). Both data sources show that the proportion of females in the youngest clinical psychologist age group was much higher than in older groups. For psychologists aged under 35 years, the ABS estimate of the proportion female was 86.4% in 2000 and 90.1% in 2005. The AIHW 2003 estimate was 86.6%. Both ABS and AIHW data show these proportions gradually reducing as age increases. For those aged 45 years or more, the ABS estimate of the proportion was 61.6% female in 2000 and 69.7% in 2005, while the AIHW estimated 71.9% for 2003 (figures 1 and 2).

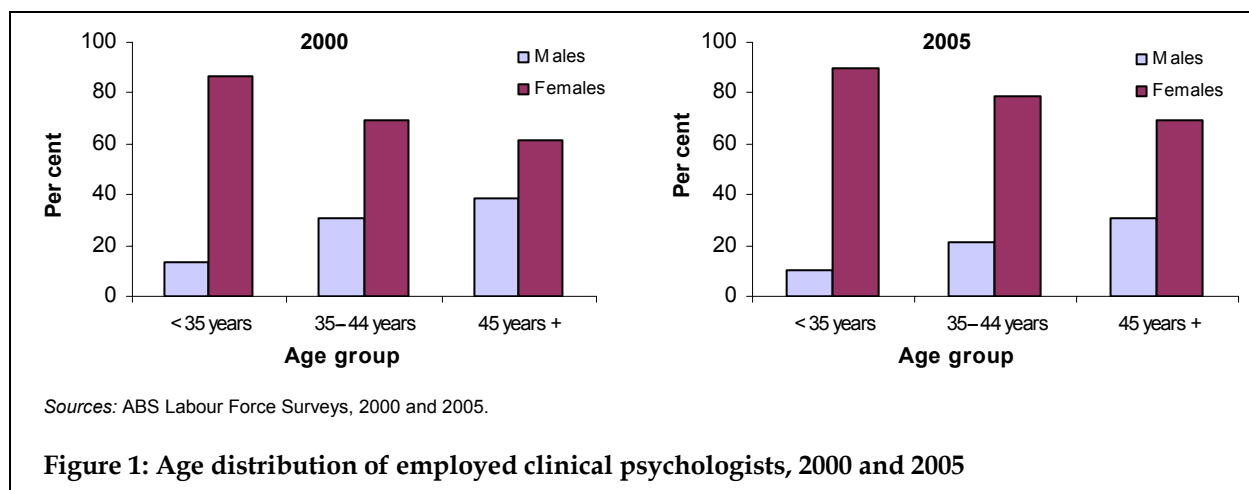


Figure 1: Age distribution of employed clinical psychologists, 2000 and 2005



Figure 2: Age distribution of employed clinical psychologists, selected jurisdictions, 2003

In the surveyed jurisdictions, the average age of working psychologists in 2003 was highest in South Australia (46.9 years) and lowest in Queensland (41.5 years) (Table 3). Males were a smaller proportion of the working psychologists in Victoria (26.3%) than in other jurisdictions, while in South Australia the proportion was highest (39.7%, compared with 29.4% in New South Wales, 32.1% in Queensland and 28.5% in the Australian Capital Territory).

Almost all employed psychologists (around 95% in all five jurisdictions) were Australian citizens (Table 6).

Nationally, 86.9% of the population lived in metropolitan areas in 2003. Across the surveyed jurisdictions, these figures were 92.1% in New South Wales, 94.7% in Victoria, 78.6% in Queensland, 84.4% in South Australia and 100% in the Australian Capital Territory (where there is no non-metropolitan area) (ABS 2003). The Territory aside, the main work location of psychologists shows their distribution was skewed towards being metropolitan-based, with proportions ranging from 86.9% in Queensland to 98.3% in Victoria (Table 6).

Table 6: Employed psychologists: selected demographics, 2003

Characteristic	NSW		Vic		Qld		SA		ACT	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Residency status										
Australian citizen	5,212	94.6	4,460	95.5	2386	94.8	743	96.7	492	96.6
Not Australian citizen	297	5.1	208	4.1	131	3.9	26	3.0	17	3.4
Location of main job^(a)										
Metropolitan	5,252	97.4	4,541	98.3	2148	86.9	725	96.1	496	100.0
Non-metropolitan	141	2.6	77	1.7	324	13.1	30	3.9
Total employed psychologists^(b)	5,589		4,671		2535		769		509	

(a) Based on the ABS ASGC Remoteness Areas. See 'Geographic classification' in the Glossary.

(b) Includes 'not stated', but percentage calculations exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2003.

Employment characteristics

This section uses the AIHW survey data to present employment characteristics across jurisdictions. Employment characteristics broadly cover psychology field, area of practice, main work setting, employment sector and hours worked. For comparisons between field, area, work setting and sector, data have been drawn from the state and territory profiles provided in the latter part of the report (tables 11 to 15).

Field of psychology

Psychologists can work in clinical psychology (directly with patients/clients) or non-clinical psychology (administration, teaching/education, research, other). Across the jurisdictions in the 2003 AIHW survey, the majority of psychologists working in the profession were in clinical psychology. Proportions ranged from 71.5% in New South Wales to 63.4% in the Australian Capital Territory (tables 11 and 15).

Administrators were the next largest group in all jurisdictions except Queensland, where the proportion of teachers/educators (9.7%) was higher than that of administrators (5.8%). The proportions of administrators in Victoria (18.8%), South Australia (20.2%) and the Australian Capital Territory (20.1%) were similar whereas in New South Wales (13.8%) it was lower. The composition of the psychologist workforce in Queensland also differed from other jurisdictions in its proportions in the remaining psychology fields. However, it should be noted that the Queensland survey used a different approach to collecting the data, and differences in the data may be attributable to conceptual differences between questionnaires.

In all jurisdictions, psychologists who were teachers/educators were older, on average, than their colleagues in other fields (ranging from 45.0 years in Queensland to 52.2 years in South Australia). Fields in which psychologists were more likely to be male varied. In New South Wales the highest proportion of males was in the field of administration (33.1%) and in Victoria it was in the field of research (36.8%). In Queensland and South Australia the highest male proportions were in teaching/education (41.5% and 69.6%, respectively), while in the Territory, the highest was for those providing professional supervision/support (55.2%).

Main work setting

Work setting is the type of service or centre in which psychologists work. The largest proportion worked in private practice in all the surveyed jurisdictions (ranging from 34.6% in Victoria and 31.7% in South Australia to 24.0%, 22.9% and 27.1% in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, respectively). The next most common work setting was community health in all jurisdictions except Queensland, where government departments were the next largest proportion (21.0%). Of the psychologists working in private practice, males comprised a higher proportion in South Australia (40.4%) than in other jurisdictions, while in Victoria, the male proportion was lowest (27.6%). A relatively low proportion of South Australian psychologists in private practice worked part-time (37.5%, compared with around half in other jurisdictions – ranging from 45.5% in New South Wales to 55.2% in Victoria). Also, the proportion of part-time workers overall in South Australia (30.2%) was the lowest of all jurisdictions (tables 11 to 15).

Data for 2000 are available for New South Wales and Queensland, and show that in New South Wales, private practice (24.1%) was also the most common main work setting in 2000, followed by community health (19.6%). However, in Queensland in 2000, the picture was the reverse of 2003, with the highest proportion of psychologists working in government departments (27.2%), followed by private practice (22.8%) (Table A.11).

Sector

Overall, in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, the ratio of public sector to private sector employment was approximately 60:40. However, this pattern differed in Victoria, where under half of psychologists (47.1%) worked in the public sector. In all jurisdictions, psychologists in the public sector were younger, on average, than their private sector colleagues. Age differences between sectors ranged between 1.5 years, on average, in New South Wales and 8.7 years, on average, in the Australian Capital Territory). Males made up a higher proportion in the private sector than in the public sector in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and the largest difference was in Queensland (29.3% public compared with 35.8% private). Conversely, in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, males made up a higher proportion in the public sector, the larger difference being in South Australia (41.3% public and 36.6% private) (tables 11 to 15).

Hours worked

Psychologists in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia worked the highest average weekly hours (37.7 and 37.6 respectively) (Table 7). This was four hours per week more, on average, than Queensland (33.7 hours), the jurisdiction with the lowest average weekly hours. The highest proportion of employed psychologists working part-time (40.1%) was in Victoria, while the lowest was in South Australia (30.2%). South Australia also had the highest proportion of psychologists working more than 50 hours per week (17.5%), followed closely by the Australian Capital Territory (17.2%) and New South Wales (16.7%).

In each jurisdiction, around half of psychologists worked between 35 and 49 hours per week (ranging from 45.2% in Victoria to 55.1% in Queensland) (Table A.3). In New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, around 1 in 10 psychologists worked less than 20 hours per week, while in Victoria and Queensland the proportions were slightly higher (15.6% and 15.9%, respectively).

Table 7: Employed psychologists: number and selected features of weekly hours worked, 2003

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT
Number	5,589	4,671	2,535	769	509
Average hours worked per week	36.8	34.9	33.7	37.6	37.7
Proportion working part-time ^(a)	31.6	40.1	35.9	30.2	31.3
Proportion working less than 20 hours per week	11.5	15.6	15.9	9.4	11.4
Proportion working 50 hours or more per week	16.7	14.7	9.0	17.5	17.2

(a) Working less than 35 hours per week.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2003.

Within psychology fields, those employed in administration/management worked the highest average weekly hours in all jurisdictions (ranging from 37.6 in Queensland to 45.0 in the Australian Capital Territory), except South Australia where researchers worked more hours per week than administrators (43.1 hours, on average, compared with 41.7) (tables 11 to 15). The hours worked by psychologists also varied depending on their main setting. The highest average weekly hours over all work settings and all jurisdictions surveyed were worked by psychologists in government work settings in the Australian Capital Territory (44.1 hours per week, on average). Correspondingly, this group also had the lowest proportion working part-time (6.4% compared with the state/territory proportions of part-time psychologists which, as noted above, were generally around a third, and up to 40.1% in Victoria) (tables 11 to 15).

Psychologists working in the public sector worked more hours than their private sector colleagues (tables 11 to 15). The difference was largest in the Australian Capital Territory where public sector psychologists worked eight hours per week more, on average, followed by Victoria (5.5 hours more). Again, this was reflected in the part-time work patterns between sectors, with public sector psychologists less likely to be working part-time. In the states surveyed, proportions of part-time workers were similar, ranging between 24.7% and 29.6% in the public sector, and 37.9% to 49.3% in the private sector. In the Territory, the public to private sector difference was more marked, with 18.7% in the public sector and 51.2% in the private sector working part-time.

Main clients

Four of the surveyed jurisdictions collected data on the main clients treated by clinical psychologists. Although the survey allowed psychologists to nominate more than one client group, data below focus on psychologists who reported one client group only (Table 8). The proportions varied by jurisdiction, with the highest proportions in New South Wales and Victoria (40.4% and 48.7%, respectively), and the lowest proportion in South Australia (14.1%). In all four jurisdictions, adults were the client type most nominated (Table 8).

Table 8: Employed clinical psychologists who reported one main client group: main client types, 2003

Main client types ^(a)	NSW	Vic	SA	ACT
Elderly/aged	40	84	11	n.p.
Adult	1,095	1,025	201	95
Adolescent	158	140	7	26
Child	133	107	24	10
Organisations	147	71	n.p.	5
Community groups	9	7	—	—
Families	32	49	7	n.p.
Other	—	10	—	—
Total employed clinical psychologists^(b)	3,996	3,067	1,793	516

(a) The survey questionnaires did not define the client groups of 'elderly/aged', 'adult', 'adolescent' and 'child'.

(b) Although respondents were able to nominate more than one client type, the table focuses on psychologists who reported just one main client group and, therefore, the total, which includes all respondents, adds to more than the sum of the categories.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2003.

The above data show the picture from the psychologist's perspective, and are for only four jurisdictions. Another source of data on clients is the ABS National Health Survey (ABS 2006), which collected data from the general population and reported from the client's view. This survey collected national data about whether people had consulted a psychologist within a two-week reference period. Results show that, in 2004–05, about 562 people per 100,000 population reported consulting a psychologist. Those in the 25–64 age group had a higher rate of psychologist consultation than those aged under 24 years (638 people per 100,000 population compared with 570) (Table A.9). Between 2001 and 2004–05, the rate of people consulting psychologists increased overall (by 25.8%), but the rate for people aged under 25 years more than doubled (up by 61.9%) while the rate for those aged 25–64 years rose by 5.7%. In 2001, females were more likely to consult a psychologist (478 per 100,000 population compared with 413 for males), but in 2004–05 the rates were about the same (548 and 574 per 100,000 population, respectively).

Supply of psychologists

Data on the size and characteristics of the psychology workforce present a valuable profile of psychologists, but do not give a picture of the overall level of service they provide. There are several ways of looking at supply. The number of psychologists per 100,000 population (the psychologist rate) enables some comparisons. However, because some psychologists tend to have long working weeks while others work part-time, their relative contributions to the level of service need to be taken into account to effectively measure the overall supply. In order to take into account the variations in psychologists' working hours, the AIHW survey data on the number of employed psychologists and their average hours worked have been used to calculate a 'full-time equivalent' (FTE) number of psychologists (see box). Further, the FTE estimates from AIHW survey data and ABS population figures have been used to present some measures of supply in terms of the FTE rate (FTE per 100,000 population).

A comparison between the psychologist rate and the FTE rate highlights the effect of the average weekly hours worked (Table 9) and the reason FTE is used as a measure of supply. In New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory the average hours worked were greater than the standard week of 35 hours (see box) and this resulted in their FTE rates (88, 54 and 170, respectively) being higher than their psychologist rates (84, 50 and 157, respectively).

For New South Wales and Queensland, 2000 data are available and a comparison with 2003 shows an overall increase in supply in both states. In New South Wales in 2003, the FTE rate (88) was noticeably higher than in 2000 (73), influenced by the sizeable increase in numbers of employed psychologists (21.2%) and the relatively small increase in the population in that state (3.0%). This is despite average hours worked decreasing over the period (tables 9, A.4 and A.6).

In Queensland the FTE rate rose from 49 in 2000 to 64 in 2003, also despite a decline in average hours worked. As in New South Wales, this was because, at the same time, there was a large increase in the number of employed psychologists (33.9%) combined with a comparatively low population growth (6.7%) (tables 9, A.4 and A.6).

Overall in 2003, the FTE rate of clinical psychologists (those working directly with patients/clients) was highest in the Australian Capital Territory (103) and lowest in South Australia (35) (Table 9). The Australian Capital Territory also had the highest FTE rate of non-clinical psychologists (those working in administration, teaching/education, research, etc.) (67) which was nearly double that of Victoria (35), the second highest rate. South Australia had the lowest non-clinician FTE rate, followed closely by Queensland (19 and 20, respectively) (Table 9).

Full-time equivalent

The full-time equivalent (FTE) measure of supply is based on the total hours worked by all psychologists, divided by 35 hours (the standard of 35 hours being consistent with the ABS cut-off for part-time work).

That is, FTE measures how many 35-hour week workloads are being worked by psychologists. This provides a measure of the supply of psychologists because it takes into account both psychologists working full-time and those working part-time.

By defining supply in terms of FTE per 100,000 population (or the FTE rate), meaningful comparisons across geographic areas and over time can be made.

Table 9: Employed psychologists, psychologist rate and FTE rate, 2003

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT
Clinical psychologists					
Psychologist rate ^(a)	60	62	47	34	100
FTE rate ^(b)	61	60	44	35	103
Average weekly hours worked	35.7	33.4	33.0	36.5	36.0
Non-clinical psychologists					
Psychologist rate ^(a)	24	33	20	17	58
FTE rate ^(b)	27	35	20	19	67
Average weekly hours worked	39.7	38.0	35.5	39.9	40.9
Total					
Psychologist rate ^(a)	84	95	67	50	157
FTE rate ^(b)	88	95	64	54	170
Average weekly hours worked	36.8	34.9	33.7	37.6	37.7
Population	6,682,053	4,911,425	3,801,039	1,526,301	323,363

(a) Psychologists per 100,000 population.

(b) Full-time equivalent psychologists per 100,000 population.

Sources: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Surveys, 2003; ABS 2003.

The Department of Education, Science and Training maintains administrative data on higher education course completions and these can be indicative of expected numbers moving into the labour market. Data show the number of people completing psychology courses has steadily increased between 1998 and 2004 (Table 10). The number of people completing postgraduate courses in psychology has also increased over the period and, at higher rates from 2002 onwards than prior to 2002. This reflects changes to the regulations on eligibility for registration to practise clinical psychology. Previously, people completing an undergraduate degree in psychology could practise under supervision for two years to gain full registration, but this is being phased out and replaced by set postgraduate level qualifications as the minimum to obtain registration. This may give rise to a longer lag between study completions and psychologists moving into the psychology workforce, until the former eligibility requirements have been completely phased out across Australia.

Table 10: Australian citizens and permanent residents completing psychology courses: level, sex, age, 1998 to 2004

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
All psychology courses							
Number	2,823	2,850	2,995	3,088	3,393	3,813	4,063
Per cent undergraduate	62.7	64.9	61.9	62.8	63.1	60.0	58.0
Per cent male	21.7	20.9	20.0	19.9	20.2	20.3	20.5
Postgraduate courses							
Number	1,053	1,000	1,141	1,149	1,253	1,527	1,705
Per cent male	23.6	21.4	21.7	20.5	20.7	19.3	21.5
Average age	31.3	32.1	31.9	32.4	32.6	32.6	32.1

Note: Excludes New Zealand citizens with or without permanent residency status in Australia.

Source: Higher Education Student Data (unpublished), Department of Education, Science and Training.