

# **Nursing labour force 2001**

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# Preface

The National Review of Nursing Education (DEST 2002) and the Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Nursing (SCAC 2002) are two of several recent inquiries concerning issues associated with nursing shortages. These issues include the ageing of the nursing labour force, the high attrition rates of nurses, particularly those recently graduated, and the increasing use of agency nursing, nursing aides and personal carers, especially in the aged care sector. In addition, despite the overall increase in nursing numbers, the trend towards part-time work has had the net effect of reducing the supply of nurses. Recognition of these factors is crucial in workforce planning to ensure that the supply of nurses in the future is adequate.

This publication reports on the results of the 1999 Nursing Labour Force Survey in the context of the concerns raised by the recent inquiries into nursing, and is supplemented by information from other sources to provide a more detailed and up-to-date picture of the nursing labour force. Comparisons are made with 1993 to show trends that have emerged over the previous 6 years, and student enrolment and migration data provide an indication of future supply.

A special feature on aged care nursing is included in this publication, in recognition of the increasing importance of aged care nursing due to the ageing of the Australian population.

Following an Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council decision based on the recommendation of the Australian Health Workforce Officials Committee, from 2003 the Nursing Labour Force Survey will be conducted annually across Australia. This will enable jurisdictions to more closely examine the issues raised in the recent inquiries. We look forward to the continued cooperation of nurses, registration boards and state/territory health departments in the collection of data on this important area of workforce planning.

Richard Madden

Director

May 2003

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Most importantly, we also thank the nurses who took the time to complete the survey. Without their cooperation, it would not be possible to maintain this collection, which is used to inform the community about the crucial nursing profession, and to form the basis of planning and policy decisions.

# Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADON	Assistant director of nursing
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
ANCI	Australian Nursing Council Incorporated
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DEWRSB	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business
DON	Director of nursing
FTE	Full-time equivalent
LEO	Labour Economics Office
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Qld	Queensland
RNO	Regional nursing officer
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

## Symbols and other usages

Throughout this publication, data may not add to the totals shown due to the estimation process for non-response. Percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

*Italics* within a table denote a subtotal.

Percentage printed as 0.0 may denote less than 0.05%.

.. denotes not applicable.

— denotes nil.

n.a. denotes not available.

n.p. denotes not publishable.

# Nursing labour force trends

