

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

An overview of the nursing and midwifery workforce in Australia

August 2024



Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation

100
YEARS STRONG

Copyright © 2024
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Federal Office

All rights reserved. No material may be reproduced, translated for reproduction or otherwise used without permission from the publisher.

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Level 1, 365 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Email: anmfederal@anmf.org.au



Introduction

Below is key information about the nursing and midwifery workforce in Australia including employment and demographic data.

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 Law¹ all nurses and midwives must be registered to practice.

1. Workforce data and demographics

- The number of nurses and midwives in the nursing workforce nationally and by state/territory from 2015 to 2023
- The number of employed nurses and midwives from 2015 to 2023
- The number of employed nurses and midwives including full time equivalent (FTE) numbers, average age and average hours worked, both nationally and by state/territory, 2023
- Location of nurses and midwives across metropolitan, regional, rural, remote or very remote regions, 2023
- The work settings of employed nurses and midwives, 2023
- Demographic data of employed nurses and midwives 2023

2. Registration

- Total number of nurses and midwives registered in Australia nationally and by state/territory
- Total number of nurses and midwives registered in Australia, by registration type, nationally and by state/territory

For information concerning students and wages data please refer to the '[Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Overview](#)' page on the ANMF website.

¹ The National Scheme is governed by a nationally consistent law passed by each state and territory parliament – the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. See the [Ahpra website](#) for more information.



1. 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 and Aged Care.²

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 provides the total number of nurses and midwives, and enrolled nurses registered and in the workforce for the years 2015 to 2023.³

Table 1: Number of registered nurses/midwives and enrolled nurses in the workforce 2015-2023

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
RN/Midwife ⁴	274,996	283,703	292,318	302,606	314,473	324,980	337,996	349,157	365,946
EN only	55,533	56,549	56,838	58,683	59,041	59,796	61,429	60,506	61,425
Total	330,529	340,252	349,156	361,289	373,514	384,776	399,425	409,663	427,371

² Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Health Workforce Data (HWD): <https://hwd.health.gov.au>

³ The number is a combined total for RNs and Midwives. Information in this document accessed 16 and 19 August 2024.

⁴ Includes 'registered nurse only', 'registered and enrolled nurse', 'midwife only', 'registered nurse and midwife', 'enrolled nurse and midwife', 'non-practising only', 'registered and enrolled nurse and midwife'.



Chart 1: Number of registered nurses/midwives and enrolled nurses in the workforce 2015- 2023

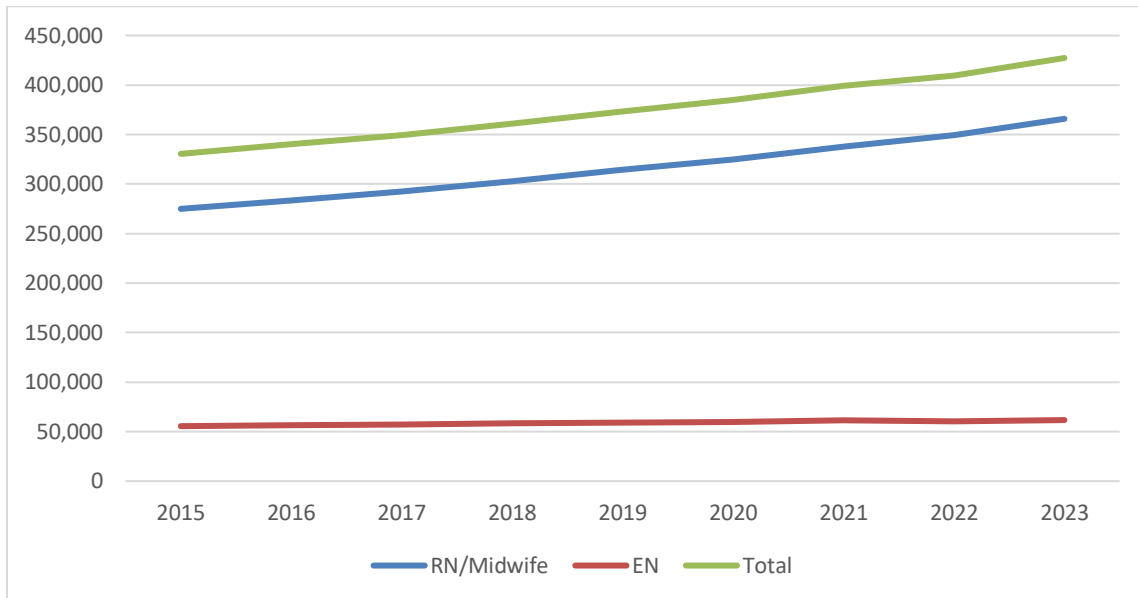


Table 2: No. of registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses in the workforce 2015-2023 by state/territory

State/territory	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NSW	92,591	95,262	97,490	99,949	103,079	105,585	109,233	110,857	115,089
Vic	89,891	92,205	94,889	98,794	102,106	105,649	109,090	111,021	116,389
Qld	65,763	68,978	71,780	75,093	78,220	81,175	84,838	88,144	91,828
SA	30,454	30,605	30,670	31,358	32,180	32,765	33,866	35,012	36,399
WA	34,057	34,857	35,388	36,395	37,406	38,402	40,095	41,744	44,077
Tas	7,985	8,131	8,375	8,782	9,130	9,438	9,906	10,372	10,727
NT	4,143	4,306	4,423	4,610	4,685	4,754	4,947	4,745	4,655
ACT	5,422	5,680	5,896	6,034	6,360	6,678	7,096	7,314	7,519
Other territories	223	228	245	274	348	330	354	454	688
Total	330,529	340,252	349,156	361,289	373,514	384,776	399,425	409,663	427,371



How many nurses and midwives are employed?

Tables 3-6, providing employment and demographic data for nurses and midwives, are taken directly from the Department of Health and Aged Care summary statistics available on their website.⁵

Table 3: Numbers of registered and employed nurses and midwives in Australia 2016-2023

Profession/Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registered nurse ⁶	228,558	236,931	245,269	254,650	265,335	271,009	286,149	293,584	310,771
Enrolled nurse only	50,801	51,454	51,478	52,944	53,219	52,342	54,193	53,612	54,417
RN/midwife ⁷	24,076	23,377	22,568	22,135	21,656	21,256	20,990	20,003	19,925
Midwife only	3,052	3,402	3,807	4,241	4,731	4,982	5,364	5,560	6,128
Total	306,487	315,164	323,122	333,970	344,941	349,589	366,696	372,759	391,241

Table 4: Age, and weekly hours of nurses and midwives registered and employed in Australia, 2023

Profession	Headcount	Total FTE	Average age	Average total hours
Registered nurse	326,838	306,463	42.2	35.2
Enrolled nurse	54,417	47,028	43.4	32.8
Midwifery	26,051	23,964	45.6	22.0
Total ⁸	391,241	358,705	42.3	34.8

⁵ HWD, [Summary Statistics Nursing and Midwifery Professions](#)

⁶ Includes 'registered and enrolled nurse'

⁷ Includes 'enrolled nurse and midwife' and 'registered and enrolled nurse and midwife'. There are less than 100 of each of these in Australia

⁸ Persons with more than one registration have been counted in both 'registered nurse' and 'midwife' category

**Table 5: State/territory of nurses and midwives registered and employed in Australia, 2023**

State	Headcount	FTE	Average age	Average weekly hours
NSW	105,611	99,138	42.6	35.7
Vic	106,426	95,475	41.8	34.1
Qld	83,913	76,834	42.5	34.8
SA	33,466	29,495	43.0	33.5
WA	40,464	37,449	42.8	35.2
Tas	9,933	9,065	43.3	34.7
ACT	6,850	6,548	40.3	36.3
NT	4,199	4,310	41.7	39.0
Unknown	379	391	39.7	39.2
Australia	391,241	358,706	42.3	34.8

Table 6 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.⁹

Table 6: Modified Monash Model (MMM), registered and employed in Australia, 2023

Modified Monash Model	Headcount	Total FTE	Average age	Average total hours
1 - Metropolitan	285,757	261,618	41.6	34.8
2 - Regional	40,136	37,071	42.7	35.1
3 - Large rural towns	30,012	27,460	44.2	34.8
4 - Medium rural towns	13,794	12,278	45.8	33.8
5 - Small rural towns	14,514	12,931	47.3	33.9
6 - Remote communities	4,071	4,116	43.4	38.4
7 - Very remote communities	2,613	2,874	45.5	41.8
Total	391,241	358,706	42.3	34.8

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 for 2022.

⁹ Further information on the MMM: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm>



Table 7: Employed nurses and midwives by principal work setting - 2023

Principal work setting	Headcount	Average weekly hours
Hospital	236,879	35
Residential health care facility	43,642	36
Community health care service	32,202	34
Other	15,018	35
Outpatient service	14,224	34
General practitioner (GP) practice	13,187	30
Other private practice	6,793	32
Independent private practice	6,619	31
Other government department or agency	4,493	36
Tertiary education facility	4,073	35
Correctional service	2,513	38
Commercial/business service	2,214	34
School	1,987	31
Aboriginal Community Controlled health service	1,705	40
Defence forces	1,617	39
Hospice	1,224	35
Midwifery group practice / caseload	1,141	38
Other educational facility	952	33
Other Aboriginal health service	627	40
Specialist (O&G) practice	128	28
Not stated	3	
TOTAL	391,241	35

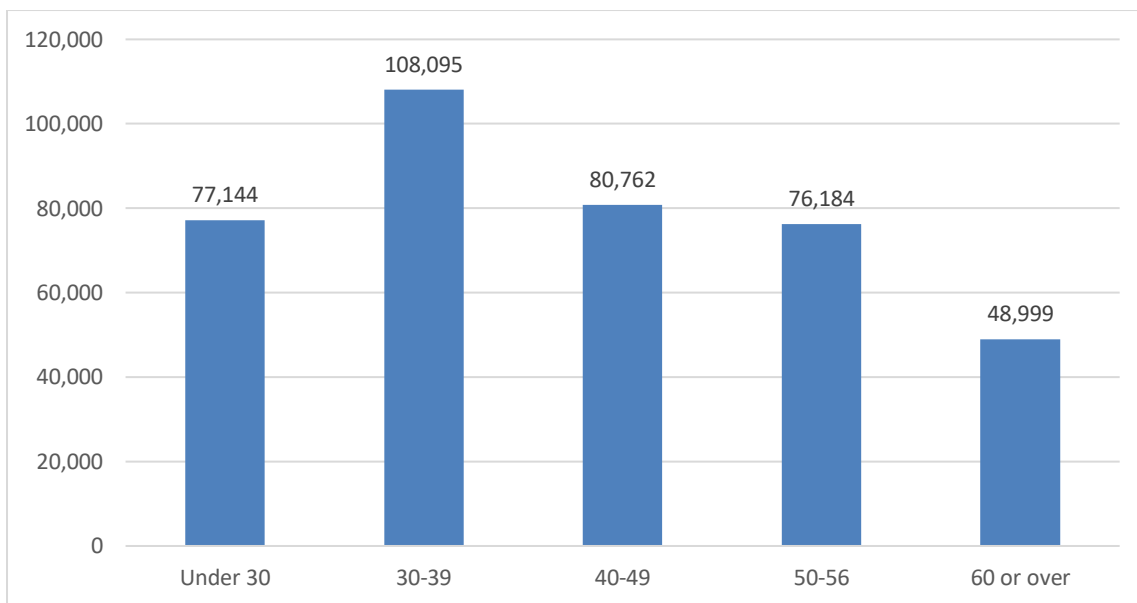
Source: Health Workforce Data Tool. National health Workforce dataset 2023 (NHWDS 2023).



Summary 2023 demographic data – employed nurses and midwives

- 87.97% identify as female and 12.01% male.
- 1.42% identify as Indigenous and Australian born.
- Average age nationally – 42.34 years. The number of nurses and midwives within the listed age ranges are shown below.

Chart 2: Nurses and midwives by age group



The average age of a nurse/midwife is trending downwards. To see changes to the age group data since 2017, view this [bar chart race graph online](#).

Table 8: Sector in which clinical hours were worked - 2023

Sector	2023
Public sector only	214,420
Private sector only	138,464
Both	10,921
Not stated	27,436
Total	391,241

Source: NHWDS Nurses and Midwives, 2023



2. Registration statistics

Every quarter the NMBA provides information on the number of nurses and midwives registered to practice in Australia. The tables below are extracted from the latest NMBA statistical report. The [NMBA website has full details](#).

The latest quarterly report (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024) states there are 512,332 nurses and midwives registered. This includes general, non-practising and provisional registration.

Table 8: Number of Registrants by state and territory

ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	No ppp ¹⁰	TOTAL
8,425	130,540	5,195	105,057	40,560	11,631	133,260	50,116	27,548	512,332

Table 9: Number of nurse and midwife registrants by registration type and by state/territory

Profession	Registration Type	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	No PPP	Total
Nurse	General	7,516	117,943	4,555	95,049	36,949	10,636	120,465	45,503	25,596	464,212
	Non-practising	232	3,530	79	2,590	1,045	287	3,104	1,140	1,312	13,319
	Provisional	1	59	4	72	26	2	89	27	11	291
Total Nurse		7,749	121,532	4,638	97,711	38,020	10,925	123,658	46,670	26,919	477,822
Nurse and Midwife	General	387	6,656	438	5,234	1,466	599	7,592	2,747	233	25,352
	Non-practising	27	308	7	139	72	15	197	71	33	869
	Provisional	0	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Total Nurse and Midwife		414	6,968	445	5,374	1,539	614	7,789	2,818	266	26,227
Midwife	General	255	1,973	111	1,907	970	90	1,761	612	327	8,006
	Non-practising	7	67	1	65	30	2	50	16	36	274
	Provisional	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Total Midwife		262	2,040	112	1,972	1,001	92	1,813	628	363	8,283
TOTAL		8,425	130,540	5,195	105,057	40,560	11,631	133,260	50,116	27,548	512,332

The NMBA also publishes nursing and midwifery summary data as part of their Annual Report. The latest (2022-2023) summary data and spreadsheets [are on their website](#).

¹⁰ Principal place of practice