

A HEALTHY CHECK-UP

THE HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE INDUSTRY IN REGIONS



Over the next five years, the health care and social assistance industry is expected to see the biggest increase in jobs of any industry across Australia. The quality and diversity of health care services we expect and require will also grow in this time. At the same time, the need for health and aged care services will continue to increase with an aging population.

Health care and social assistance services are in increasing demand across regional Australia. These services are important not only for the wellbeing and quality of life of people in regions, but they can also support the economic development of a region itself. Having access to good health services also improves the attractiveness of a place, and these sectors play an important role in the most regional labour markets.

The health care sector and social assistance sector jobs are a mix of private and public jobs. While

traditionally the public sector provided the 'backbone' of health services in a region, the private sector is increasingly playing a role in both health care and social assistance, particularly in response to changing consumer expectations.

Overall, health care jobs are distributed relatively equally between the private and public sector in regions. They provide a mix of high and low skilled jobs including opportunities in a range of non-healthcare occupations (like cooks, cleaners, and office managers) and so provide a variety of low, mid and high paying jobs.

There are many job opportunities in the sector. Internet vacancy data, comparing the 12 month averages for January 2016-17 and January 2018-19, shows that vacancy rates for these jobs increased by 23 percent across regional Australia, but only seven percent in metropolitan areas. The health care and social assistance sectors will build on the important role they already play in regions over the coming years.



employs **14.4%** of regional Australians



accounts for **12.5%** high income jobs (\$104K+) in regions



expected **biggest increase** in jobs of any industry across Australia over the next **5 years**

Proportion of jobs in healthcare & social assistance by regional type



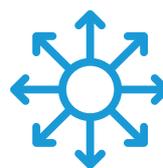
METRO
13.1%



REGIONAL CITIES
16.5%



INDUSTRY & SERVICE HUBS
14.2%



CONNECTED LIFESTYLE REGIONS
11.9%



HEARTLAND REGIONS
9.8%

These four regional types are defined in our Talking Point [Foundations of Regional Australia](#).

There are limited health services in smaller communities

The size of a town restricts its ability to support a good mix and availability of health care services. RAI's report on service delivery professionals in small towns (2500 to 5000 residents) in Australia found that these communities were more likely to have a nurse available, but access to other health professionals were mixed.

In particular, very few small towns have health specialists within their communities, including

psychologists and dentists, even though mental health and dental health are nationally significant service priorities.

Although there are instances where the gap in service delivery personnel between major cities and small towns is closing, overall these gaps remain significant and for some professions the trend is that the gaps are widening rather than narrowing.

| As a proportion of all Australian small towns | Population below 1,000 | | Population 1,000 to 2,499 | | Population 2,500 + | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| | 1981 (%) | 2011 (%) | 1981 (%) | 2011 (%) | 1981 (%) | 2011 (%) |
| Towns with a GP  | 3 | 5 | 16 | 25 | 29 | 72 |
| Towns with a nurse  | 66 | 67 | 93 | 98 | 83 | 100 |
| Towns with a psychologist  | 9 | 0 | 19 | 7 | 30 | 40 |
| Towns with a dentist  | 2 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 20 | 19 |
| Towns with a paramedic  | 8 | 6 | 27 | 30 | 27 | 68 |
| Towns with a social welfare professional  | 9 | 5 | 19 | 25 | 30 | 64 |

Data from our report [Pillars of Communities: Service Delivery Professionals in Small Australian Towns](#)

The industry will be the largest and fastest growing by 2023

 **250,300+**
more jobs by May 2023



with **34%** in regional areas

Projected employment growth 5 years to May 2023

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Aged & Disabled Carers | 69,171 |
| Registered Nurses | 51,357 |
| Child Carers | 27,576 |
| Welfare, Recreation & Community Arts Workers | 11,805 |
| Nursing Support & Personal Care Workers | 11,383 |
| Psychologists | 11,317 |
| General Practitioners & Resident Medical Officers | 7,397 |
| Physiotherapists | 6,234 |
| Welfare Support Workers | 5,440 |

Top 5 regions to have greatest job increases

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Newcastle & Lake Macquarie (NSW) | 6,584 |
| Sunshine Coast (QLD) | 5,853 |
| Gold Coast (QLD) | 5,802 |
| Capital Region (NSW) | 4,554 |
| Central West (NSW) | 4,483 |

 Very high skill  High skill  Lower skill

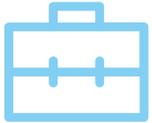
Data from The Department of Jobs and Small Business Labour Market Information Portal

CASE STUDIES: WAGGA WAGGA & TAMWORTH

Regional centres like Wagga Wagga and Tamworth serve as hubs to provide health services to their catchments.

The role of regional centres in providing more accessible and closer treatment to home is likely to continue to grow as state governments undertake significant capital investments in health infrastructure.

These investments are partly aimed at reducing the need for people to travel to bigger cities like Sydney, Canberra or Melbourne for specialised services.



Health care and social assistance makes up about 17% of total employment for both Wagga Wagga and Tamworth



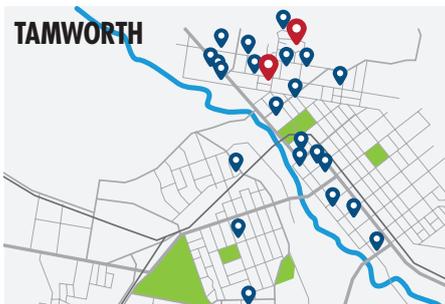
NSW government has invested nearly \$500 million in improving health infrastructure



Health precincts emerge around regional hospitals

Health precincts are emerging in many regions, ranging from a co-location of health services to research, education and training facilities being built close to a hospital.

These health precincts can help to provide training for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, while improving links between universities, research facilities and hospitals. They also help to develop a range of supporting medical services within the region.



There is a range of health care and social assistance industry businesses located within the health precincts surrounding the Tamworth and Wagga Wagga hospitals.

Major hospital

Other healthcare and social assistance services

There are a mix of private and public health care and social assistance industry jobs

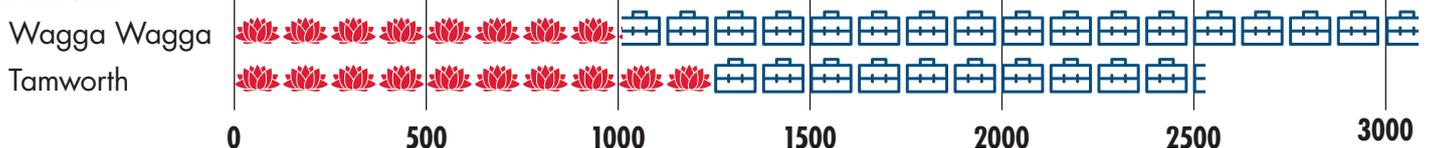
Both the private and public sector have a role to play in the industry. Jobs in the healthcare sector are generally a good mix between public and private sector. However, social assistance jobs are dominantly private sector jobs.

PUBLIC & PRIVATE JOBS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



HEALTHCARE



Public sector — NSW govt. jobs Private sector jobs

Occupations in the health care and social assistance industry include both high and low skill jobs

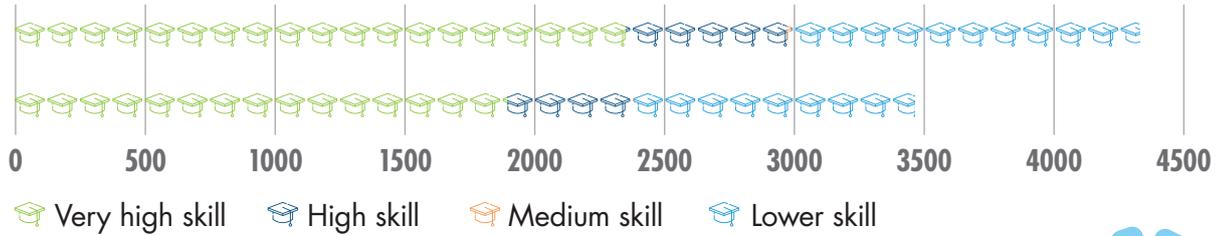
More than 50% of occupations in each region requires very high skill levels (i.e. University Degree), such as medical practitioners, nurses, as well as other allied health professionals like psychologists and physiotherapists. There are also lower skilled occupations such as child carers and aged cared workers that require more technical qualifications.



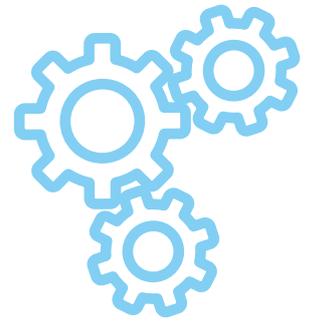
SKILLED OCCUPATIONS

WAGGA WAGGA

TAMWORTH



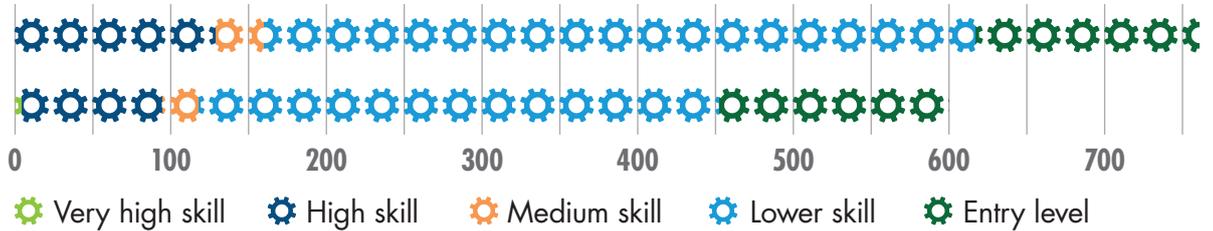
Additionally, the industry is supported by a range of entry level and lower skilled non-health occupations such as cooks, cleaners, receptionists and office managers all provide essential services that support the functions of hospitals and other health related establishments.



INDUSRY SUPPORTING JOBS

WAGGA WAGGA

TAMWORTH



Jobs in the healthcare industry contribute to mid- and high-wage jobs in a region

The industry is very important in regional economies for providing mid- and high-wage jobs. Healthcare jobs account for approximately 12-13% of mid-wage jobs (\$65,000-\$77,999) and around 18% of high-wage jobs (\$104,000 or more) in Tamworth and Wagga Wagga.



DISTRIBUTION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS BY INCOME AS % OF ALL INDUSTRIES

WAGGA WAGGA

TAMWORTH



<\$41.6K
\$41.6K to \$52K
\$52K to \$65K
\$65K to \$78K
\$78K to \$104K
\$104K+