

HEALTHCARE Pulse Report



2023



Executive Summary

Off the back of a strong post-pandemic recovery in Healthcare & Medical and beyond, Australia continues to experience record low levels of unemployment, with the rate dipping below 4% for the first time since 1974. But with cost-of-living pressures, monetary policy tightening in response to inflation and concern over possible recession taking hold, economic growth is forecast to slow in 2023 in Australia and around the world.

At the same time, stability is returning to Healthcare & Medical after the supply and demand imbalances of the pandemic. As one of the country's least volatile industries, it's well placed to navigate changing economic conditions.

Competition among hirers to attract and retain healthcare workers remains strong, especially in Aged & Disability Support and Aged Care Nursing where strong demand is forecast to persist. Lifestyle factors are driving employment decisions like never before as candidates gravitate to part-time jobs and flexible working arrangements.

Shortages in significant growth areas like Aged Care Nursing and Mental Health Nursing provide strong impetus to attract and retain talent from other industries. Understanding career pathways and leveraging transferable skills will help hirers train a skilled workforce to fill the gaps.

In the face of economic uncertainty, competition for talent and ongoing shortages, Healthcare & Medical hirers who understand what candidates want and, equally, what they can bring to a role are positioned for success.

This report leverages SEEK's vast experience and rich analytics to support hirers to navigate a complex employment market and attract high-calibre talent. Considering the Healthcare & Medical industry, as well as Aged & Disability Support roles, its key findings are:

- **Leveraging transferable skills is crucial in Aged & Disability Support and Nursing.** Shortages are expected to persist as our population ages, and organisations that attract candidates from outside Healthcare & Medical with transferable skills are well placed to make up some of the shortfall.
- **Thinking laterally can help to attract high-quality candidates.** Especially for GPs, offering simple application processes and looking regionally, interstate and overseas for talent are effective strategies.
- **Greater collaboration between aged care providers and hospital and health service providers is essential.** The aged care industry has the potential to help improve long-term nursing supply, and cooperation between the major healthcare providers is key to maximising the potential of this valuable candidate pipeline.
- **Work-life balance is a crucial factor in retention.** The pandemic has changed our relationship with work, and there's no going back. Candidates increasingly expect flexible working arrangements tailored to the unique needs of Healthcare & Medical workers.

For more healthcare industry insights, get in touch with your SEEK Account Manager or email us at healthcaresales@seek.com.au



James Duncan
Healthcare Leader
SEEK

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INTRODUCTION

Off the back of a strong post-pandemic recovery and record low levels of unemployment in Australia, competition among Healthcare & Medical hirers to attract and retain workers remains strong.



As one of the country's least volatile industries, it is well placed to navigate changing economic conditions.

This report has been created to support healthcare recruiters, managers and decision makers – the 'hirers' looking to attract and retain healthcare employees. It offers an in-depth look at the healthcare labour market plus strategic insights to aid workforce planning.

Encompassing the Healthcare & Medical industry, including the Allied Services, Specialist Services, Nursing and Management role groups, as well as the Aged & Disability Support role group, these insights are based on SEEK's extensive workforce data and expert analysis.

The report examines four key areas for hirers:

- **Macro trends impacting employment**
- **Factors influencing healthcare workforce demand**
- **A special focus on GPs**
- **Analysis of career pathways in Aged & Disability Support and Nursing.**

There is growing need for hirers to support flexible working arrangements and support healthy work-life balance. Likewise, shortages necessitate sourcing candidates from outside Healthcare & Medical. For the first time, SEEK's data shows clear career pathways from entry level through to mid-career and more senior roles, which can help attract new talent to the industry, explains SEEK Healthcare Industry Leader, James Duncan.

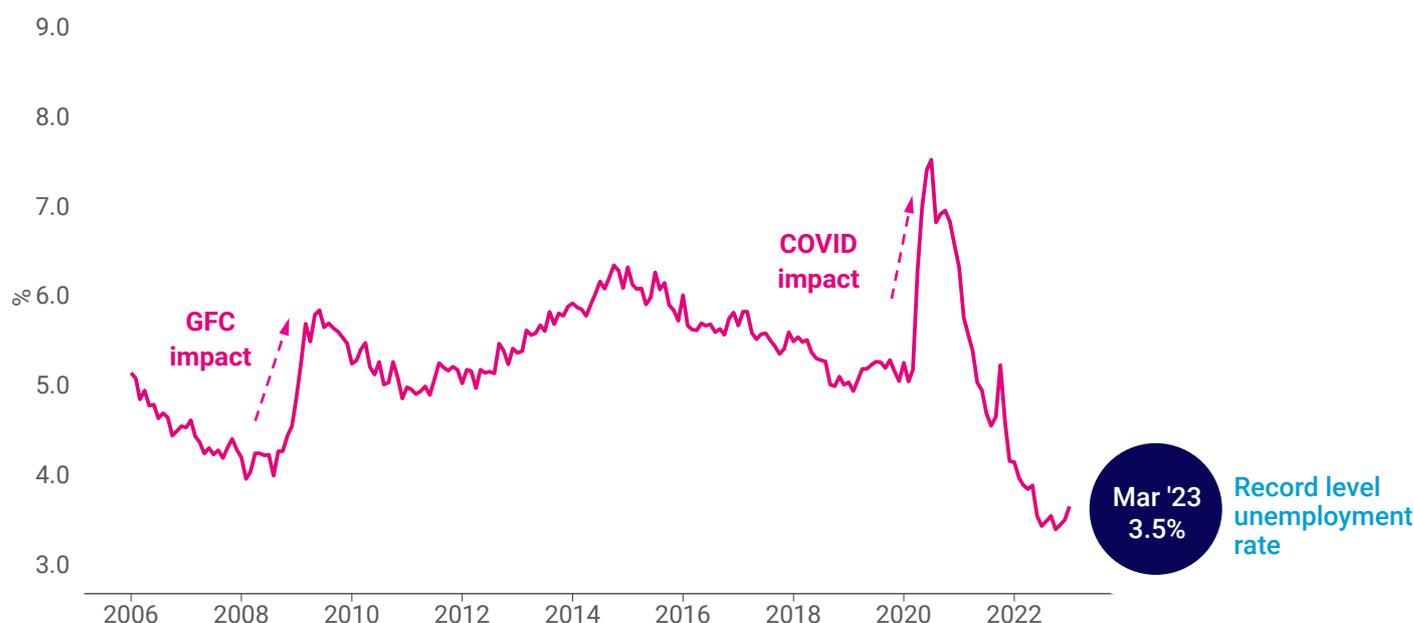
"There's clarity on where people are coming from, what skills are missing and need to be developed, and where people could end up in their career in healthcare," he says. "The clarity that this data gives us is really exciting."

THE CURRENT MACRO ENVIRONMENT

Unemployment is at record low levels in Australia, with economic growth forecast to slow in 2023 as external factors take hold. Hirer activity is higher than before the pandemic, and it remains a healthy job market for candidates.

Unemployment rate remains low for now

FIGURE 1. MACRO ECONOMIC VIEW: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Notes: Unemployment rate data as at Mar '23. Source: ABS

Off the back of a strong post-pandemic recovery, Australia continues to experience record low levels of unemployment, with the rate dipping below 4% for the first time since 1974. "It's a very unusual circumstance," explains SEEK Analytics Manager Martin Hartley.

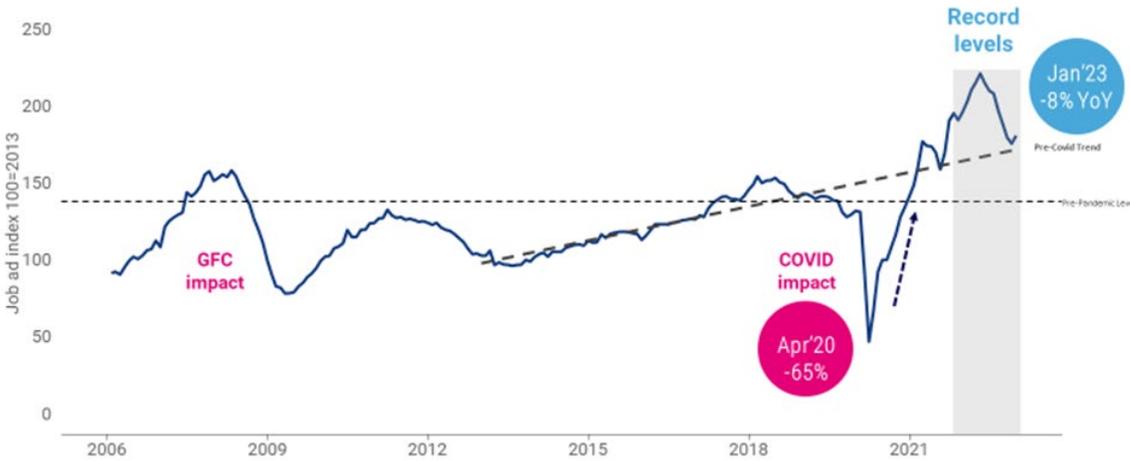
But with cost-of-living pressures, monetary policy tightening in response to inflation and concern over possible recession taking hold, economic growth is forecast to slow in 2023 in Australia and around the world.

The RBA forecasts that the unemployment rate will remain around its current level until mid-2023, before rising over the second half of the year to 3.8% by December and above 4% by June 2024.

"The market was very hot post-COVID and it was unlikely to stay there forever, but external factors are accelerating a return closer to historically more typical patterns of unemployment," Hartley says.

Job ads fall but still outnumber pre-pandemic levels

FIGURE 2. JOB ADS FELL IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2022 AFTER RECORD HIGHS



Notes: Covid impact comparison against 2019 average; Jan '23 vs Jan '22 YoY average. Source: SEEK

The story of job ads in 2022 was a tale of two halves, with job ads rising to record levels in the first half of the year and peaking in May, before steadily declining over the second half of the year.

However, job ads remain healthier than pre-pandemic levels, tracking 31% higher than the 2019 average.

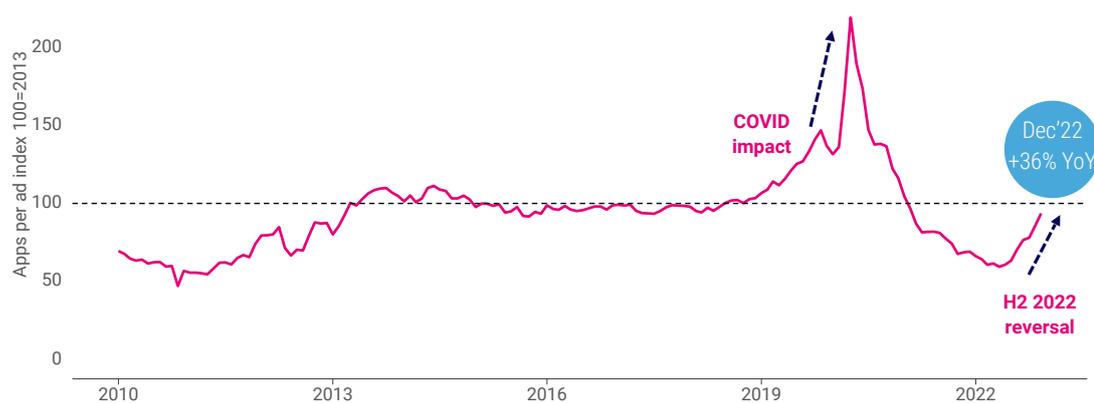
“During the pandemic there was a big drop, then job ads climbed to record levels, and now they’ve come down to a level that’s still above pre-COVID but is more

sustainable than those record levels that we saw in May 2022,” Hartley says.

“Supply and demand seem to be returning to more historical trends. Since the low of the global financial crisis, we have seen a mining boom and retreat between 2009 and 2014, then steady job ad growth between 2014 and 2018.

“We now seem to be returning to the historic trend line we saw between 2014 and 2020.”

FIGURE 3. APPLICATIONS PER AD ARE ON THE RISE



Notes: Dec'22 vs Dec'21 year on year comparison. Source: SEEK

As job ads fell across the country, applications per ad were on the rise in the second half of 2022. They remain 23% lower than pre-pandemic despite a 36% increase year-on-year. Among the biggest drivers in the increase in applications per ad were Trades & Services and Hospitality & Tourism. Applications per ad for healthcare showed a 15% increase year-on-year. [See Figure 12]

“This trend is largely driven by fluctuations in job ad numbers,” Hartley says. “Job ad numbers going down

will lead to the number of applications per ad going back up.”

Despite increasing competition for jobs, he says it’s still a good market for candidates. “There’s a lot of demand for workers. As economic conditions shift it’s possible that the situation will change slightly, but it’s likely to remain a healthy market.”

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE DEMAND

After the supply and demand imbalances of the pandemic, stability is returning to Healthcare & Medical. Hirers who prioritise work-life balance and flexible working arrangements are well placed to weather changing economic conditions.

Towards stability in supply and demand

It's been an interesting year for Healthcare & Medical that in some ways reflects overall market fluctuations. The first half of the year saw the continuation of the job ad demand seen after COVID lockdowns and borders reopened in late 2021.

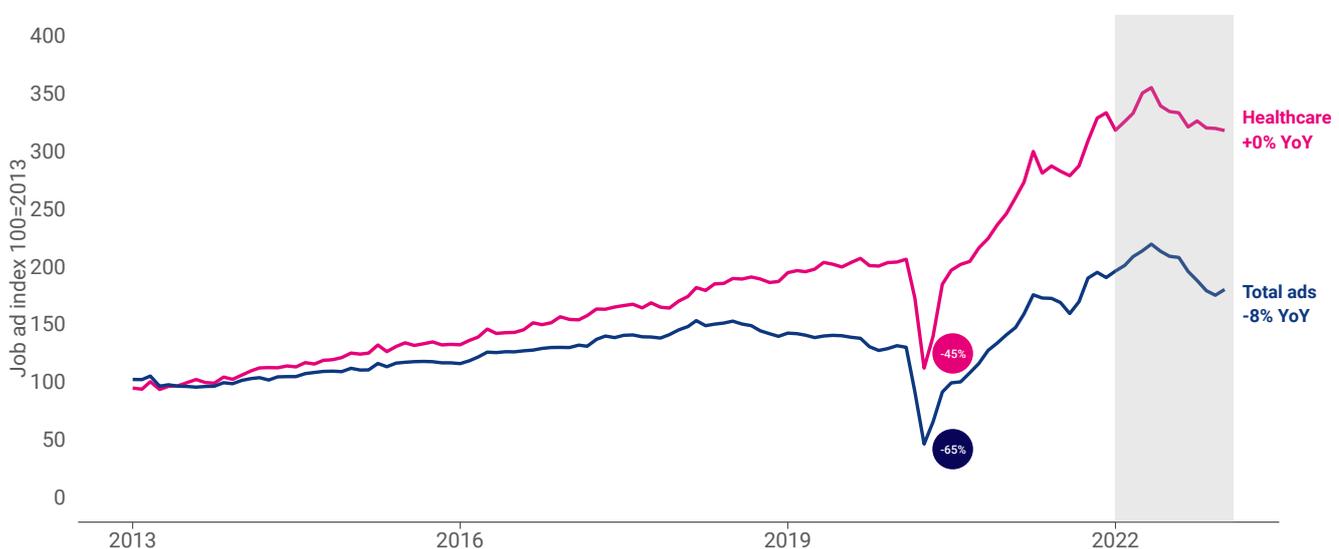
"This demand was driven by a number of converging forces impacting the healthcare job market towards the end of 2021 and into 2022," explains SEEK Healthcare Industry Leader James Duncan. "These include the impact of COVID on the healthcare and aged care workforces – for example, higher rates of burnout, early retirement and the shift to telehealth – the aged care royal commission recommendations rolling out, the backlog of government home care packages being released onto the market, and the broader physical and mental health impact on Australians during the pandemic."

These forces culminated in "unrealistic" job ad growth peaking in May 2022 and declining into September, Duncan says, before setting into a more stable pattern between September and December.

"Incredibly, this has resulted in no change in job ad growth year-on-year, as well as stability in supply and demand within Healthcare & Medical," he says. [See Figure 4]

But stability doesn't necessarily mean it's easy to find talent. "Hirers that prioritise work-life balance, culture, learning, and person-centred selection and onboarding practices will be well placed to find the people they need," Duncan says.

FIGURE 4. HEALTHCARE JOB AD PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO TOTAL JOB ADS



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22. Source: SEEK

Healthcare demand resists economic changes

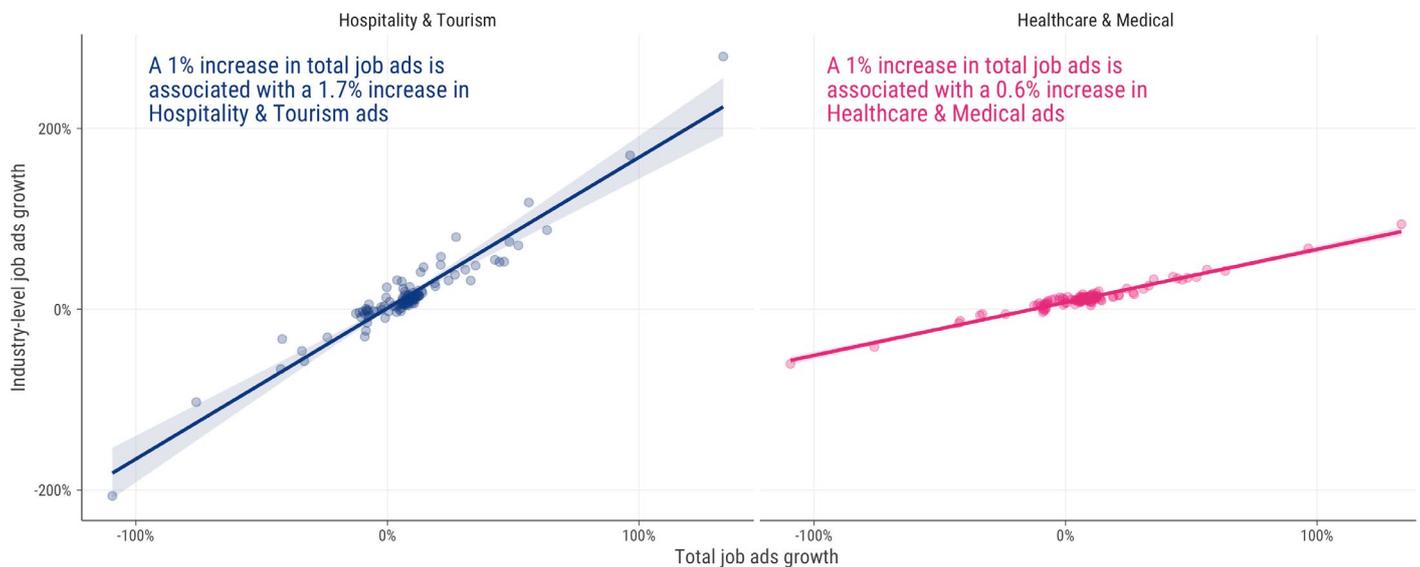
Compared to the total jobs market, Healthcare & Medical job ads haven't fallen as sharply and look to be stabilising. "The overall expectation from the marketplace is that it will remain stable in the year ahead," Duncan says.

Healthcare & Medical is one of the least volatile industries in Australia. If economic conditions worsen and the unemployment rate rises, the impact on jobs in the industry is predicted to be less than the overall employment market. [See Figure 5]

In fact, job ad growth in the healthcare industry has strongly exceeded the total labour market over the past decade, increasing by more than three times compared to less than two times for total job ads. During the initial COVID-19 shock, healthcare job ads fell by 45% in April 2020 – far less than the 65% reduction for total job ads. [See Figure 4]

"Healthcare is always going to be needed, whether we're experiencing poor economic conditions or good economic conditions. It's not discretionary like, for example, Hospitality & Tourism," Hartley says.

FIGURE 5. SOME INDUSTRIES ARE MORE CYCLICAL THAN OTHERS



Note: seasonally adjusted. Growth rates are measured using log-differences, which approximately equal percentage growth rates. Confidence intervals based on heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. Source: SEEK.



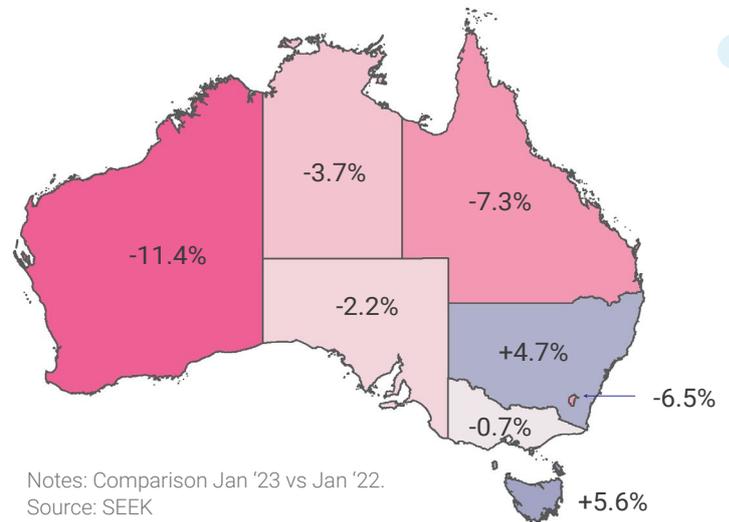
Workforce demand across the country

While overall year-on-year growth in Healthcare & Medical has been steady at 0% change, it hasn't been uniform across the country. "All states and territories except Western Australia and the Northern Territory have followed a similar trend, booming in the first half of 2022 and coming back down in the second half of the year, but the effect is more pronounced in some places," Hartley says.

Home to the country's largest population, New South Wales made the largest contribution to keeping job ads growing, with an increase of 5%. Nursing and Allied Health are the biggest drivers of growth in the state. Job ads in Tasmania grew by 6%, with sizeable growth in Specialist Services, while having lesser impact on the overall numbers.

Victoria saw only a slight decrease in job ad growth, with strong growth in Nursing counterbalanced by a sharp decrease in Management & Other job roles, as demand recedes for these professionals in line with the pandemic.

FIGURE 6. JOB AD YEAR ON YEAR GROWTH BY STATE – HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22.
Source: SEEK

FIGURE 7. DRIVERS OF CHANGE BY STATE (TOP 2 DRIVERS HIGHLIGHTED)

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Allied Health	-1%	+7%	+18%	-3%	+17%	+14%	+3%	-9%
Nursing	+7%	+11%	-9%	-8%	+1%	+6%	+9%	-11%
Specialist Services	-16%	+1%	-3%	-8%	-12%	+46%	-6%	-14%
Aged & Disability Support	-18%	-3%	-13%	-7%	-1%	-27%	+0%	-4%
Management & Other	-12%	+4%	-26%	-12%	-16%	-14%	-14%	-23%
State	-7%	+5%	-4%	-7%	-2%	+6%	-1%	-11%

• **Specialist Services, Nursing and Management & Other have been the biggest drivers of change across the majority of states**

Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22.
Source: SEEK.

Duncan notes the rise in demand for nurses in New South Wales (11%) and Victoria (9%) is large given the size of the nursing workforce in these states. "This growth is being driven by increased demand for nurses in Sydney and Melbourne, which is somewhat unusual against historical measures," he says. "Nursing demand is also being driven by high demand for aged care nurses."

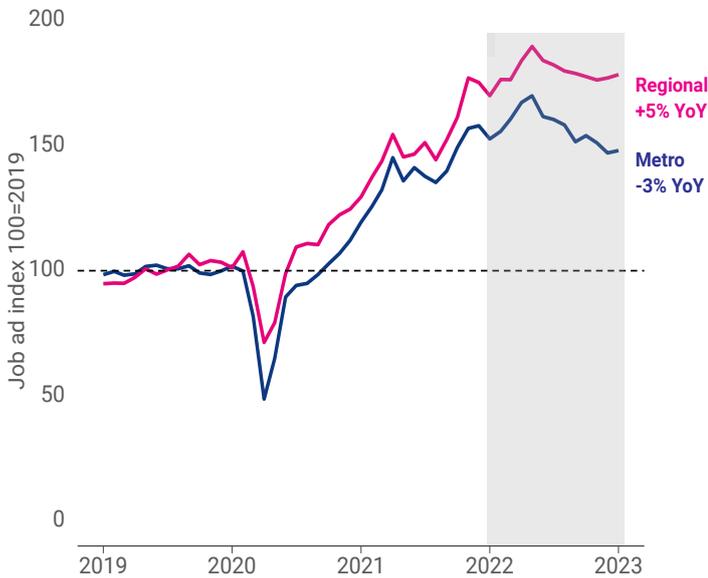
Allied Services growth across most states is driven by increased need for Psychologists, Councillors

and Social Workers to address rising mental health challenges. Conversely, demand for Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Optometrists has remained relatively flat throughout 2022.

"There are mobility opportunities for clinical staff, with differences in demand for certain roles groups across states," Duncan says. "This presents hirers with the opportunity to find high-quality candidates in states where there is an oversupply."

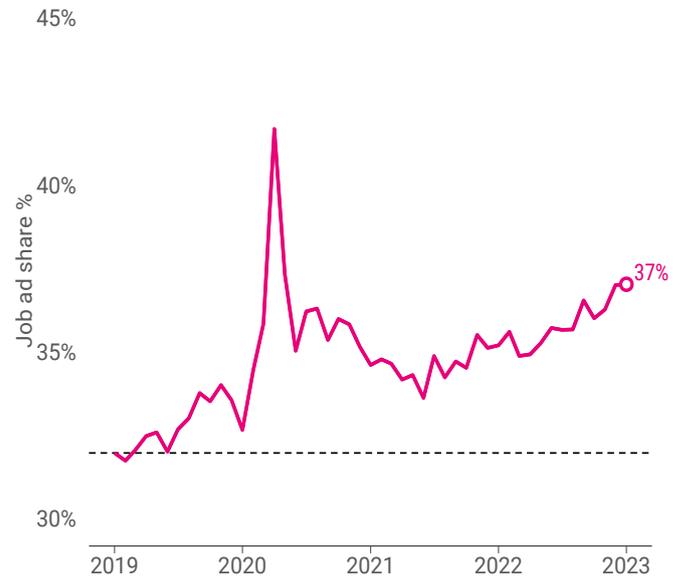
Regional demand remains strong

FIGURE 8. JOB ADS – METRO VS REGIONAL GROWTH



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22. Source: SEEK

FIGURE 9. SHARE OF REGIONAL ADS – HEALTHCARE ROLES



The trend of relocating from metro to regional areas that took hold during the pandemic is showing no signs of abating, with the share of regional job ads as a percentage of all Healthcare & Medical job ads steadily increasing over the past four years, from 32% in 2019 to 37% in 2023.

“The pandemic has changed the way we work and live, and with more people working remotely, they are moving into the regions as it’s more affordable,” Duncan says. “This means health service providers are having to expand their workforce to meet demand from the growing population.”

Plus, he says, the rise of telehealth means Healthcare & Medical workers can also explore remote working.

To combat challenges early in the relocation process, Duncan says hirers can look to source short-term accommodation for new staff and their families or repurpose existing infrastructure. Families may also need assistance finding schools and other services.

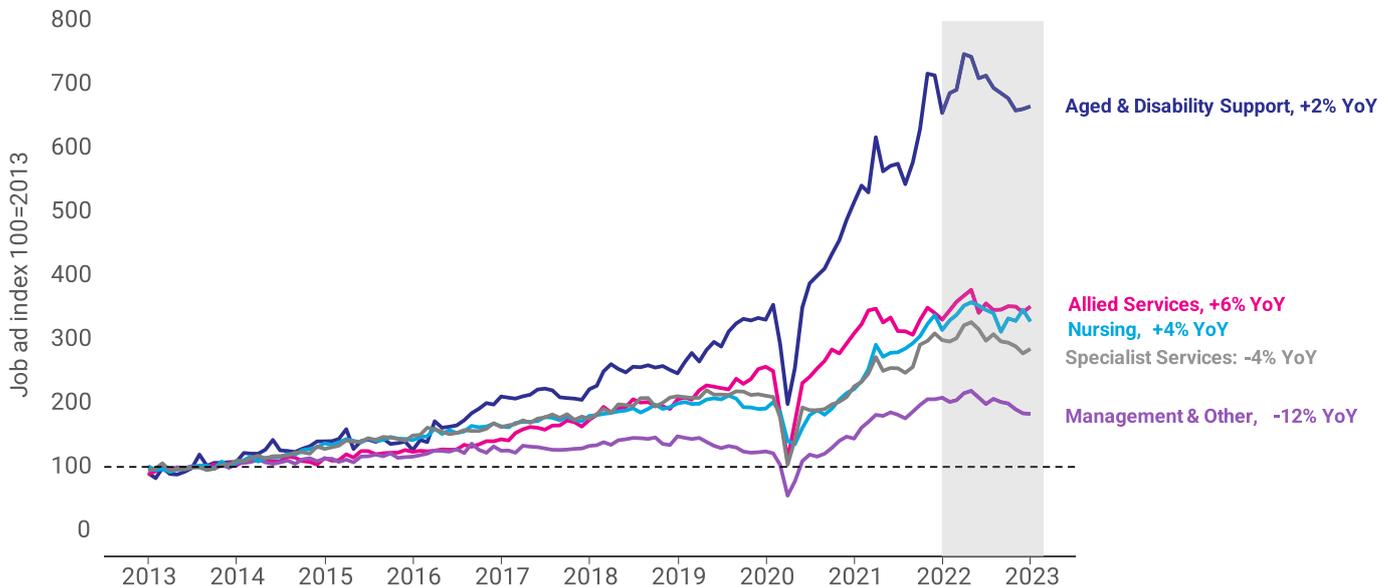
“Moving to a new place can be tough,” Duncan says. “Effective onboarding can help new hires and their families feel comfortable and included.”

While it’s positive news for regional hirers, Duncan says metro hirers are facing challenges as, “for the first time ever we’re seeing, especially in public health, a real need for more nurses in particular.”



Aged care and nursing seeing significant growth

FIGURE 10. LONG-TERM GROWTH ACROSS HEALTHCARE CATEGORIES



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22. Source: SEEK.

FIGURE 11. LONG-TERM VIEW - HOW ROLES HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME

TOP 10 ROLES BY AD VOLUME IN 2022 (AND CHANGE FROM 2013)



Notes: Percentage of all healthcare subclassifications. Source: SEEK.

All Healthcare & Medical role groups have enjoyed significant growth over the past decade, but it is Aged & Disability Support that has experienced the largest increase – by a considerable margin, expanding more than two times quicker than the next fastest growing role group (Allied Services). [See Figure 10]

So strong is demand for Aged & Disability Support and Aged Care Nursing roles that together these two role groups have increased their share of the total healthcare market from 18% in 2013 to almost one-third in 2022. [See Figure 11]

“The rise in Aged & Disability Support is being driven by our ageing population,” Duncan explains. “The royal commission and increasing rules and regulation around staffing numbers are also having a large impact.”

From 1 October 2023, all aged care homes will need to meet individual care requirements based on a sector average target of 200 minutes of care per resident per day.¹ As a result, growth is expected to continue across Aged & Disability Support for the rest of the year.

“Not only is the increase happening in aged care, but it’s also happening in aged care nursing as well,” Hartley says. Duncan agrees: “Aged care nursing is the big one to watch for the year ahead.”

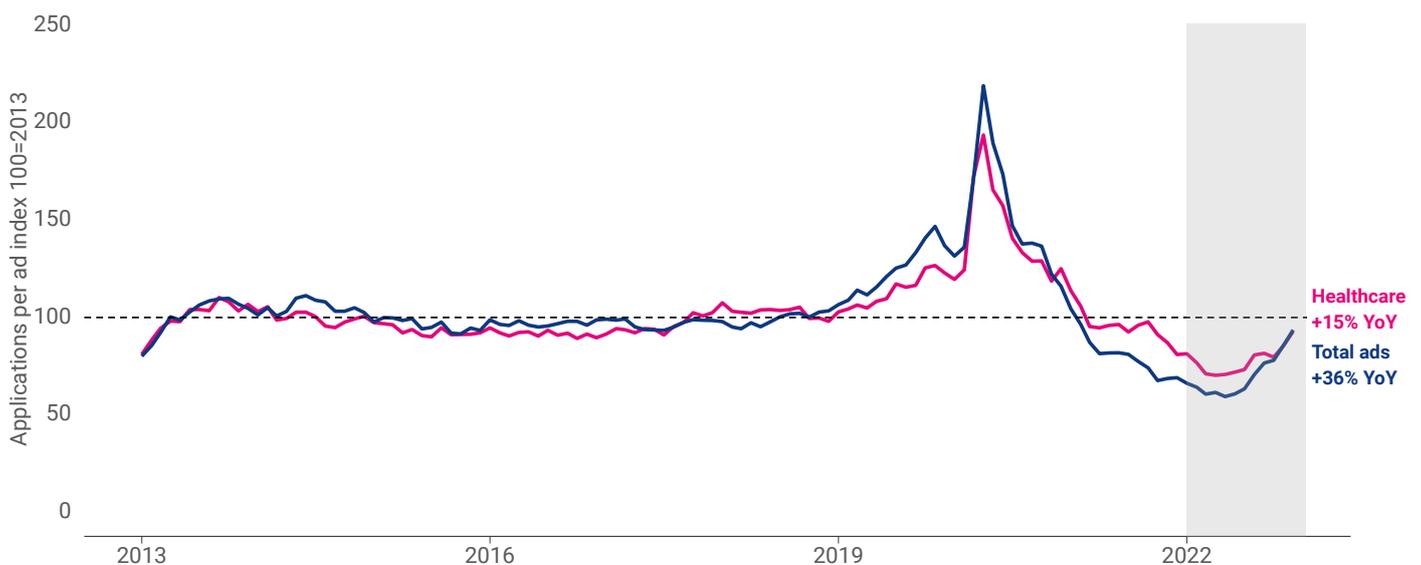
Competition among hirers to attract and retain healthcare staff remains strong and, Duncan says, “it’s really important for organisations to focus on culture and engagement”.

“Salary is one factor in retention, but it tops out eventually, so focusing on reward and recognition becomes central.”

Critical, too, is facilitating work-life balance. “This is a huge consideration across healthcare, in particular for nursing and allied health professionals,” Duncan says. “Allowing flexibility in areas like hours worked and start and finish times can help to prevent burnout, which is common as we move out of the pandemic.”

Charting candidate availability

FIGURE 12. CANDIDATE AVAILABILITY – HEALTHCARE VS TOTAL



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22. Source: SEEK.

Unlike job ads where there’s greater difference in growth rates between Healthcare & Medical and total job ads, applications per ad for both cohorts have tended to follow broadly similar trends over the past decade.

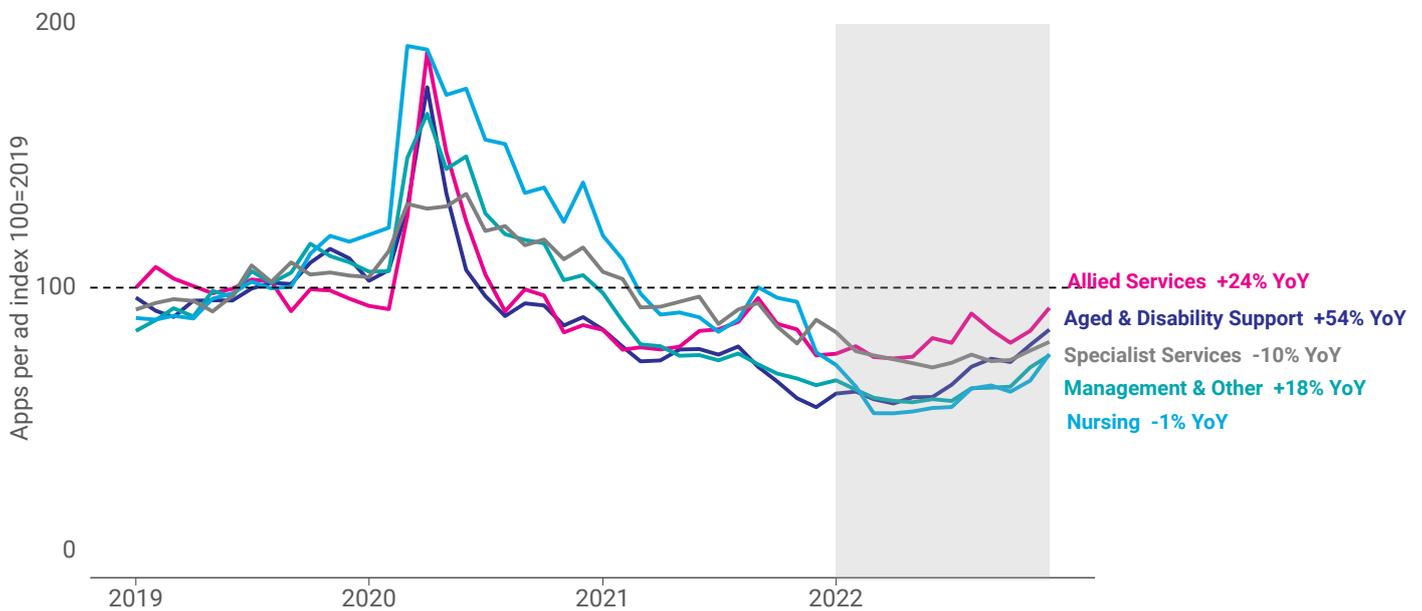
“Similar to total job ads, and especially during the pandemic, applications per ad for Healthcare & Medical roles were less volatile than total job ads, possibly because they were seen as a steady source of jobs,” Hartley says.

It’s good news for hirers with applications per ad on the rise after the fluctuations of the pandemic. “As demand for candidates has reduced, applications per ad are on the rise and this is providing a little more balance to the employment marketplace,” Duncan says.

“That said, organisations still need to work hard to attract the best talent, and it’s organisations that champion work-life balance, career development and remuneration that will win moving forward.”

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/care-minutes-registered-nurses-aged-care/care-minutes>

FIGURE 13. CANDIDATE AVAILABILITY ACROSS HEALTHCARE CATEGORIES



Notes: Comparison Jan '23 vs Jan '22. Source: SEEK.

Noteworthy too is the sharp rise of Aged & Disability Support and the decline of Nursing. "With nursing, applications stayed fairly high throughout COVID, then it really dropped off dramatically," Hartley says. "Now that other options are available, or perhaps nurses are feeling burnt out, there's a bit of an exodus from nursing."

Duncan concurs but says it's not all bad news. "Nurses are missing the camaraderie their profession provides and are starting to return to the workforce in 2023."

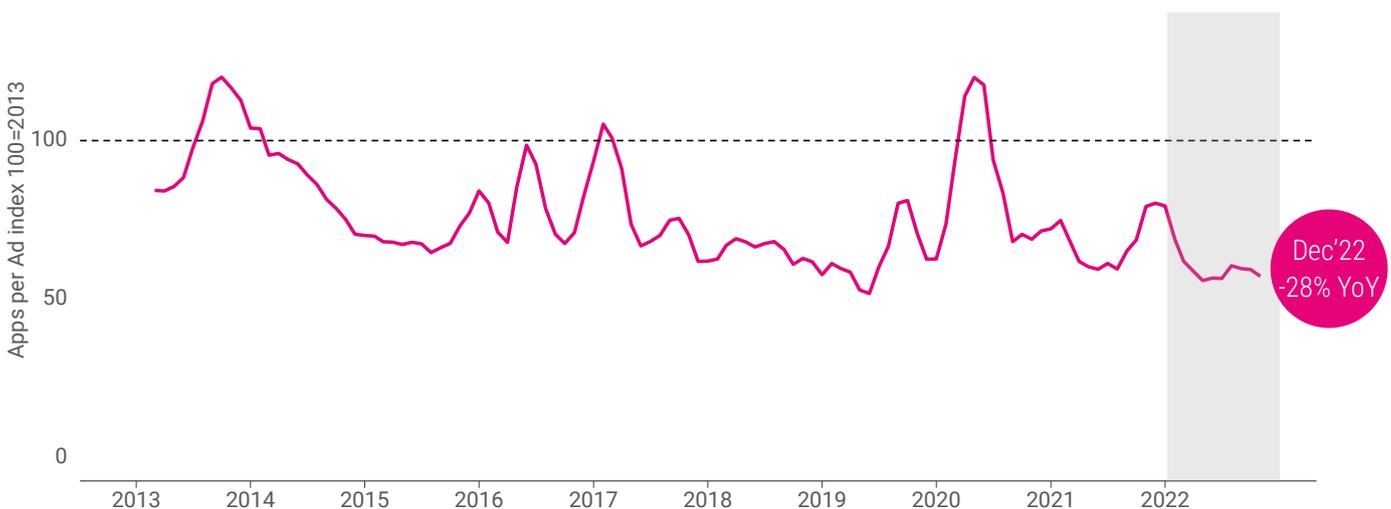


SPOTLIGHT ON GPs

There are more than 31,000 GPs in Australia² who are at the frontline of the healthcare system. Hirers who offer simple application processes, look regionally, interstate and overseas for talent, and facilitate flexible working arrangements are well placed to tap into this unique workforce.

Analysing GP job application behaviour

FIGURE 14. OVERALL GP APPLICATIONS PER AD



Notes: 3 month rolling average – comparison period is December value for 3mra. Source: SEEK.

There has been a decrease in applications per ad since 2013 for GPs, with very little pandemic-induced fluctuation unlike in other industries and healthcare job roles.

Duncan attributes this to an increase in complicated application processes over the past decade. “While this helps filter occupations with large application numbers, it acts as a deterrent for occupations with low application numbers like GPs.”

Hartley says GPs often use SEEK as a job search tool, with a larger proportion of job ad searches and views relative to applications compared to other healthcare role groups.

“From the start of 2022 to now, for GP ads there have been 63% more views per applicant than the other healthcare subclassifications, and 96% more views per application. This suggests that applicants are viewing a lot of ads but not applying.”

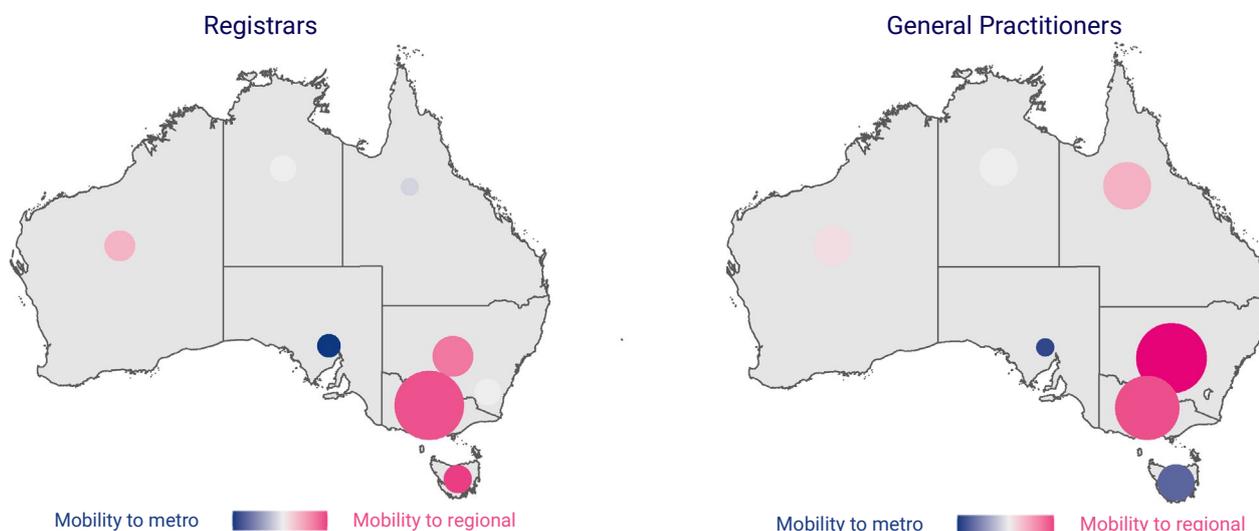
To encourage more GPs to apply for jobs, Duncan says hirers need to make the process simple.

“Most healthcare providers require a lot of upfront information on job applications, which is a real turn-off for GPs because they just don’t have the time to go through the application,” he says. “It’s best to use a quick application process. You want a fast call-to-action, an easy apply or a simple way to let them provide their intent to the job.”

²<https://www.health.gov.au/topics/doctors-and-specialists/in-australia>

Comparing GP and registrar movement

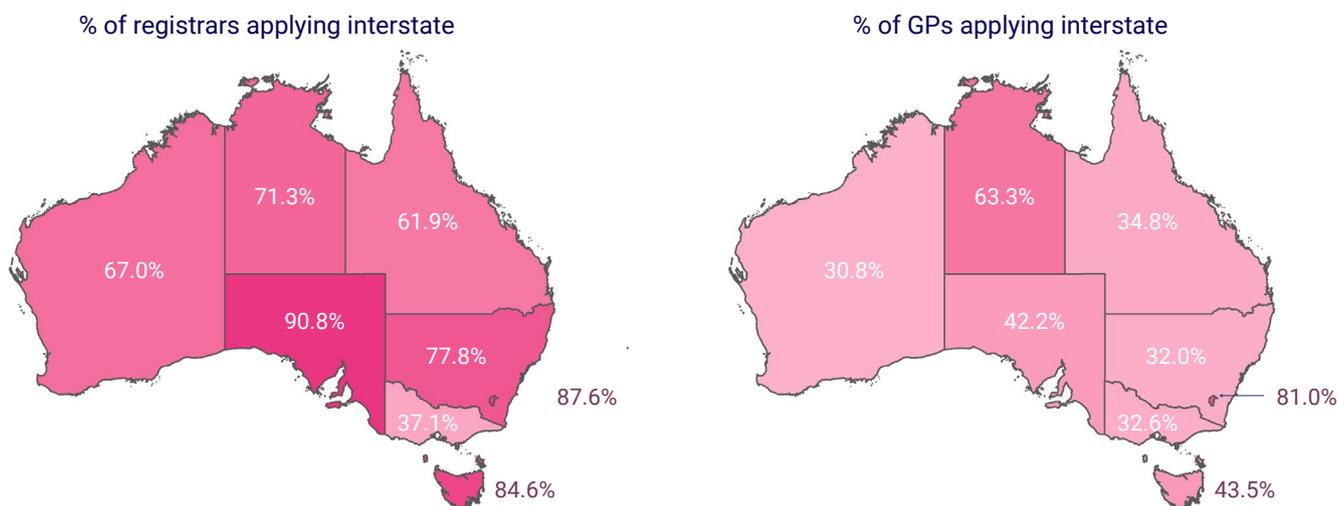
FIGURE 15. METRO TO REGIONAL MOBILITY



Notes: July '22 – Jan '23. Source: SEEK

When it comes to moving from metro to regional areas or regional to metro, there's more movement among registrars in Victoria, Hartley explains. "Four times as many applicants in Victoria are either moving metro to regional or regional to metro compared with the other states." For GPs, these type of movement patterns are comparable in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, he says.

FIGURE 16. INTERSTATE APPLICATIONS



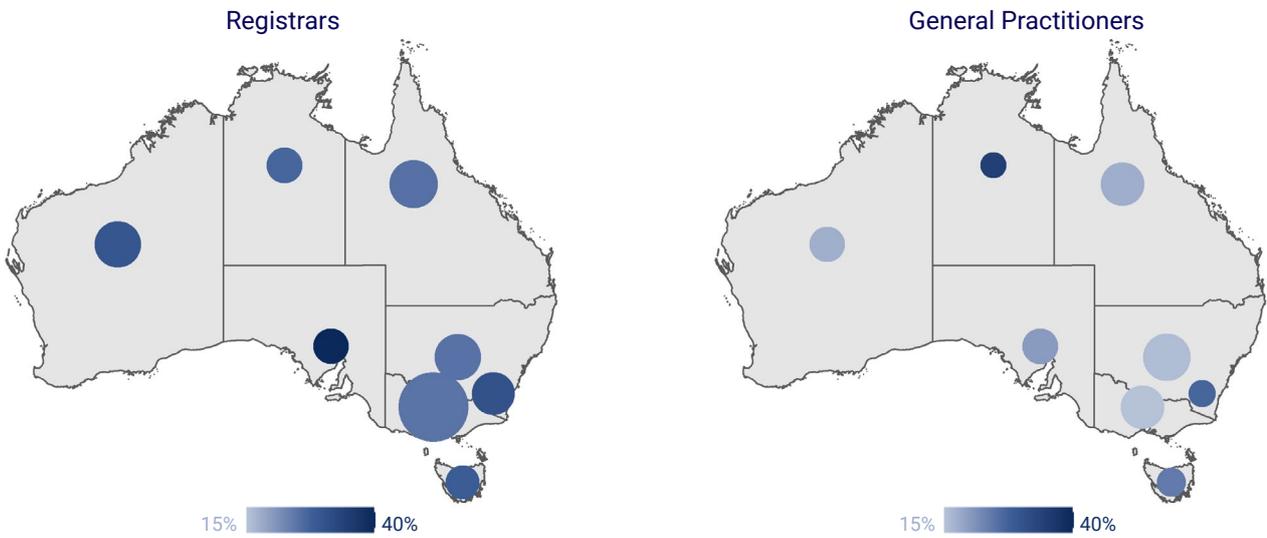
Notes: State value is proportion of applications the originate in the state that are to an external state, i.e. NSW resident applying in SA. July '22 – Jan '23. Source: SEEK.

Most GPs are applying to jobs in their state of residence. In contrast, registrars – who have undergone similar medical training – are much more likely to apply for interstate positions. "For hirers looking to recruit GPs, looking within your state can be an effective approach," Hartley says.

Duncan says interstate movement among residents and registrars is reflective of a supply issue that was created by the international border closures during the pandemic.

"Not only did closed borders impact the supply of senior clinicians, it also impacted the supply of international medical graduates," he says. "This meant that many intakes were impacted and consequently job opportunities were reposted more broadly, resulting in interstate mobility. Also, many providers have started offering incentives to relocate, including covering relocation costs."

FIGURE 17. OVERSEAS APPLICANTS



Notes: July '22 – Jan '23, Overseas defined as non-AU/NZ. Source: SEEK.

With borders open once more, overseas applicants make up a significant proportion of applicants for both role groups, with registrar roles (26%) attracting more internationals than GP roles (17%).

While looking overseas can be an effective strategy for hirers seeking GPs, Duncan says looking closer to home at supply and demand differences in each state can pay off. "Often what we see is there's more demand in some states for certain roles, and less in others, so it's helpful to keep on top of what's happening in the local market."

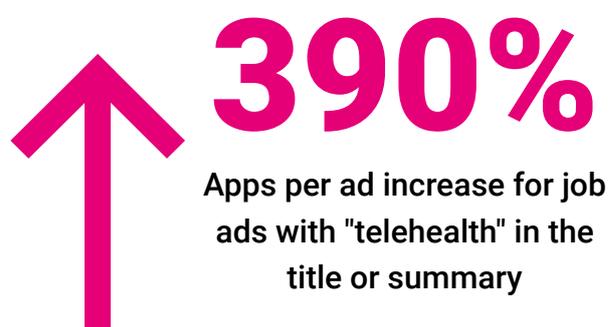
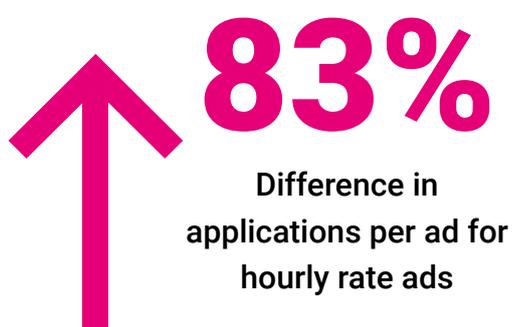
Drivers of attraction for GP candidates

FIGURE 17. FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME GP ROLES PERCENTAGE



Notes: Full-time and Part-time ads as proportion of all ads. Source: SEEK.





The percentage of full-time GP roles has been declining over the past four years, averaging over 80% during 2019 before dropping to 65% in the past six months. Likewise, GPs are much more likely to apply for jobs that list an hourly rate or mention telehealth.

Duncan says some GPs want to work part-time, while others prefer to combine a part-time GP role in a clinic with a medical officer job in a hospital, especially in regional areas. "The decline in full-time roles comes from GPs working across several roles in some cases," he says. In fact, the proportion of part-time GP roles has increased from around 10% to close to 20%.

Looking ahead, he says organisations will need to have ongoing conversations about how telehealth fits within the broader healthcare offering, and how to manage growing numbers of part-time and casual workers.

"Work-life balance is a significant factor overall, and GPs' preference for telehealth is a proof point on what the market is wanting."

Case study: Bupa

Bupa is a global brand and a well-known Australian health insurer. But many GPs are unaware of Bupa's large health services department that recruits talent – around 100 GPs annually, and 117 in 2022 – for three Commonwealth Government contracts.

In these roles, GPs work in medical clinics on Australian Defence Force bases, perform visa medicals for new migrants and provide clinical advice to the Department of Veterans Affairs in an office-based environment.

"The biggest challenge that we face is we are an invisible business," says talent acquisition manager Melina Saunders. "GPs just don't know there's another option out there."

What's particularly attractive about these roles, she explains, is GPs are only expected to work business hours from Monday to Friday – and they are paid an hourly rate.

"Our GPs generally see six to eight patients a day in one of our health centres, so they don't have to see one patient every 8.5 minutes or 60 patients a day in order to make a good wage," Saunders says. "Plus, none of our roles require anyone to interact with Medicare."

Selling the lifestyle benefits

Given the growing demand for better work-life balance among GPs, Saunders says a recruitment marketing rebrand is helping to change the way prospective GP candidates think about a career with Bupa and sell the lifestyle benefits of moving out of a traditional practice environment.

"We're saying to them: you know us as a health insurer – you've seen the optical stores in the shopping centres and you've seen the dental practices. But you can also have a meaningful and fulfilling career as a GP with Bupa.

"You don't have to work in aged care or health insurance, and we also have really interesting specialties for GPs like aviation medicine and underwater medicine," Saunders says.

She says SEEK's Talent Search allows the company to spread this message directly to GPs. "We approach GPs directly and say to them: Do you know about these great opportunities with Bupa? If they just see our ads, they often think the roles are only for health insurance and aged care."



Making applications easy

Because most GPs prefer to apply for roles on the go via a smartphone, Bupa launched a new recruitment system that “doesn’t require GPs to create an account or sign in or answer a heap of questions about their background before applying for a job”, Saunders says.

“They don’t even have to attach a CV – they can just apply right away or express their interest. We’re looking at integrating SEEK with this new system, so they can just apply via SEEK.”

Because of this new approach to promoting GP roles and streamlining the application process, “people are actually applying for our GP roles, and that never happened before – ever”, Saunders says. “Whenever I talk to GPs and they’re joining Bupa, it’s because they want to do something different.”



MAPPING CAREER PATHWAYS

Aged & Disability Support and Nursing – in particular, Aged Care Nursing and Mental Health Nursing – are significant growth areas. Labour shortages provide strong impetus to attract and retain talent from other industries.

Understanding career pathways and leveraging transferable skills will help hirers train a skilled workforce to fill the gaps in these areas.

Understanding the jobs market

SEEK builds a connected view of the jobs market by extracting, standardising and linking information from job ads posted by hirers and profiles provided by candidates.

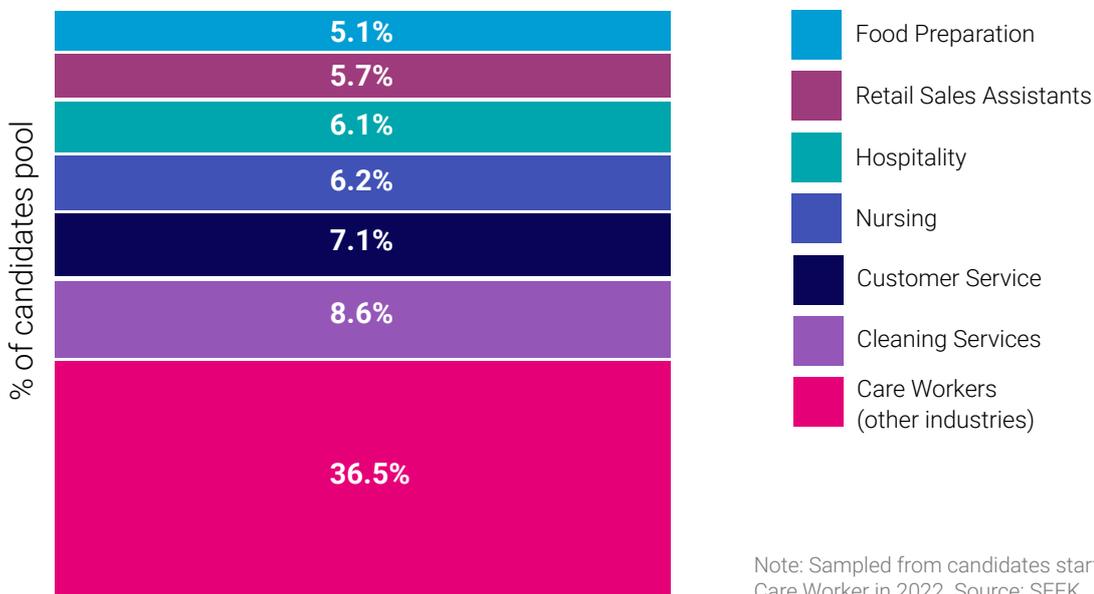
Combined with information about the roles and skills candidates and hirers talk about, and the way job seekers interact on the platform, it allows SEEK to understand dynamics in the jobs market and derive insights into market trends.

Crucially, these insights show how candidates transition between different role types and industries across their career, as well as the transferable skills they hone.



From varied backgrounds into aged care careers

FIGURE 18. WHAT ROLES DO CANDIDATES HAVE BEFORE THEIR FIRST AGED CARE WORKER ROLE?



Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job as an Aged Care Worker in 2022. Source: SEEK

Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of Aged Care Workers move across from other Care Worker in other industries (36%) and Nursing (6%) roles. Over the last decade, the share of Care Workers has increased, while fewer nurses are making the jump into aged care.

There's also a sizable number of candidates (the remaining 60%) transitioning into aged care from varied but related role groups, including Cleaning, Customer Service, Retail Sales Assistants, Hospitality, and Food Preparation.

"Quite often there's a low barrier to entry for candidates undertaking their first aged care roles and there's a lot of people coming from role groups with a similar low barrier to entry," says Data Scientist David Jennens, from SEEK's AI & Platform Services team.

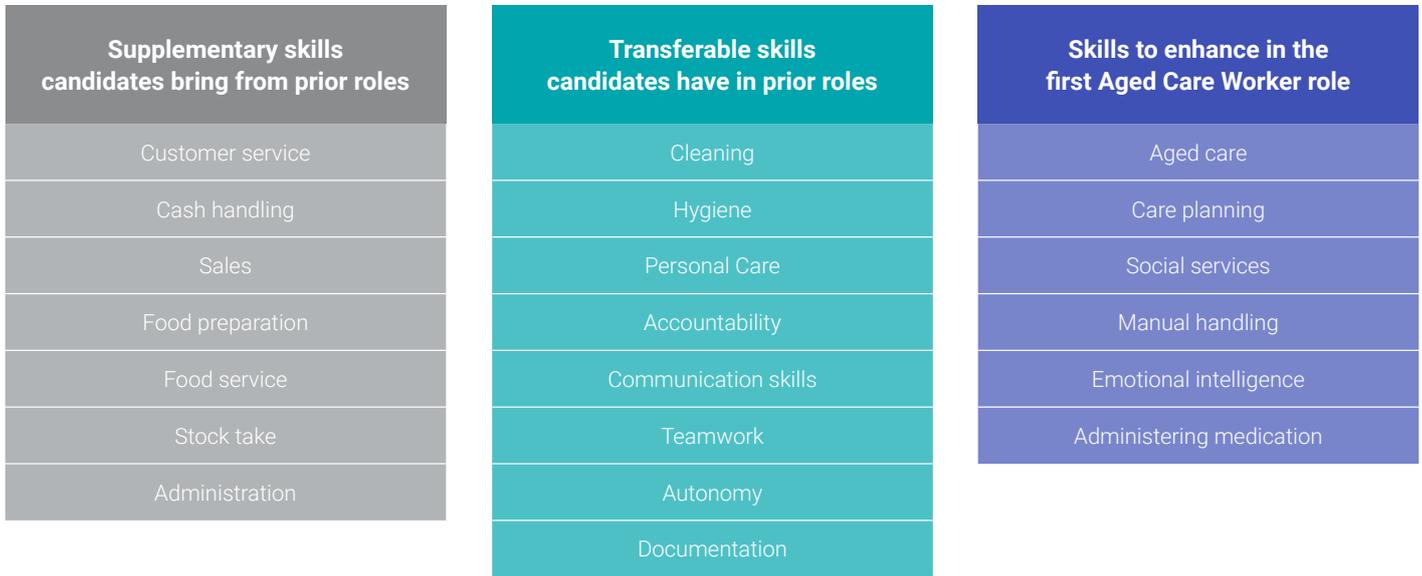
As Aged & Disability Support continues to face a significant shortage of workers, Duncan says organisations that look to attract candidates from outside Healthcare & Medical can benefit from diverse experience and perspectives.

"There are people coming from other industries slowly and organically, but what we'd like to do is accelerate this movement," he says.

"It's about getting proactive by promoting a career in aged care and the benefits it can provide, including job security, a purposeful career, flexibility and potential for career development into nursing and allied health."

Aged care candidates have transferable skills

FIGURE 19. WHICH SKILLS DO CANDIDATES TALK ABOUT IN AGED CARE WORKER ROLES?



Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job as an Aged Care Worker between 2000 and 2022. Source: SEEK

Transferable skills help candidates transition into aged care roles, and there’s considerable overlap between skills associated with candidates’ aged care roles and their previous roles. Personal care, hygiene, cleaning, accountability, documentation and teamwork are among the most common.



FIGURE 20. TYPICAL SKILLS FOR INCOMING CANDIDATES TO AGED CARE

	Skill mentioned	Care workers	Nurses	Customer service	Cleaning	Retail sales	Hospitality	Food preparation
Incoming skills transferable to Aged Care Worker skills	Autonomy	Light blue	White					
	Personal care	Dark blue	Light blue					
	Documentation	Light blue	Dark blue					
	Communication skills	White	Light blue	Light blue				
	Cleaning	Light blue	White	Light blue	Dark blue	Light blue	Dark blue	Dark blue
	Hygienic	Dark blue	Light blue	Light blue	Dark blue	Light blue	Light blue	Dark blue
	Accountability	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue
	Teamwork	White	White	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue
Incoming skills supplementary to Aged Care Worker skills	Customer service			Dark blue	Light blue	Dark blue	Dark blue	Light blue
	Cash handling			Dark blue	White	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue
	Reliability			White	Light blue	White	White	White
	Food preparation						Light blue	Dark blue

- Typical skills from other healthcare roles
- Typical skills across all incoming candidates
- Typical skills from non-healthcare candidates

For candidates coming from other role groups, frequently mentioned skills are denoted with darker colours and less frequently mentioned skills are denoted with lighter colours.

Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job as an Aged Care Worker between 2000 and 2022. Source: SEEK

Depending on their background, candidates bring different skill sets to their aged care roles. Documentation and personal care are listed almost solely by candidates coming from healthcare roles, while customer service and reliability are cited by more candidates transitioning from non-healthcare roles.

“In aged care there is now a real emphasis on providing good customer service and satisfaction to drive greater client engagement and new word-of-mouth business opportunities,” Duncan says.

Jennens recommends hirers look for candidates with transferable skills, while acknowledging new skills can be taught on the job. “You may need to teach more

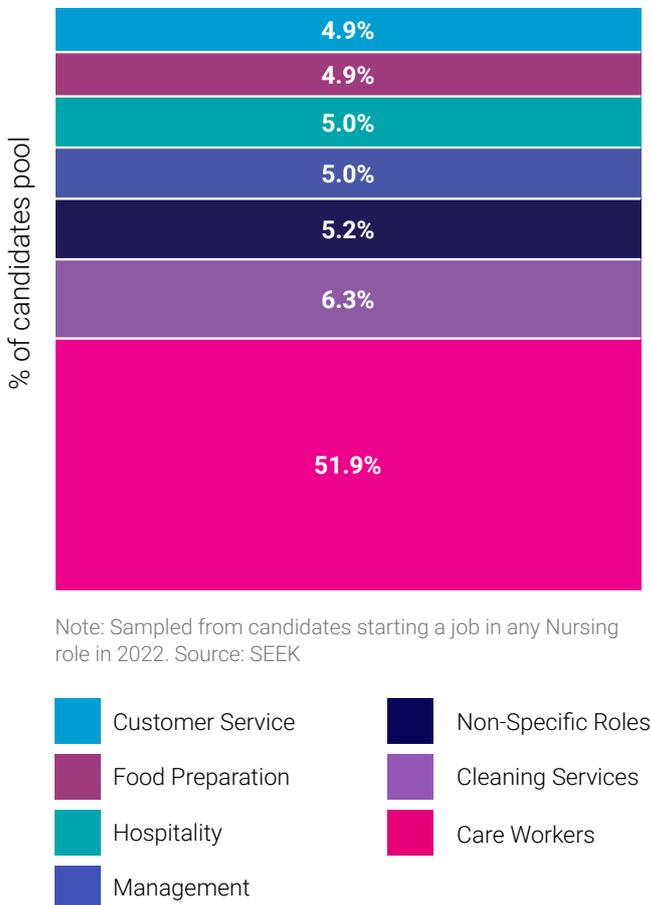
specialised skills like care planning, manual handling and social services, otherwise you risk reducing your talent pool,” he says.

Duncan suggests focusing on these skills during the onboarding process, which will help to boost confidence among new hires and aid retention. “It’s amazing how many skills crossover nicely, but it’s important to focus training and development in the areas people need to work on at the outset.

“Someone coming from customer service is different to someone coming from cleaning or retail sales. Filling individual skills gaps is a really sensible approach.”

Transitioning from care work to nursing

FIGURE 21. WHAT ROLES DO CANDIDATES HAVE BEFORE THEIR FIRST NURSING ROLE?



Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job in any Nursing role in 2022. Source: SEEK



More than half of nurses (52%) come from care worker roles, and compared to Aged Care Worker career pathways substantially more nurses have come from Management roles.

Duncan says the high proportion of care workers – in particular, Aged Care Workers – transitioning into nursing demonstrates a clear career pathway that may help to alleviate candidate shortages in the future.

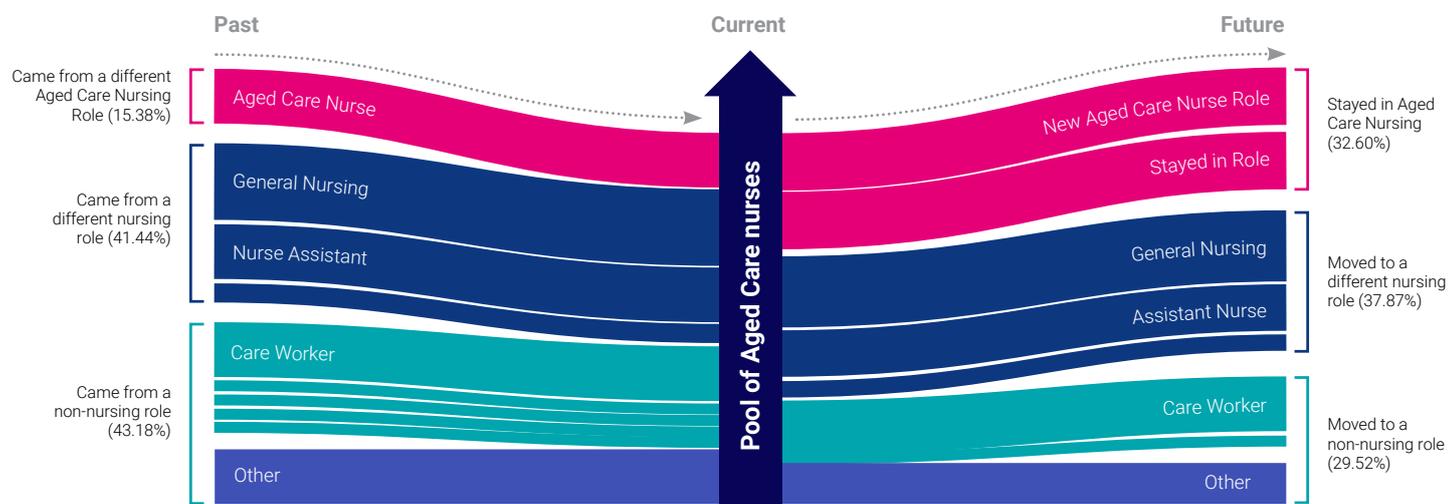
“The aged care industry can really help Australia with long-term nursing supply,” he says. “Aged care can attract people from retail, hospitality or admin jobs and offer them a pathway to become an assistant in nursing, then an enrolled nurse and a registered nurse.

“Many of those nurses will stay in aged care, but some may move into hospital or community settings.”

Importantly, Duncan says, “collaboration between aged care providers and hospitals and health service providers is key to maximising the potential of this valuable candidate pipeline”.

Tracking aged care nursing careers

FIGURE 22. PATHWAYS TO AND FROM AGED CARE NURSING



Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job as an Aged Care Nurse between 2000 and 2022. "New Aged Care Nurse Role" refers to a new job, with a change of company or seniority or similar. "Stayed in Role" means there has been no change at all – the role and company remain the same. Source: SEEK

Candidates starting a new Aged Care Nursing role can be split into those coming from another Aged Care Nursing role (15%), those coming from a nursing role outside aged care (41%) and those coming from outside nursing entirely (43%). Fewer Aged Care Nurses are leaving for a non-Aged Care nursing role (38%) or leaving nursing entirely (30%), implying that the pool of Aged Care Nurses is growing.

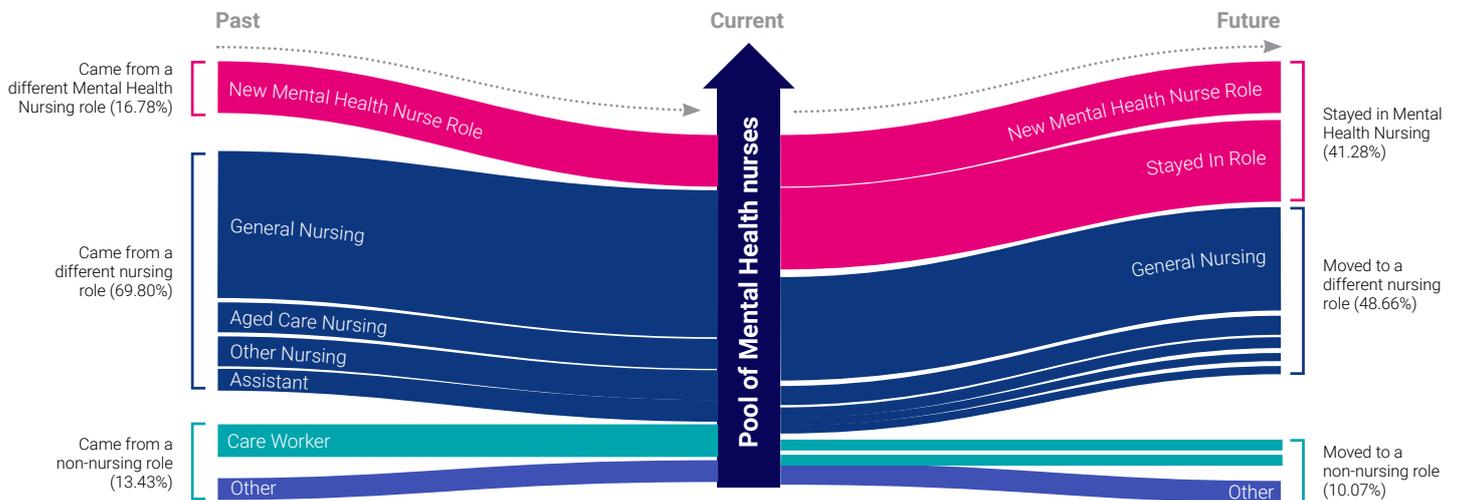
The difference between those starting their first nursing role in aged care and those leaving nursing after an aged care placement is around 14%. This suggests that Aged Care Nursing is an avenue to attract talent into aged care and nursing more broadly. Interestingly, candidates who transition to an Aged Care Nursing role from Customer Service, Cleaning and Hospitality are unlikely to return to these roles.

Almost one third (33%) of Aged Care Nurses will stay in the aged care field, either moving to a new Aged Care Nursing role (15%) or staying in their current role (17%).

When seeking aged care nurses, hirers can look to general nurses, other aged care nurses, assistant nurses and care workers as potential candidate pipelines, Jennens says.

Mental health nursing is a pathway to senior positions

FIGURE 23. PATHWAYS TO AND FROM MENTAL HEALTH NURSING



Note: Sampled from candidates starting a job as a Mental Health Nurse between 2000 and 2022. "New Mental Health Nurse Role" refers to a new job, with a change of company or seniority or similar. "Stayed in Role" means there has been no change at all – the role and company remain the same. Source: SEEK

There's higher retention in Mental Health Nursing compared to Aged Care Nursing, with 17% of next roles also in Mental Health Nursing and 25% staying on their current role. The rotation to (33%) and from (45%) general nursing after a stint in Mental Health Nursing is also much higher than for Aged Care Nursing.

Given the seniority of many Mental Health Nursing roles, there is more movement into Management and Nursing Management.

"Hirers can attract mental health nurses by positioning roles as career-boosting positions – come here, do

your rotation through mental health, and then go into management," says Jennens.

Duncan says high rates of retention within Mental Health Nursing and nursing more broadly is great news for the sector. "With hirers really struggling for mental health nurses, evidence that it offers a strong career pathway can help to attract candidates."





Case study 2: International SOS

As the world's leading provider of medical assistance, logistics and security services, with 13,000 employees working across 90 countries and a 1,200-strong Australian team, International SOS was heavily impacted by candidate shortages and logistics challenges during the pandemic.

"The travel restrictions during COVID created a negative effect in our recruitment," says International SOS Recruitment Manager Elisabet Coll. "One big issue was the majority of our roles are fly-in fly-out because they are in remote locations across Australia, and some of the candidates were not happy to proceed with the process because of the quarantine requirements."

Plus, there was huge demand for healthcare workers across the country, compounded by closed borders and a lack of overseas candidates. Charged with helping the Australian Government with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, International SOS also hired more

than 300 healthcare workers in just four months. "I grew a lot of grey hair because it was a very stressful time!" Coll says.

Even though the situation has eased, she says the company is still finding it challenging to source candidates due to competitive job market conditions. "We get many more withdrawals during the application process and we also have fewer candidates applying for positions than before the pandemic," Coll says. "This means we need more resources and time to recruit for the same number of positions."

Looking to transferable skills

To fill the growing number of vacant positions, Coll says the company is increasingly hiring candidates with transferable skills from related industries. "It's about looking at skills rather than experience," she says.

For screening nurse positions – who take temperatures and collate health information when people enter healthcare facilities – International SOS has started hiring first aiders to combat the shortage of nurses. "These workers can follow instructions and are very methodical, and they don't need many clinical skills," Coll says. "We transformed this medical role into a non-medical role."

The same approach helps the company hire counsellors instead of psychologists for mental health support roles, and travel agents to fill vacant recruitment partner positions.

"We have a really, really short pipeline of psychologists in Australia, and there is a lot of crossover with a counsellor's skill set," Coll says. "Because our recruitment partners look after many fly-in fly-out workers with rotations, travel agents are a great fit because they have many of the same skills in logistics, customer service and client management."



Navigating the market

SEEK's Talent Search and Premium ads also support International SOS to source candidates with transferable skills, especially for highly competitive positions, Coll explains.

"We have to work hard to stand out in this competitive market, and SEEK's training sessions really helped us to improve our advertisements and understand how to best use SEEK's Talent Search."

She says SEEK's market insights help the company's hiring team to better navigate the market and "really understand that it's not something they can control". "We partnered with SEEK during COVID and they really helped a lot," Coll says.

Looking ahead, Coll says the company's approach to redefining roles and hiring for skills rather than solely experience means it's well placed to withstand an unpredictable employment market.

"It has now become a must to plan ahead by increasing our candidate talent pools, having back-ups and being prepared for last-minute deployment. Knowing that we can expand our candidate sourcing with this approach really helps."



CONCLUSION

Based on the strategic insights in this report and trends shaping the employment market, four key considerations for healthcare recruiters, managers and business owners can shape future planning and help combat challenges in attraction, retention and skills shortages.

Leveraging transferable skills is crucial in Aged & Disability Support and Nursing. Shortages are expected to persist as our population ages, and organisations that attract candidates from outside Healthcare & Medical with transferable skills – including from Cleaning, Customer Service and Retail Sales Assistant role groups – are well placed to make up some of the shortfall.

Thinking laterally can help to attract high-quality candidates. Especially for GPs, offering simple application processes and looking regionally, interstate and overseas for talent are effective strategies.

Greater collaboration between aged care providers and hospital and health service providers is essential. The aged care industry has the potential to help improve long-term nursing supply, and cooperation between the major healthcare providers is key to maximising the potential of this valuable candidate pipeline

Work-life balance is a crucial factor in retention. The pandemic has changed our relationship with work, and there's no going back. Candidates increasingly expect flexible working arrangements tailored to the unique needs of Healthcare & Medical workers – most notably, greater provision for part-time work. This approach can also prevent burnout.



Where to next?



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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. WHAT SEEK CLASSIFIES AS HEALTHCARE AND MEDICAL ROLES

Classification	Role groups	Subclassification	Size of sector
Community Services & Development	Aged & Disability Support	Aged & Disability Support services	18%
Healthcare & Medical	Allied Services	Psychology, Social work, Opticians, Natural Therapies, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy)	20%
	Specialist Services	Medical & Dental professions (dental, GP's, Medical specialists, Pharmacy, Ambulance/paramedic)	19%
	Nursing - ALL roles	Nursing (A&E, Aged Care, General Medical, Paediatric, Midwifery, High Acuity, Educators)	29%
	Management & other roles	Management, Sales, Medical Administration, Pharmaceuticals, etc	14%

Notes: Based on 2022 job ads. Source: SEEK.

APPENDIX 2. DEFINING AGED CARE WORKERS

Aged Care Worker roles are identified by looking for role titles which:

1. Specifically mention Aged Care or;
2. More general Care Worker roles at companies which work specifically in Aged Care

Example role titles	
Aged Care	General Care
Aged Care Worker	Personal Care Assistant
Aged Care Role	Personal Care Worker
Aged Care Support Worker	Carer
Aged Care Assistant	Care Worker

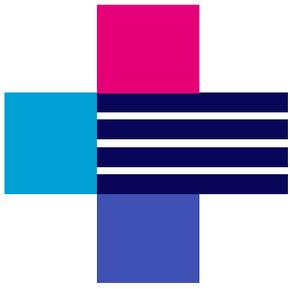
Notes: Based on 2022 job ads. Source: SEEK.

APPENDIX 3. EXAMPLES OF NURSING CLUSTERS

Role groups	Example role titles
Nursing	Division One Nurse, Night Duty Registered Nurse, Enrolled and Registered Nurse
Aged Care Nursing	Aged Care Nurse, Aged Care Assistant in Nursing
Mental Health Nursing	Mental Health Endorsed Enrolled Nurse, Community Mental Health Nurse
Management in Nursing	Nurse Case Manager, Associate Nurse Unit Manager
Nursing Assistant	Nursing Assistant, Nursery Hand, Nursing Aide

Notes: Based on 2022 job ads. Source: SEEK.





HEALTHCARE Pulse Report



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