

Dietitians

Profile using data from Census 2006

1.1 Introduction

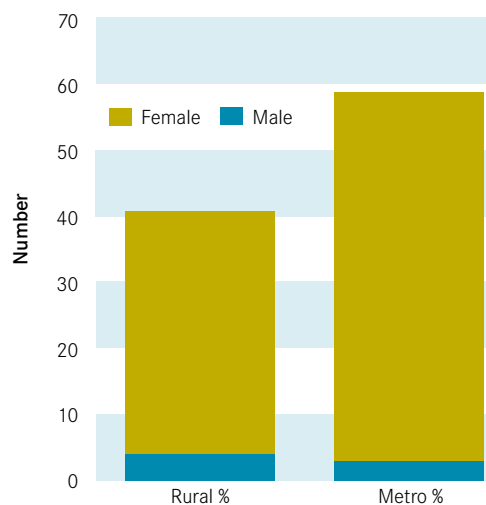
This profile of dietitians was developed using data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. According to the Australian and New Zealand Classification of Occupations (ANZCO), dietitians apply the science of human nutrition to help people understand the relationship between food and health and make appropriate dietary choices to attain and maintain health, and to prevent and treat illness and disease.

The Census includes a range of questions regarding a person's level of education and occupation. The data provides information about the numbers of persons who reported that they were working in particular human services occupations and/or industries during the week prior to the Census night of 8 August 2006. It should be noted that Census data is self-reported, and based on the responses given by persons completing the Census form.

1.2 Gender and metro/rural location

Dietetics is a female dominated profession. Of the 655 persons who described themselves on their 2006 Census form as a dietitian, 612 (93.4%) were female and 43 (6.6%) were male. Of the total dietitians, 58.9% worked in metropolitan locations and 41.1% worked in rural locations. While 60% of female dietitians worked in metropolitan locations, the majority of male dietitians (55.8%) worked in rural locations. However, as previously mentioned the number of males is very small.

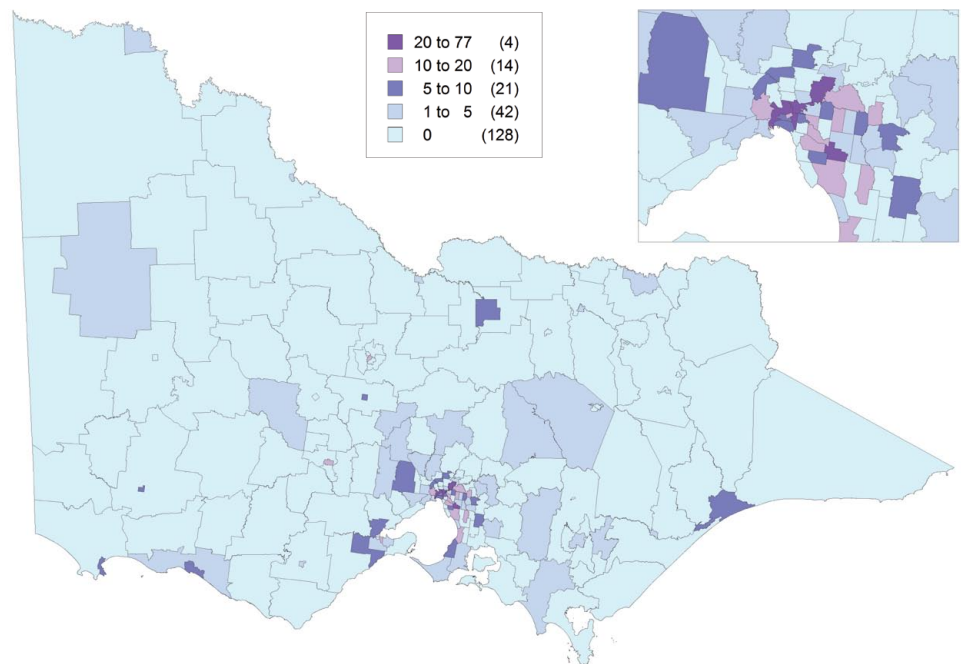
Figure 1: Gender and location of dietitians



1.3 Location by Statistical Local Area

The Census collects data on the main work location only for the week prior to the Census. Note that this data relates to numbers of dietitians (head count) rather than hours worked (full time equivalent). Analysis of data at Statistical Local Area level indicates that dietitians were concentrated in inner Melbourne (15.1%), inner and middle Melbourne suburbs (particularly those near hospitals) and regional centres (Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat). There were 128 Statistical Local Areas which no dietitian had nominated as their main work location in the week prior to the Census.

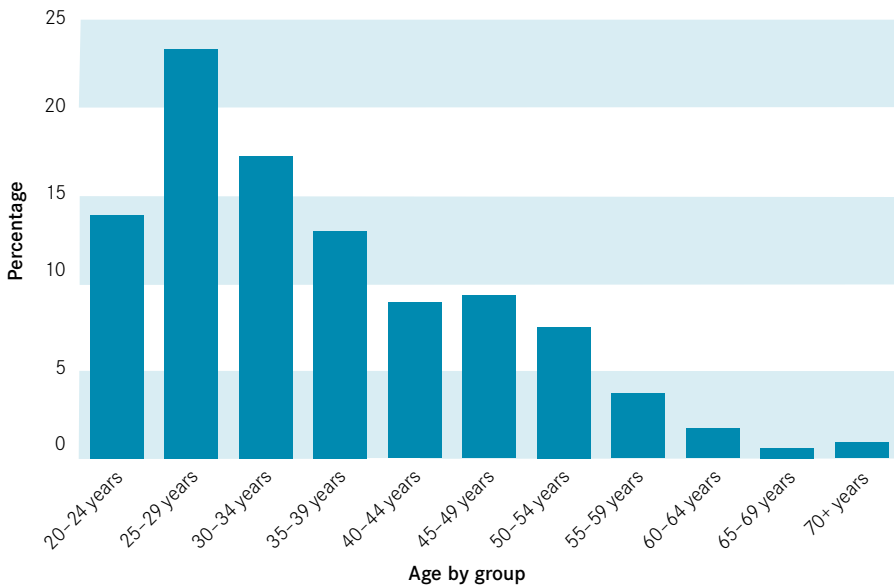
Figure 2: Number of dietitians by statistical local area



1.4 Age breakdown

Dietetics has a relatively young age structure with 70.3% indicating that they were aged less than 40 years of age. Over one third (37.3%) were aged less than 30 years of age.

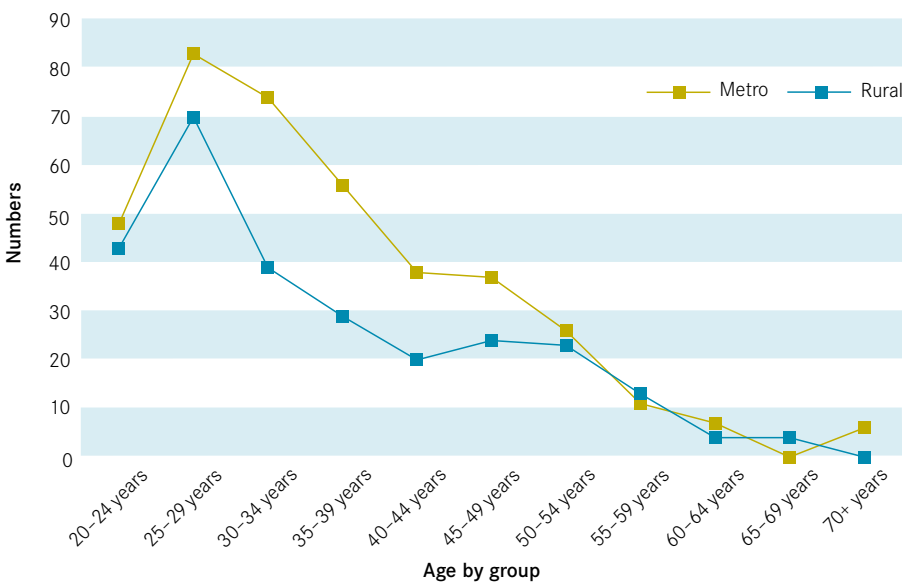
Figure 3: Age profile of dietitians



1.5 Age and location

At all age groups below 55 to 59 years, there are higher numbers of dietitians in metropolitan than rural areas. The difference is greatest between ages 30 and 44, when approximately two thirds of dietitians work in metropolitan areas.

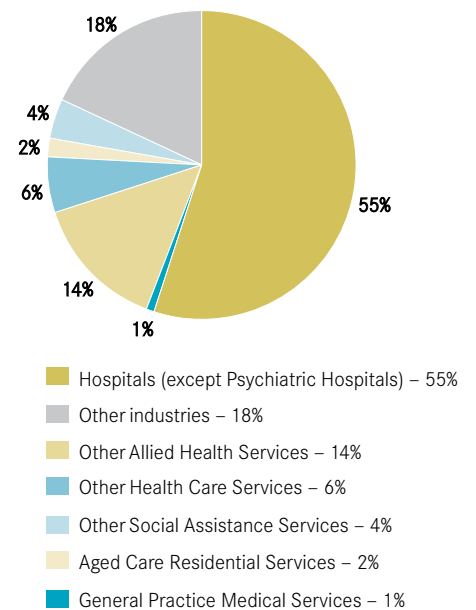
Figure 4: Age and location of dietitians



1.6 Industry of employment

The definitions for industry of employment are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC). This Classification does not include a separate category for dietitian service; this is grouped under *other allied health services*. Over half (55%) of dietitians were employed in *hospitals (other than psychiatric hospitals)* and 14% in *other allied health services*. This latter category would include those employed in private practice. About 18% were employed in *other industries*, that is industries which are not related to health care or social assistance.

Figure 5: Industry profile of dietitians



1.7 Sector of employment

Overall 53.4% of dietitians were employed in the government sector and 46.6% in the non-government sector. Of those employed in hospitals, 84.4% were employed in the Government sector. Major employers in the non-government sector were *other allied health services* with 91.6% in the non-Government sector and *aged care residential services* with 66.6% in the non-government sector.

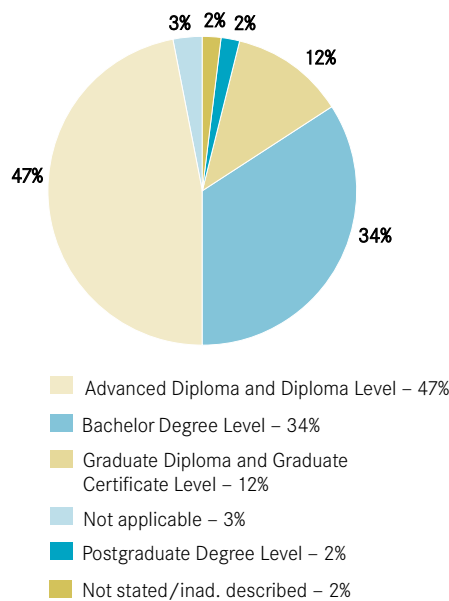
1.8 Field and level of qualification

Of the total respondents, 81% indicated that they had qualifications in nutrition and dietetics, while 13% had qualifications in other fields, including small numbers in each of general medicine, naturopathy, complementary therapies, health promotion and occupational health and safety. A small proportion of the respondents (3%) indicated that they did not have tertiary qualifications.

With respect to the highest level of education attained, 47% indicated advanced diploma/diploma, 34% indicated bachelor degree, 13% indicated graduate diploma/certificate and 2% indicated postgraduate degree.

Of the 1662 persons who indicated that they had qualifications as a dietitian, 74% were employed, 22.3% were not in the labour force, 1.9% were unemployed and 1.8% did not state a labour force status. Of those who were employed, only 44% were working as dietitians, 48% were working in a non-human services occupation and the remaining 8% were working in small numbers in a range of human services occupations.

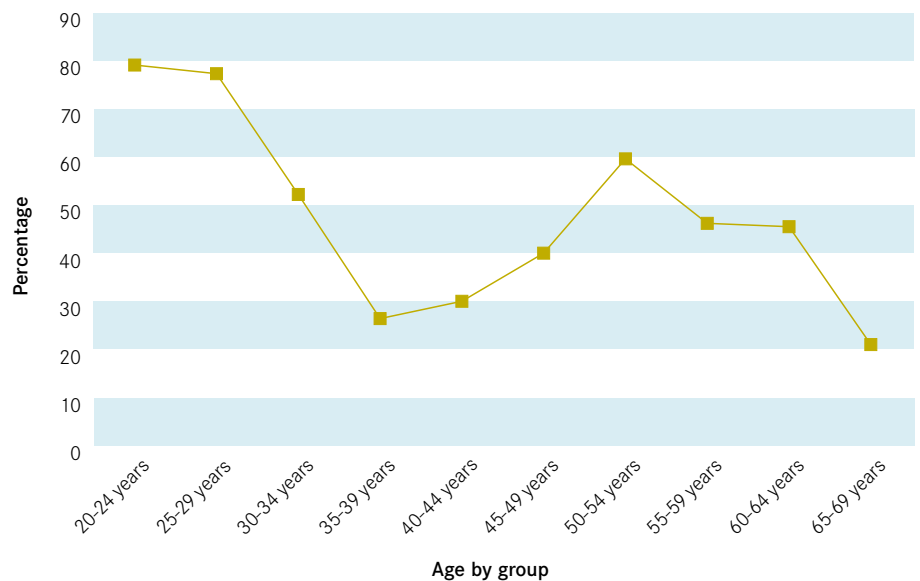
Figure 6: Level of qualifications of dietitians



1.9 Age and hours worked

The mean hours worked by persons describing themselves as dietitians in the week prior to the Census was 32 hours, and 55% indicated that they worked 35 or more hours per week. However, the number of hours worked varied considerably with age, with 79.1% of 20-24 year olds and 77.3% of 25-29 year olds working 35 or more hours per week, which decreased to 26.4% of 35-39 year olds, increasing again to 59.6% of 50-54 year olds. As dietetics is a female dominated occupation, this pattern is likely to be related to child rearing.

Figure 7: Age and percentage of dietitians working 35 hours or more



1.10 Gross weekly income

The Census question regarding income asks respondents to nominate one of 12 categories which indicates their weekly income before taxation or other deductions. The largest proportion of dietitians (31%) received \$1,000 to \$1,299 per week, which is equivalent to \$52,000 to \$67,599 per year. Only 2% indicated that their income was in the highest income category, or \$104,000 or more per year.

1.11 Change over time

In 2006, 662 persons described themselves as a dietitian compared with 381 in 1996. This is an increase of 74%. The proportion of dietitians who are male has remained fairly stable, at 5.8% in 1996 and 6.9% in 2006.

The numbers of dietitians has increased between 1996 and 2006 for all age groups except the 40-44 year age group, which decreased slightly from 60 to 58. Growth in the younger age groups was particularly strong, with a 225% increase in the 20-24 age group, 95% in the 25-29 age group and 88% in the 30-34 age group.

Figure 8: Gross weekly income of dietitians

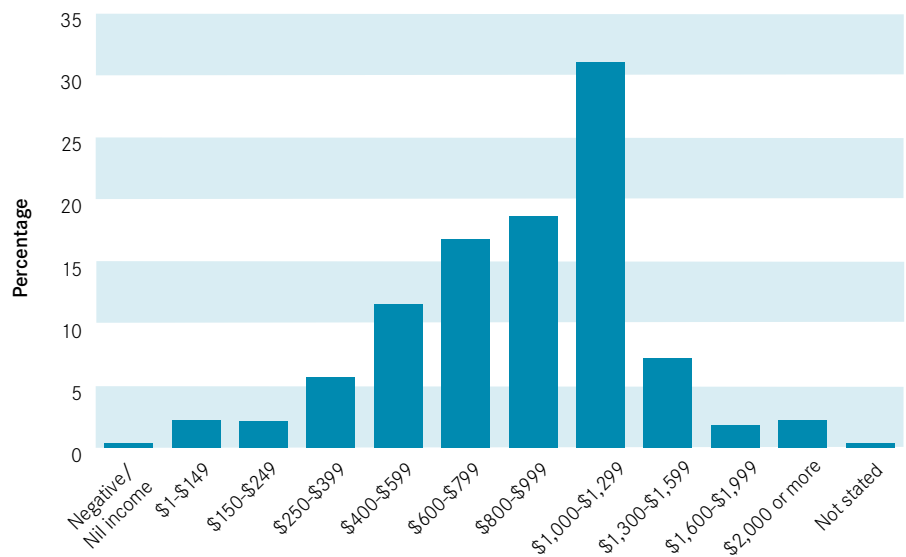
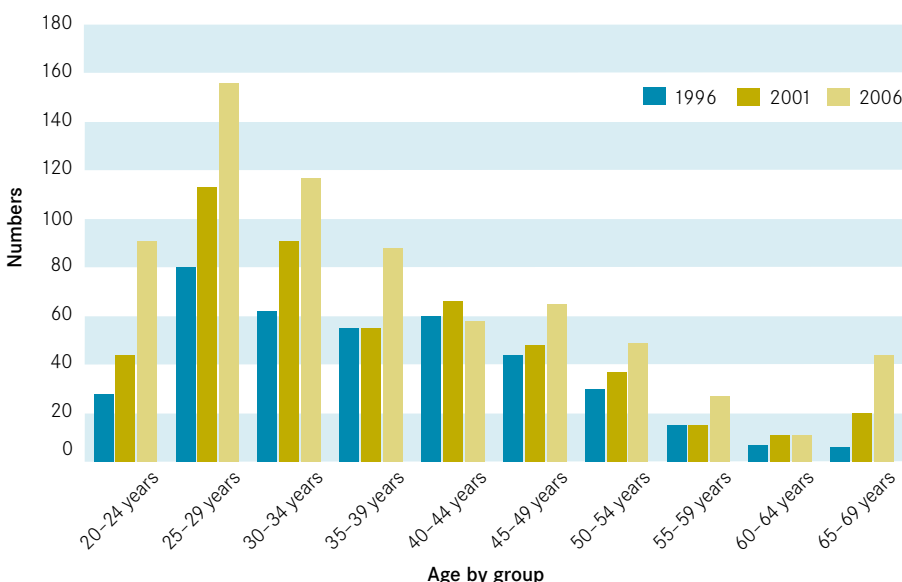


Figure 9: Number and gender of dietitians 1996 to 2006



Future 10: Age profile of dietitians 1996 to 2006



Summary

The Census data indicates that dietetics is an occupation which has strongly grown in numbers since 1996. The occupation has a relatively young age structure, and therefore has a high number of new recruits to replace those who are likely to retire from the occupation. As dietetics is a female dominated profession, with the proportion working 35 hours plus decreasing significantly during the late 30s and 40s, before increasing again during the 50s.

Prepared by Service and Workforce Planning Branch.
Published by Victorian Government Department of Human Services Melbourne Victoria.
October 2008
© Copyright State of Victoria, Department of Human Services, 2008
Authorised by the State Government of Victoria, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.