

# Speech pathologists

## Profile using data from Census 2006

### 1.1 Introduction

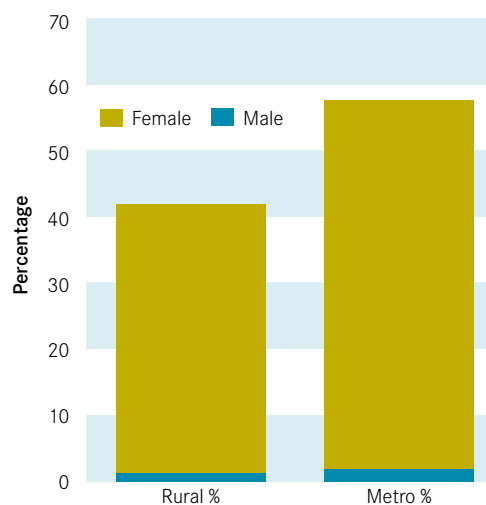
This profile of speech pathologists was developed using data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. According to the Australian and New Zealand Classification of Occupations (ANZCO), speech pathologists assess and treat people with communication disorders, such as speech, language, voice, fluency and literacy difficulties, and people who have physical problems with eating or swallowing.

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

Speech pathology is a female dominated profession. Of the 1051 persons who described themselves on their 2006 Census form as a speech pathologist, 1018 (96.9%) were female and 33 (3.1%) were male. Of the total speech pathologists, 58% worked in metropolitan locations and 42% worked in rural locations. A slightly higher proportion of females (42%) than males (39%) worked in rural locations. However, as previously mentioned the number of males is very small.

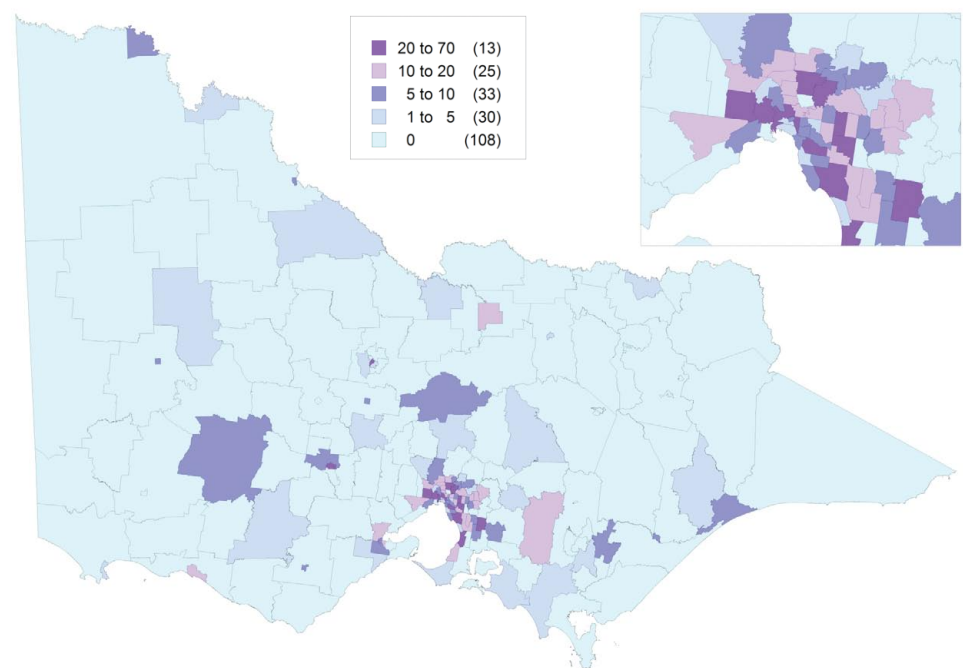
Figure 1: Gender and location of speech pathologist



### 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 head count rather than full time equivalent. Analysis of data at Statistical Local Area level indicates that speech pathologists were concentrated in inner Melbourne (6.5%), inner and middle Melbourne suburbs and regional centres (Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat). There were 98 Statistical Local Areas which no speech pathologist had nominated as their main work location in the week prior to the Census.

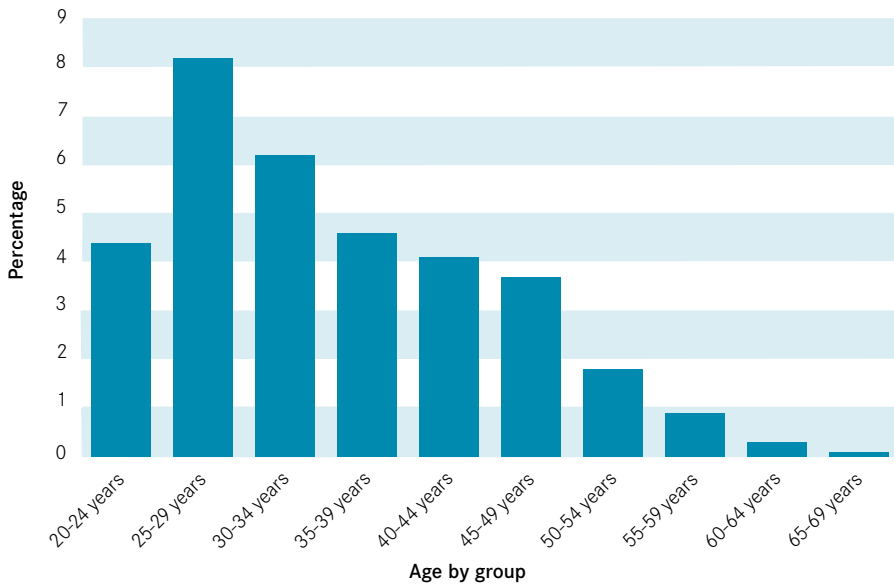
Figure 2: Number of speech pathologist by statistical local area



### 1.4 Age breakdown

Speech pathology has a relatively young age structure with 67.8% indicating that they were aged less than 40 years of age. Over one third (36.4%) were aged less than 30 years of age.

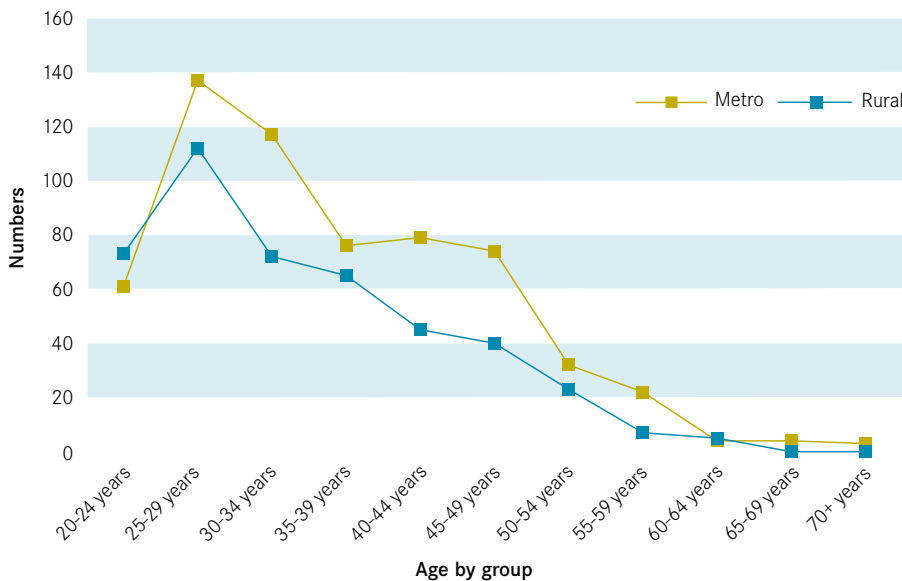
Figure 3: Age profile of speech pathologists



### 1.5 Age and location

In the youngest age group of 20 to 24 years, there are more speech pathologists in rural than metro areas. At all other age groups below 60 to 64 years, there are higher numbers of speech pathologists in metropolitan than rural areas.

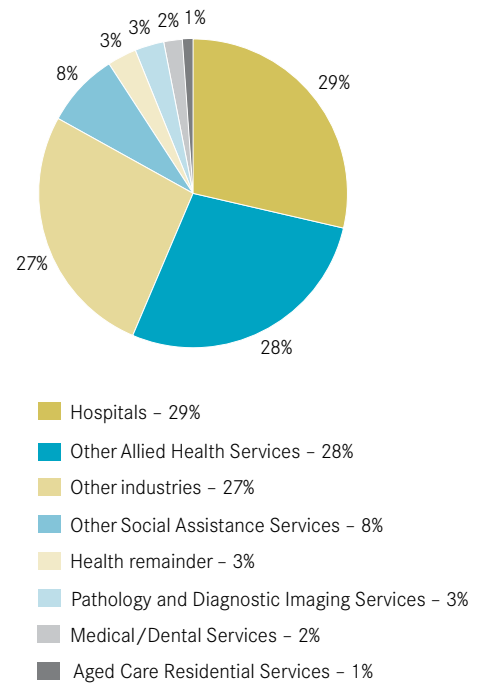
Figure 4: Age and location of speech pathologist



### 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 speech pathologist service; this is grouped under *other allied health services*, and 28% were employed in this category. Significant percentages of speech pathologists were employed in *hospitals* (29%) and other (non-health or social assistance) industries.

Figure 5: Industry profile of speech pathologist



### 1.7 Sector of employment

Overall 44.7% of speech pathologists were employed in the government sector and 55.3% in the non-government sector. Of those employed in hospitals, 87.6% were employed in the government sector. The major employer in the non-government sector was other allied health services with 95% in the non-Government sector.

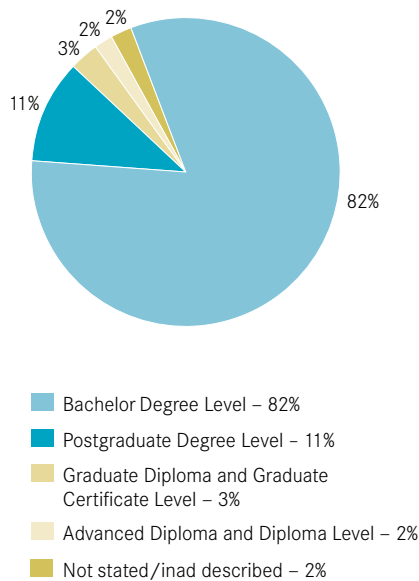
### 1.8 Field and level of qualification

Of the total respondents, 90.4% indicated that they had qualifications in speech pathology, while 8.16% had qualifications in other fields, and 1.5% did not state or inadequately described their qualifications.

With respect to the highest level of education attained, the majority (82%) had a bachelor level degree, and a further 11% had a postgraduate degree.

Of the 1445 persons who indicated that they had qualifications as a speech pathologist, 66% were working as speech pathologists, 5% were working in other human services professions, 15% were not in the workforce, and 14% were working but not in a human services occupation. Those not working in human services were employed in very small numbers in a broad range of occupations.

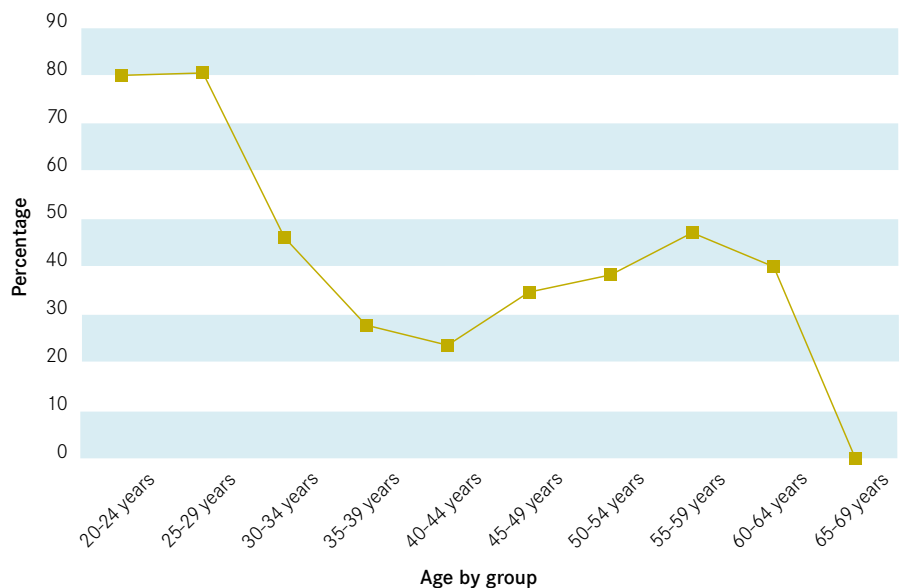
Figure 6: Level of qualifications of speech pathologist



### 1.9 Age and hours worked

The mean hours worked by persons describing themselves as speech pathologists in the week prior to the Census was 30 hours, and 52% indicated that they worked 35 or more hours per week. However, the number of hours worked varied considerably with age, with 80% of those under 30 years working 35 or more hours per week, which rapidly decreased to 46.1% of 30 to 34 year olds, 27.8% of 35-39 year olds, and 23.6% of 40-44 year olds. This gradually increased to 47.1% of 55-59 year olds. As speech pathology is a female dominated occupation, this pattern is likely to be related to child rearing.

Figure 7: Age and percentage of speech pathologist 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 equal largest proportions of speech pathologists (27%) received \$800 to \$999 per week (which is equivalent to \$41,600 to \$51,999) and \$1,000 to \$1,299 per week (which is equivalent to \$52,000 to \$67,599 per year). Less than 1% indicated that their income was in the highest income category, or \$104,000 or more per year.

### 1.11 Change over time

In 2006, 1051 persons described themselves as a speech pathologist compared with 620 in 1996. This is an increase of 70%. The proportion of speech pathologists that are male has decreased slightly, from 4% in 1996 to 3.1% in 2006.

The numbers of speech pathologists have increased between 1996 and 2006 for all age groups up to 65 years.

Figure 8: Gross weekly income of speech pathologist

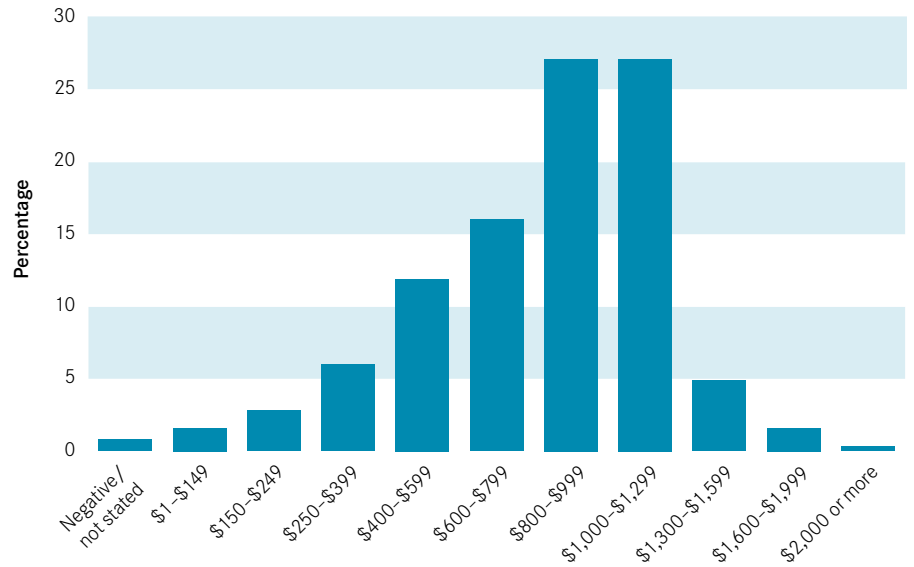


Figure 9: Number and gender of speech pathologist 1996 to 2006

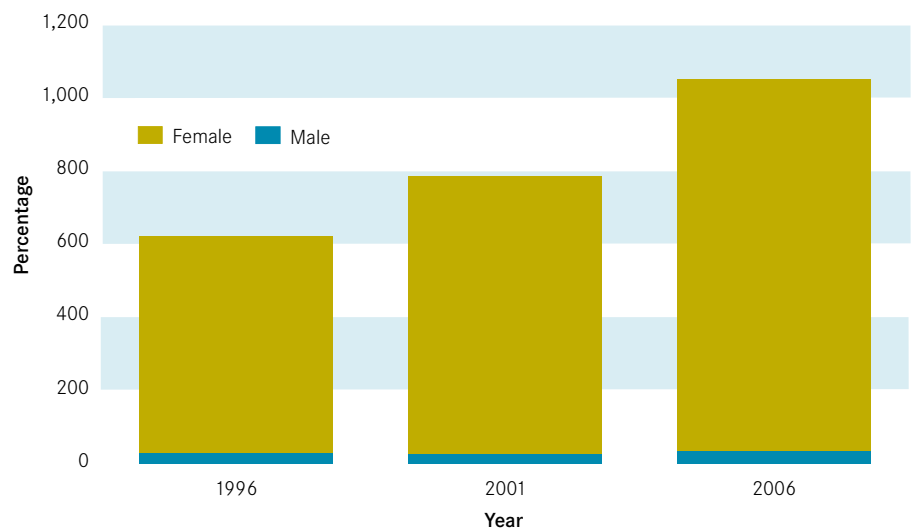
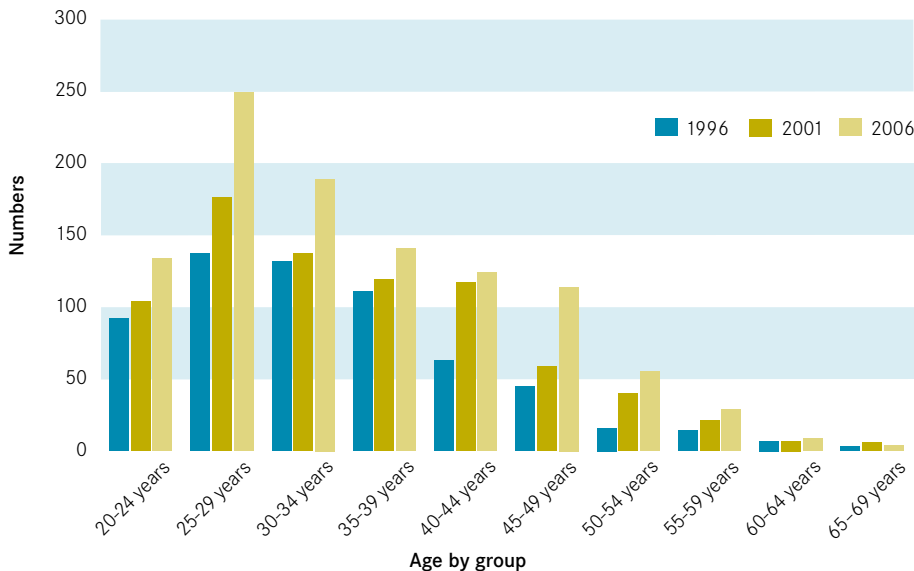


Figure 10: Age profile of speech pathologist 1996 to 2006



### Summary

The Census data indicates that speech pathology is an occupation which has grown strongly 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 speech pathology 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.