

# Main findings

- In 2001 the total number of registrations and enrolments in Australia was 268,873, increasing from 265,076 in 1999, a 1.4% increase (Table A.1).
- Excluding multiple registrations, there were 256,938 registered and enrolled nurses in Australia in 1999.
- This was a slight increase (0.5%) since 1997, but was still lower than in 1993 (270,720). Against the overall decrease since 1993:
  - the number of nurses actually employed in nursing increased from 216,696 to 224,595, a 3.6% increase
  - the number of employed registered nurses increased from 164,252 to 179,177, a 9.1% increase
  - the number of employed enrolled nurses fell from 52,444 to 45,418, a 13.4% decrease (Tables C.1, C.35, C.36).
- The overall increase in the number of employed nurses was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of nurses working part time, from 46.8% in 1993 to 53.8% in 1999, and a decrease in average hours worked per week from 32.2 hours to 30.3 hours (Table 17). This resulted in a fall in the national supply of nurses from 1,074 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses per 100,000 population in 1993 to 1,018 in 1999.
- Across jurisdictions, the supply ranged from 944 FTE nurses per 100,000 population in Queensland to 1,086 in Victoria (Table C.5).
- Across geographic locations, the supply ranged from 731 FTE nurses per 100,000 population in other rural areas to 1,553 in large rural centres (Table C.6).
- There was an overall increase in workload in the hospital setting (as measured by the number of hospital separations). According to Australian hospital statistics, the number of separations for public and private acute and psychiatric hospitals increased from 5.3 million in 1995–96 to 6.0 million in 1999–2000 (Tables D.3, E.1–E2).
- The nursing workforce is ageing, and the number of new entrants is not likely to increase over the next few years:
  - Between 1993 and 1999, the average age of nurses rose from 39.5 years to 41.6 years
  - The number of Australian students completing basic nursing studies decreased from 6,397 in 1993 to 4,465 in 2000
  - The number of Australian students commencing basic nursing studies decreased from 8,010 in 1993 to 7,195 in 2000 (Tables C.37, F.1, F.2).
- The number of male nurses increased from 16,096 in 1995 to 17,835 in 1999, a 17.7% increase (Table C.35).
- Between 1993 and 1999, there was an increase in the number of employed nurses in all jurisdictions except South Australia and Tasmania (Table 5).
- The number of clinical nurses in the field of geriatrics/gerontology (aged care) decreased markedly between 1994 and 1999, from 41,334 to 33,335, a 19.4% decrease (Table 27).