General Surgery is a specialty that focuses on the surgical treatment of abdominal organs, skin and soft tissue, and endocrine organs. General Surgery also includes breast surgery, transplantation, emergency and trauma surgery, head and neck surgery, vascular surgery, and surgical oncology.

In the 2010 calendar year, there were 495 General Surgeons who primarily worked within NSW. This workforce had the following characteristics:

**Average Age:** 53.9 years

**Females:** 10% of the workforce

**Average Hours:** General Surgeons worked an average 41.7 hours per week (of a standard 40 hour week)

**Over 50s:** Approximately 56% were aged 50 years and over and 38% of the workforce were older than 60 years

Source: AIHW (2012) 2010 Medical Workforce Profile extracts for NSW (unpublished data)

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**Trainees and New Fellows**

**SET Trainees (SET)**: 132 in 2012 in NSW with an average of 135 SETs between 2008 and 2012

**Females:** Female SETs in NSW have increased from 33 in 2008 to 54 in 2012 (41% of total)

**New Fellows:** An average of 18 per year in NSW from 2008-2011 (18.8% female)

**Medical Specialty College:** Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (http://www.surgeons.org/)

**HETI Supported Training:** Not part of Health Education and Training Institute Training Networks (www.heti.nsw.gov.au)

Source: Royal Australasian College of Surgeons * SET – Surgical Education and Training (SET) program

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**Retirement Intentions in NSW**

**1-2 Years:** 5.8% of General Surgeons intend to retire within 1-2 years

**3-5 Years:** 17.7% of General Surgeons intend to retire within the next 3-5 years

**6-9 Years:** 4.2% of General Surgeons intend to retire within the next 6-9 years

Source: AIHW (2012) 2010 Medical Workforce Profile extracts (unpublished data)
Supply and Distribution

Distribution: Some 40% of the Sydney metropolitan workforce is over 60 years of age compared to 33% in non-metropolitan Sydney.

Rural & Regional: General Surgeons in rural and regional Local Health Districts (LHDs) are generally small and highly at risk through either retirement or unexpected employment changes.

The Future in NSW – Workforce Planning to 2025

Estimated Demand Growth: Between 2% to 2.6% to 2025
Estimated Workforce Size: In 2025, between 678 to 710 Full Time Equivalents
Additional Fellows: All demand scenarios require additional trainees as of 2014
Range: Up to 10 additional new trainees per annum

Workforce Planning Priority and Risk Rating

Ageing: The risk associated with the workforce aged over 60 and 70.
Small Workforce Size: The risk associated with the sustainability of small workforces.
Retirement Intentions: The risk associated with the retirement intentions of the current workforce.
New Fellow Requirements: The risk associated with the requirement to recruit additional trainees, based on workforce planning to 2025.
Training Supervision: The risk associated with the availability of the existing workforce to provide supervision to new trainees.

Future Workforce Considerations

Addressing rural and regional workforce maldistribution