

Profile of the Nursing Workforce in NSW, 2005

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Profile of the Nursing Workforce in NSW, 2005

ISBN 978-1-74187-189-0

STATE HEALTH PUBLICATION No. (WDL) 070199

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1

INTRODUCTION

The annual nursing workforce survey

(a) Overview

Each year a work force survey questionnaire is forwarded to nurses renewing their registration in NSW. Information from the survey contributes to constructive discussion of nursing workforce planning issues for the NSW Health Department, Commonwealth Government, Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales, Area Health Services, professional colleges and associations, nursing faculties in tertiary institutions and other interested bodies.

The response rate for registered nurses was 74.8 % in 2005; and for enrolled nurses was lower, at 64.6%; resulting in a combined response rate of 73.1%. The definition of response rate for this profile is the same as the definition used in profiles from 2000 onwards where a review was undertaken with staff of the Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales to ensure that all nurses that should be included in the survey population were in fact included. (see Sections below on Survey Coverage and Response Rate to Workforce Survey to explain calculation of response rate). The continued support of the Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales, professional organisations and nurses registered and enrolled in New South Wales in completing the survey, is appreciated.

(b) Availability of survey information

Strict procedures are followed to ensure the privacy of individual nurses who respond to the survey. An agreement between NSW Health Department and the Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales prevents access to identifying data. Survey information will not be made available in any format that enables the identification of individual respondents.

Nurses registered or enrolled in New South Wales

In 2005, there were 98,643 nurses either registered or enrolled with the Nurses Registration Board of NSW over the calendar year, an estimated decrease of 1,729 from the 100,372 nurses either registered or enrolled in 2004. This includes 82,053 registered nurses on the Register of the Nurses Registration Board of NSW and 16,590 financial enrolled nurses on the Roll of the Nurses Registration Board of NSW. The decline was accounted for by registered nurse numbers (1,981) compared to a small increase in enrolled nurse numbers (252). However, due to the delayed extraction of the 2004 annual data the 2004 registration numbers may have been inflated.

The Appendix provides a detailed description of response rate for registered nurses and enrolled nurses separately.

Response rate

Table 1.1: Response Rate to Annual Nursing Workforce Survey, 2002 - 2005

	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
	2002		2003		2004		2005	
Formal response rate								
<i>Survey respondents</i> ¹	69,910		71,005		69,163		64,146	
<i>Total renewals</i> ²	83,157	84.1%	84,183	84.3%	89,474	77.3%	87,720	73.1%
<i>Unusable survey forms</i>	2,110		2,891		4,883		5,374	
<i>No form returned</i> ³	11,137		10,287		15,428		18,200	

- Notes:**
- 1 A "survey respondent" is a renewal as defined below who provides information to the question on work status, or whose work status can be derived from other data.
 - 2 A renewal is defined to include a person who paid their registration fee on time, who was a renewal but was late in paying the renewal fee, and was therefore de-registered and then restored (ie technical restoration), or who was sent a survey form and returned a form or was still financial at the end of the relevant year while having no financial status (technical renewal).
 - 3 This count is for those nurses who should have returned a form, based on their registration status

The response rate to the 2005 Nursing Workforce Annual Survey for all nurses was 73.1%, lower than in the previous years shown above. The response rate to the 2005 Nursing Workforce Annual Survey for registered nurses was 74.8% and for enrolled nurses was 64.6% (see Appendix). The main change to the survey process was the introduction of a revised survey form for both 2004 and 2005 designed in conjunction with other States and Territories, together with AIHW. These survey forms have been more complex in design and this has most likely resulted in the reduced response rate.

Work Status

There were 48,339 working renewal nurse survey respondents in 2005.

Working renewals are those respondents who:

- Were financially registered or enrolled and defined as a renewal
- Returned a labourforce survey indicating their work status or provided sufficient data for a status of working in NSW to be derived; and
- Indicated that their work status was one of the following three categories:
 - Working in nursing only in NSW
 - Working in nursing mainly in NSW, but also in other states
 - Working in nursing in NSW, but on extended leave (see Table 1.3a)

Table 1.2: Work status of Nurse Workforce Survey respondents¹, NSW, 2005

Work Status	No.		%		No.		%		%	
	Unknown sex		Female		Male		Total		Female	
Working in nursing										
Only in NSW	678	73.6%	42,201	72.5%	3,773	74.9%	46,652	72.7%	91.8%	
Mainly in NSW, but also in other states	2	0.2%	213	0.4%	14	0.3%	229	0.4%	93.8%	
Mainly in other states, but also in NSW, or only in other States	32	3.5%	2,468	4.2%	252	5.0%	2,752	4.3%	90.7%	
Working overseas	8	0.9%	847	1.5%	91	1.8%	946	1.5%	90.3%	
Working in NSW but currently on leave	23	2.5%	1,451	2.5%	44	0.9%	1,518	2.4%	97.1%	
Not Working in/ practicing in nursing										
Currently not working	75	8.1%	5,244	9.0%	227	4.5%	5,546	8.6%	95.9%	
Currently working, not in nursing	103	11.2%	5,763	9.9%	637	12.6%	6,503	10.1%	90.0%	
Total	921	100.0%	58,187	100.0%	5,038	100.0%	64,146	100.0%	92.0%	
Workforce in NSW	703		43,865		3,831		48,399		92.0%	
% participation	76.3%		75.4%		76.0%		75.5%			

- Notes:
1. There were 69,631 forms from nurses renewing or re-enrolling, of whom 4,865 did not reply to the question on working status, and did not provide a NSW postcode for place of work. Another 620 who provided forms did not give adequate information on work status category to be allocated to a specific work status category.
 2. There were 703 nurses who did not provide information on the survey form on sex, and for whom sex was not available from the Board data.

Estimating Workforce Size

The Appendix describes in detail the method used in this publication for estimating workforce size. Fig 1.1 and Table 1.3 below shows trends in the estimated size of the nursing workforce for NSW between 2000 and 2005.

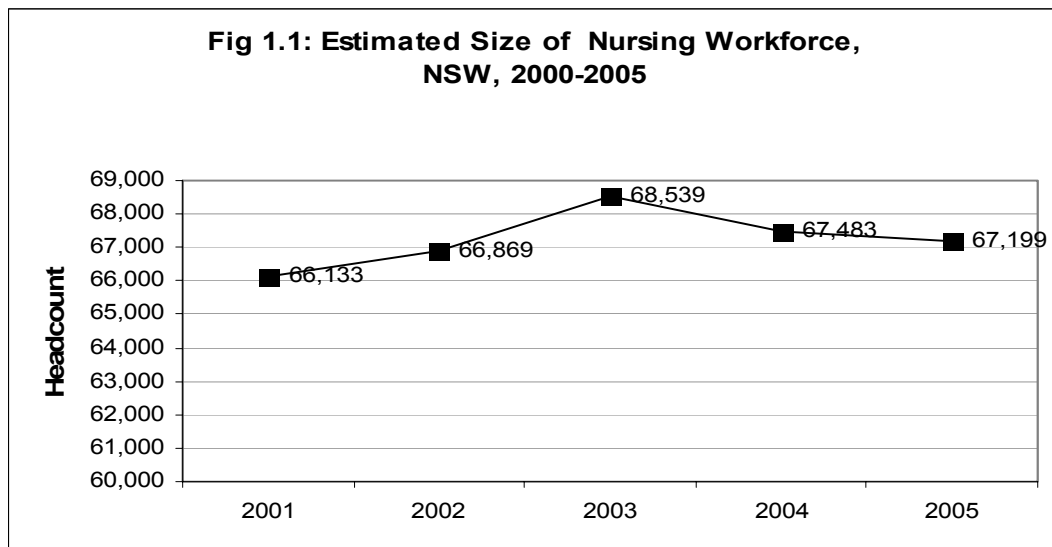


Fig 1.1 indicates that while there was growth in the estimated size of the nursing workforce in NSW between 2000 and 2003, that there has been a decline between 2003 and 2005.

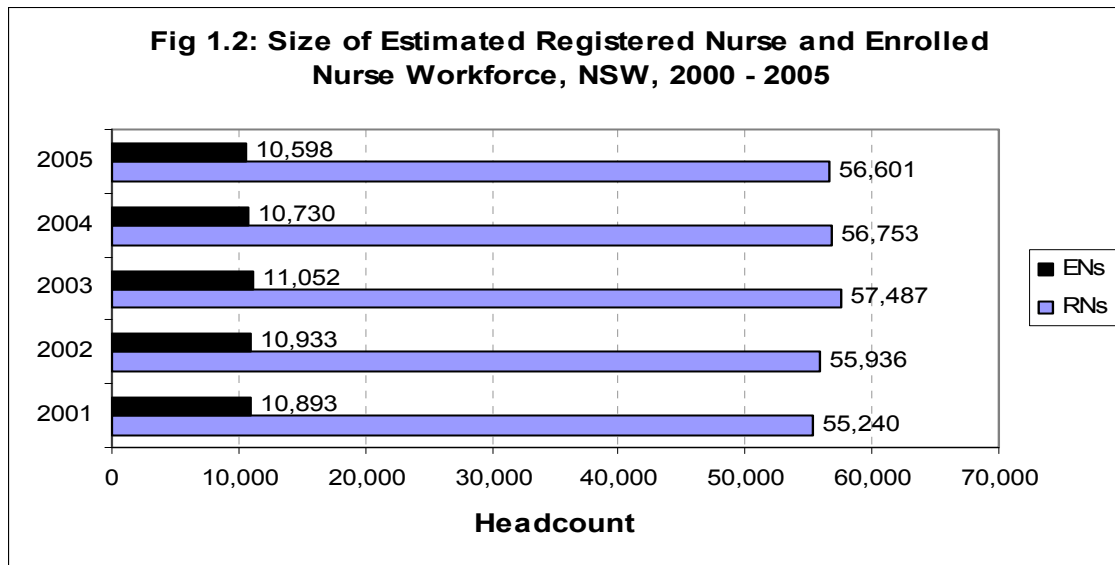
Table 1.3: Estimating the Size of the Nursing Workforce, NSW, 2001 - 2005

	<u>No.</u> <u>2001</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>2002</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>2003</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>2005</u>
Size of Workforce (Unadjusted) ¹	52,565	53,741	55,342	53,539	48,399
Total respondents to work status	67,825	69,910	71,005	69,040	64,146
% working	77.5%	76.9%	77.9%	77.5%	75.5%
No. of renewals	81,569	83,157	84,183	89,474	87,720
1) estimated workforce from renewals	59,420	60,227	61,234	61,140	60,315
renewals workforce as % of all renewals	72.8%	72.4%	72.7%	68.3%	68.8%
No. of new registrants	4,974	4,922	6,122	5,494	5,858
2) estimated workforce from new registrations	4,265	4,141	5,229	4,573	5,022
% working	85.7%	84.1%	85.4%	83.2%	85.7%
No. of restorations	6,250	6,188	6,593	6,293	6,094
3) estimated workforce from restorations	2,448	2,501	2,076	1,770	1,862
% working	39.2%	40.4%	31.5%	28.1%	30.6%
Total Estimated Workforce (1+2+3)	66,133	66,869	68,539	67,483	67,199

- Notes:**
- 1 The size of the workforce is based on respondents classified as renewals, technical restorations and technical renewals who answered the work status question (see Section on work status)
 - 2 The number of renewals includes renewals, technical restorations and technical renewals
 - 3 The number of restorations includes only true restorations as shown in the Appendix
 - 4 The estimates of workforce participation for new registrants and restorations are indicative only for 2005 as data on workforce status is not available until the following year

Table 1.3 shows that the estimated nursing workforce was 66,133 in 2000, increasing to 67,199 in 2005, a growth of 1,066 nurses or 1.6%. The workforce grew by 1.1% between 2001 and 2002, by 2.5% between 2002 and 2003; and then showed a decline of 1.5% between 2003 and 2004 and 0.4% between 2004 and estimated 2005 workforce size.

Fig. 1.2 shows the change in estimated workforce size for registered nurses and enrolled nurses separately. Fig. 1.2 shows that the growth in the nursing workforce in total is principally due to a growth in registered nurse numbers over the period (1,361 in total, or 2.5%), compared to a small decline in enrolled nurse numbers overall (295 in total, or 2.7%).



Estimating Full-Time Equivalent Workforce (FTE)

The numbers of hours worked by registered and enrolled nurses on average per week for all jobs together excluding overtime hours can be converted to full-time equivalents (FTEs), which are a measure of the productive workforce. The total hours worked by nurses in each age and hours worked group are divided by 35 to calculate the FTE workforce, and again by 38. Thirty five hours is used as the measure of full time work based on labour force definitions developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, while 38 hours is the award rate for nurses working in New South Wales.

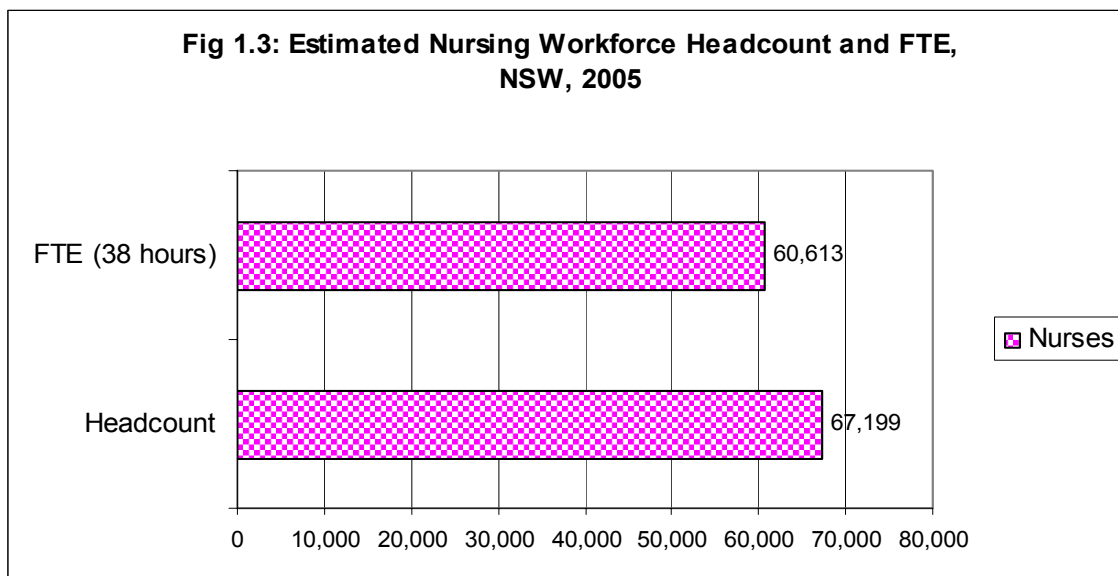
A ratio of FTEs to the total headcount workforce can then be calculated, to determine the relative productivity of the workforce. Table 1.4 provides a comparison of estimated FTE for both survey data unadjusted for non response and then adjusted for response.

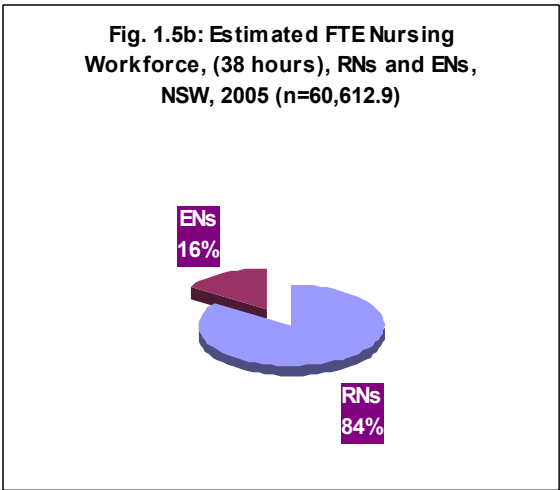
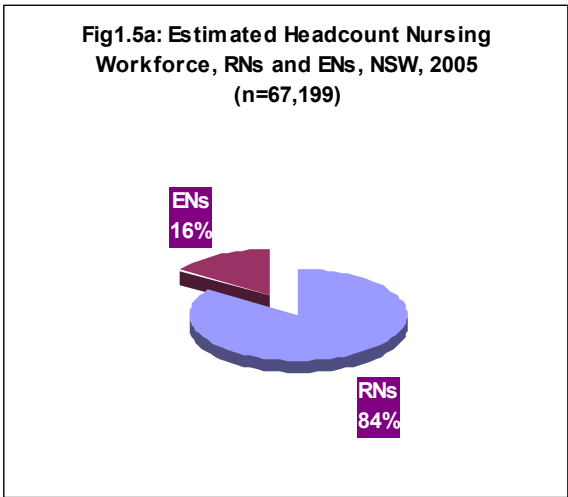
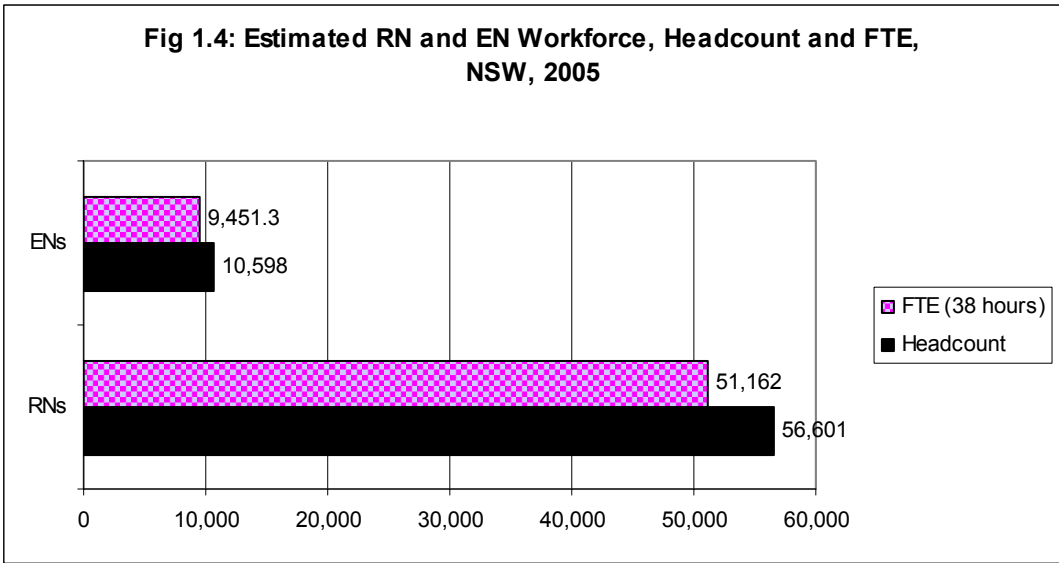
Table 1.4: Unadjusted and adjusted FTE workforce for registered nurses, enrolled nurses, total nurses in 2005

2005 data	Registered Nurses	Enrolled Nurses	Total Nurses
Unadjusted for non response			
Headcount	41,611	6,788	48,399
Headcount with hours	40,511	6,513	47,024
FTE (38 hours)	36,617.9	5,808.5	42,426.4
Ratio (38 hours)	0.9039	0.8918	0.9022
FTE (35 hours)	39,756.6	6,306.3	46,062.9
Ratio (35 hours)	0.9814	0.9683	0.9796
Adjusted for non response			
Estimated Headcount	56,601	10,598	67,199
Estimated FTE (38 hours)	51,161.6	9,451.3	60,612.9
Ratio (38 hours)	0.9039	0.8918	0.9020
Estimated FTE (35 hours)	55,548.2	10,262.0	65,810.2
Ratio (35 hours)	0.9814	0.9683	0.9793

Note: excludes overtime hours

Based on the above table, the estimated FTE workforce is 60,612.9 nurses, dividing hours worked per week in total (including paid and unpaid hours, excluding overtime hours) by 38. The estimated FTE workforce is 65,810.2 nurses, dividing hours worked per week in total (including paid and unpaid hours, excluding overtime hours) by 35. The graphs show the estimated headcount and FTE workforce for total nurses working in NSW, and then separately for RNs and ENs.





Registered nurse account for 84% and enrolled nurses 16% of both the estimated headcount and FTE combined nursing workforce.

2

NURSES WORKING IN NSW

Characteristics of nurses working in NSW in 2005:

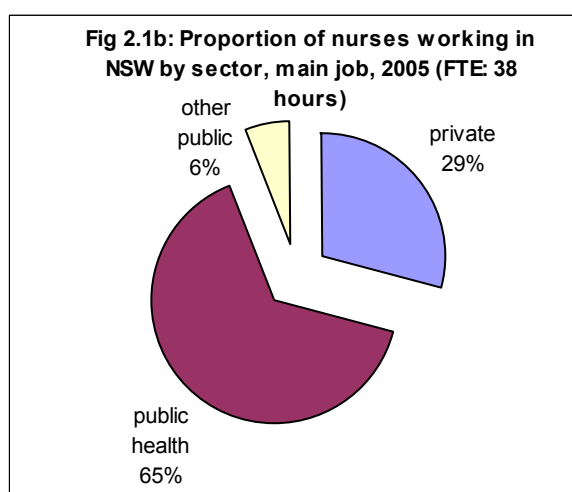
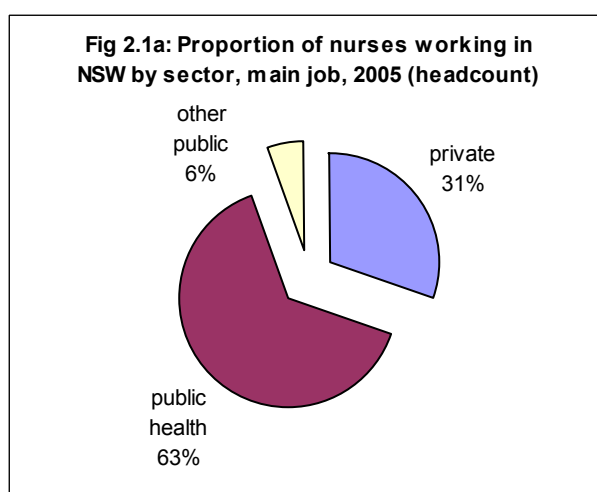
Size of the combined workforce:

- The combined nursing workforce consists of 48,399 nurses, unadjusted for non response and 67,199 nurses adjusted for non response, and 42,426.4 FTE nurses based on award conditions of 38 hours per week, unadjusted for non response and 60,612.9 FTE nurses adjusted for non response.

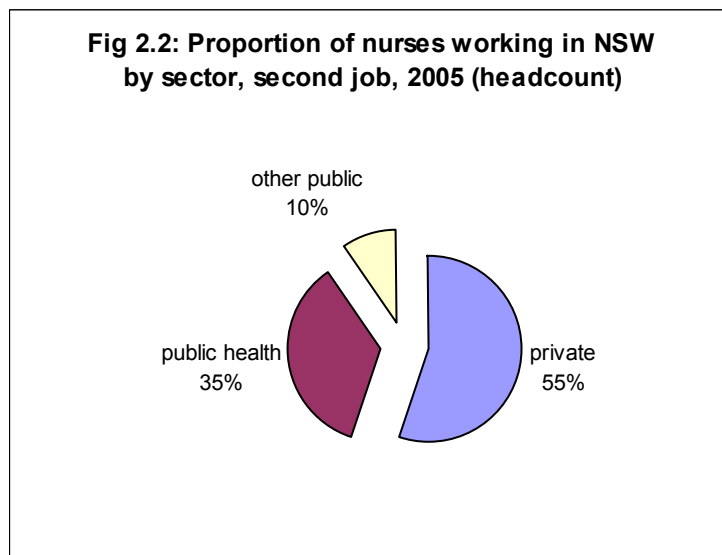
Age and sex of the workforce:

- The proportion of women in the nursing workforce (combined workforce of registered and enrolled nurses) is 92%, with males accounting for 8.0% of the workforce. Some 29.6% of the female workforce were aged under 40, while 35.1% of males were under forty years in 2005. Women are greater in numbers in all age groups, varying from 96.1% of all nurses in the 75 years and older year age group, to the lowest proportion of 90.1% for those 35 to 39 years.
- Some 30.0% of the workforce are aged under forty years, 35.9% are aged 40 to 49 years, 27.3% are aged 50 to 59 years, and 6.8% of the workforce are 60 years and older. This indicates a middle aged workforce overall, with the modal age range being 45 to 49 years for female, male and total nurses (ie the age range with the greatest number of working nurses).

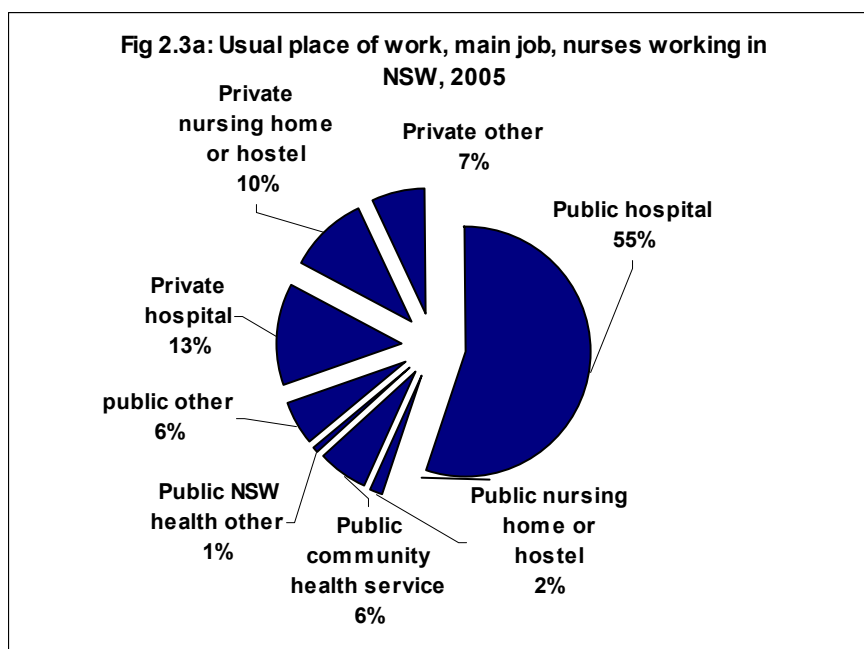
Usual place of work and employment category:



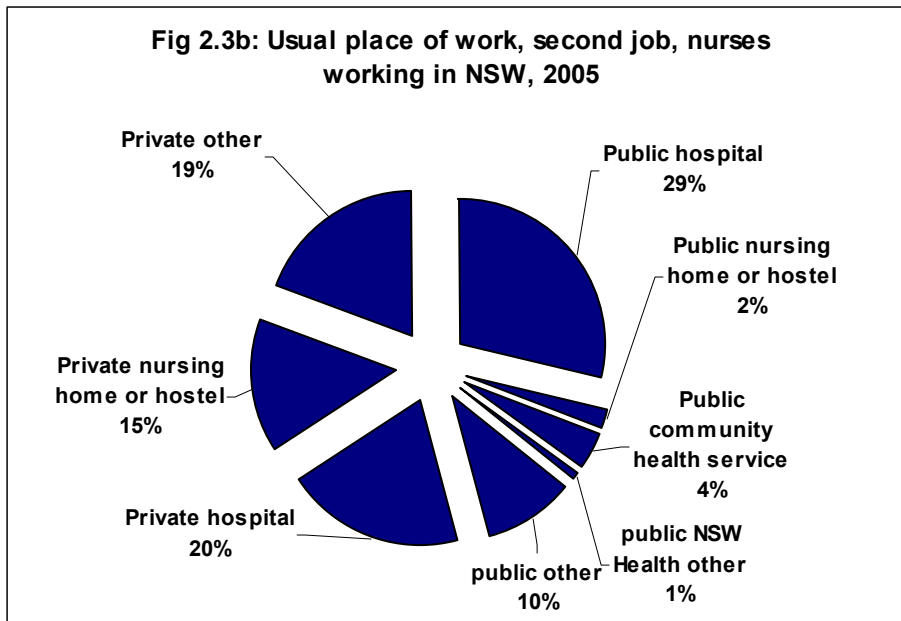
- The public health sector accounted for some 63%, the private sector 31% and the other public sector 6% (including tertiary education institutions, developmental disability facilities, other government departments) of the combined nursing workforce in their main job. The public sector increases to 65%, the private sector decreases to 29% and the other public sector remains at 6% in terms of the combined FTE (full – time equivalent) nursing workforce in a main job.



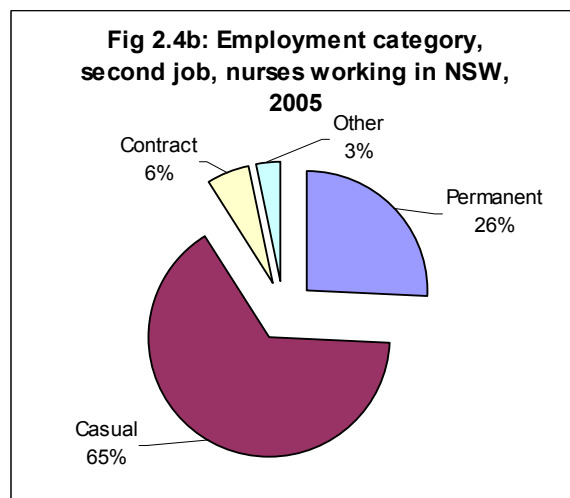
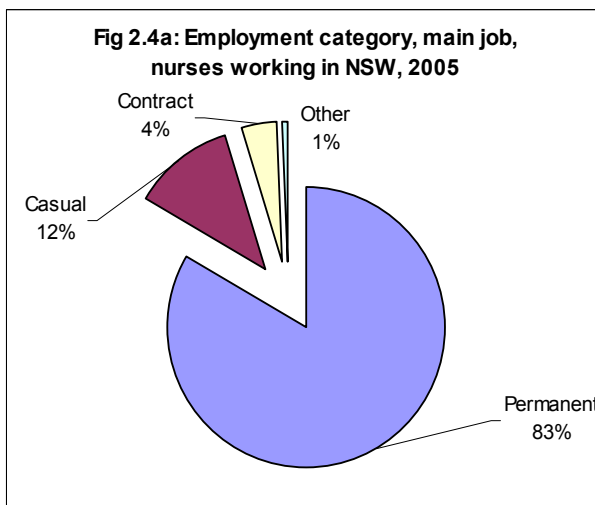
- The public health sector accounted for 35%, the private sector 55% and the other public sector 10% of the combined nursing workforce in their second job. In total, there were 4,416 nurses unadjusted for non response who reported being in a second job (9.4% of the total number of nurses in the workforce (NOTE: Estimated figure based on highest response as respondents are not directly asked if they have a second job).



- Public hospitals are the main employer of the combined nursing workforce in their main job (55% of all nurses) followed by private hospitals (13%), private aged care facilities (10%), other private services (7%), public community health services (6%) and other public sector services (6%).

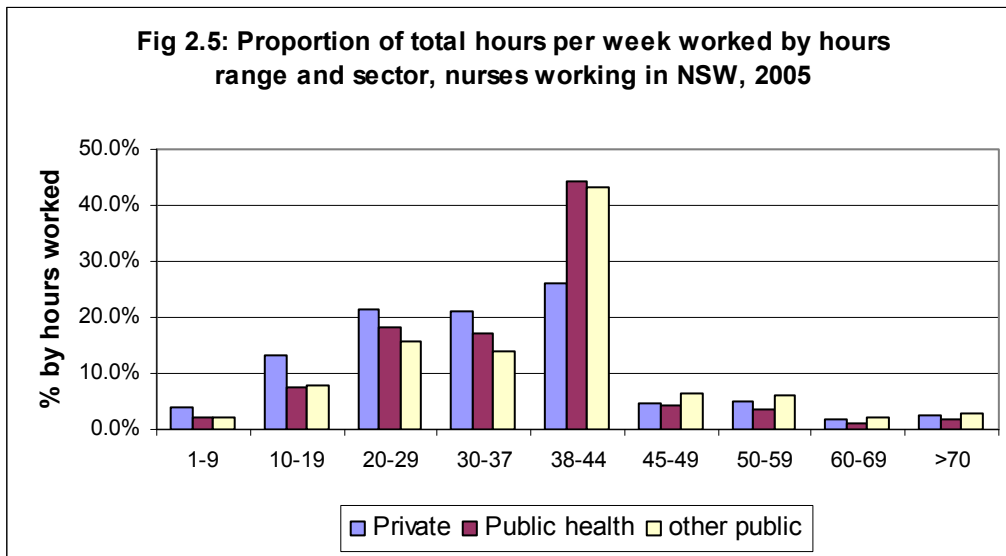


- Public hospitals are the main employer of the combined nursing workforce in their second job (29% of all nurses) followed by private hospitals (20%), other private services (19%), private aged care facilities (15%), other public sector services (10%) and public community health services (4%).



- Some 83% of nurses were permanent staff in their main job, 12 % casual, 4% on contract (temporary or fixed) and 1% self employed or other; while only 26% were permanent in their second job, 65% casual, 6% on contract and 3% self employed or other.

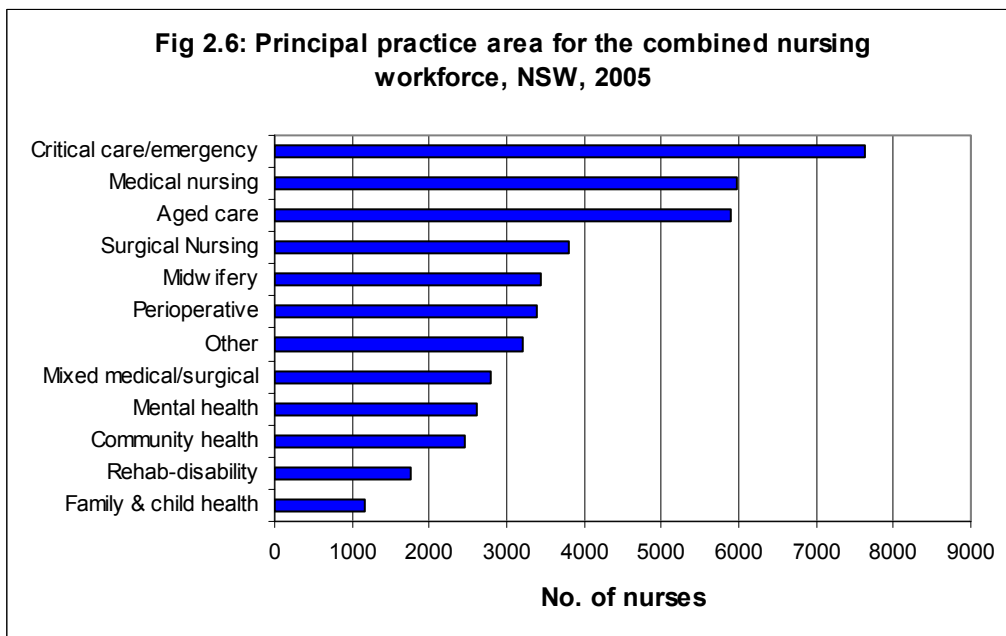
Hours worked per week:



Note: sector of main job

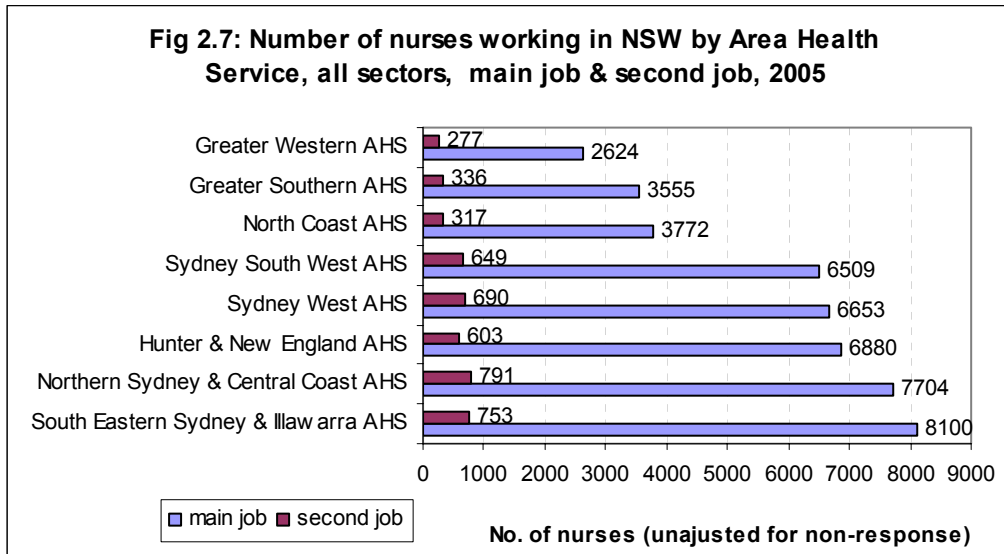
- **Based on 38 hours worked per week (excluding overtime):** Some 49.3% of nurses reported working part time in their **total job hours** (hours worked less than 38 hours per week). There was a significant difference by sector, with 60.1% of the nursing workforce working part-time in the private sector, 45% in the public health sector and 39.6% in the other public sector areas.

Principal area of nursing practice:



Critical care/emergency nursing employs the greatest proportion of the nursing workforce (17.3%) followed by medical nursing (13.5%) and aged care (13.3%) in their main job. It is difficult to compare to previous surveys, as the coding frame was significantly changed between 2003 and 2004, and again in 2005.

Work location:



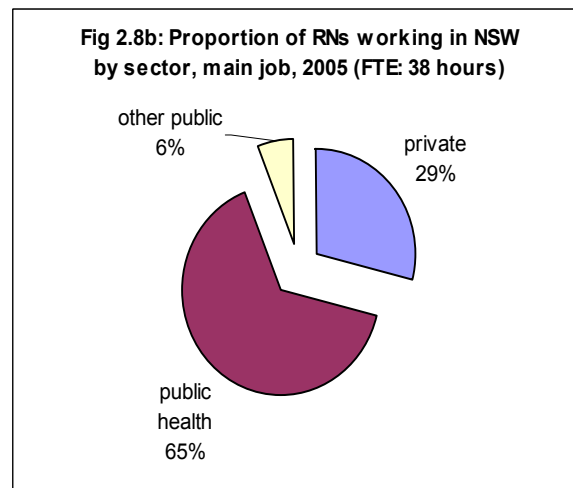
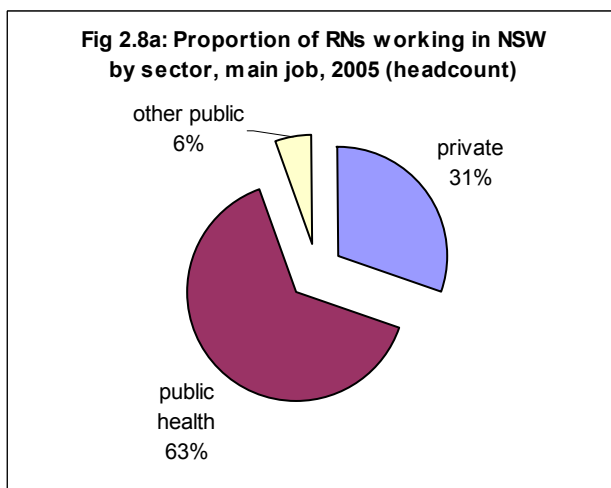
- The above graph shows that the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service (SESIAHS) had the largest number of the employed nursing workforce in their main job, followed by the Northern Sydney & Central Coast AHS. The Greater Western Area Health Service had the lowest number of nurses working in NSW of all of the Area Health Services.

Characteristics of registered nurses working in NSW in 2005:

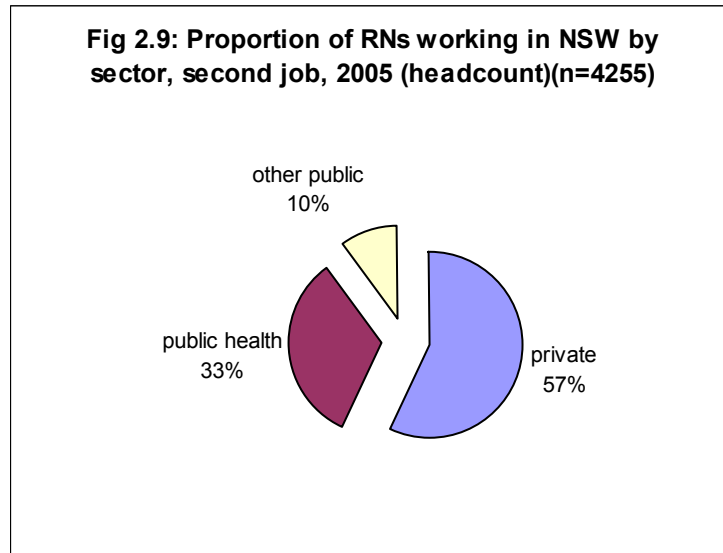
Size of the workforce:

- The registered nurse workforce consists of 41,611 headcount and 36,617.9 FTE nurses unadjusted for non response and 56,601 headcount and 51,161.6 FTE nurses adjusted for non response (based on award conditions of 38 hours per week).
- The proportion of women in the registered nursing workforce (combined workforce of registered and enrolled nurses) is 92%, with males accounting for 8.0% of the workforce.
- Some 29.6% of the registered nurse workforce are aged under forty years, 34.9% are aged 40 to 49 years, 28.2% are aged 50 to 59 years, and 7.2% of the workforce are 60 years and older. This indicates a middle aged workforce, with the modal age range (ie the age range with the greatest number of working nurses) of 45 to 49 years for female, male and total registered nurses. The average age is 45.1 years.

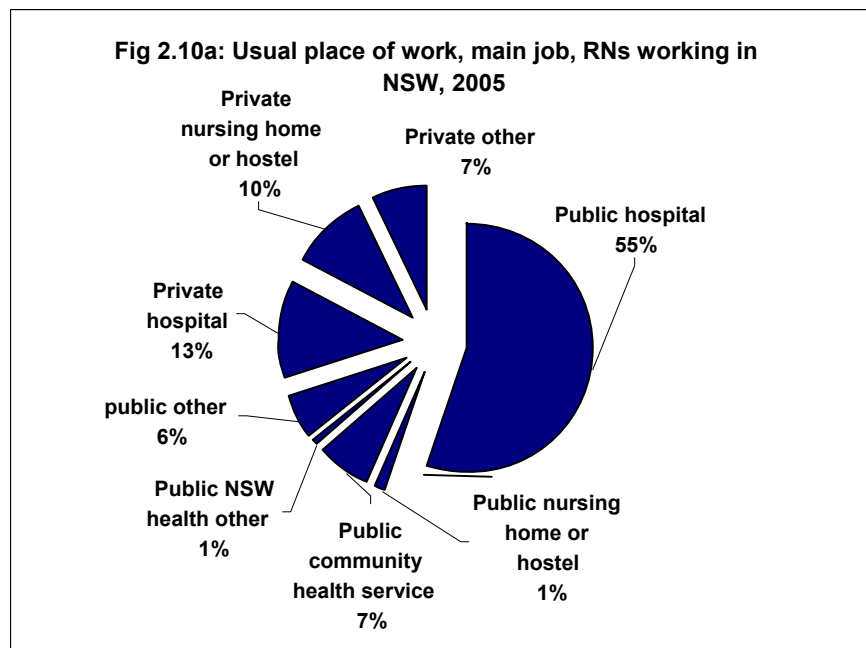
Usual place of work and employment category:



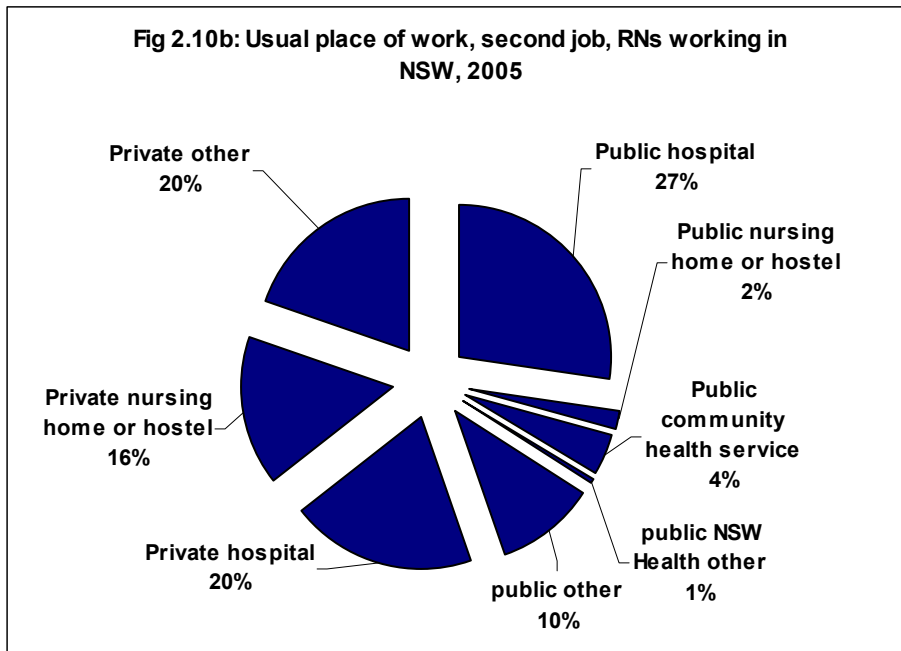
- The public health sector accounted for some 63%, the private sector 31% and the other public sector 6% (including tertiary education institutions, developmental disability facilities, other government departments) of the combined registered nursing workforce in their main job. The public sector increases to 65%, the private sector decreases to 29% and the other public sector remains at 6% in terms of the registered FTE (full – time equivalent) nursing workforce in a main job.



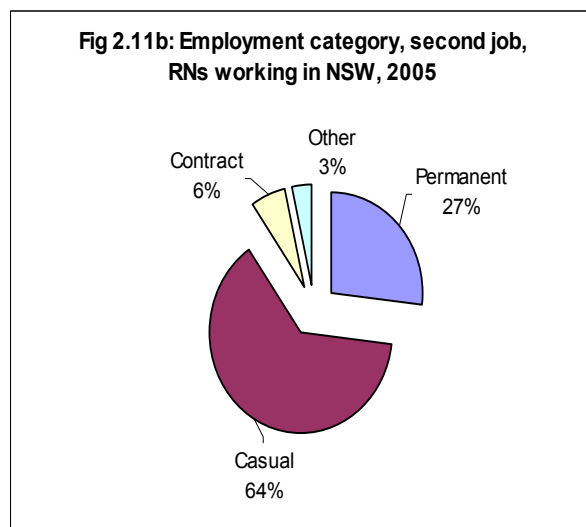
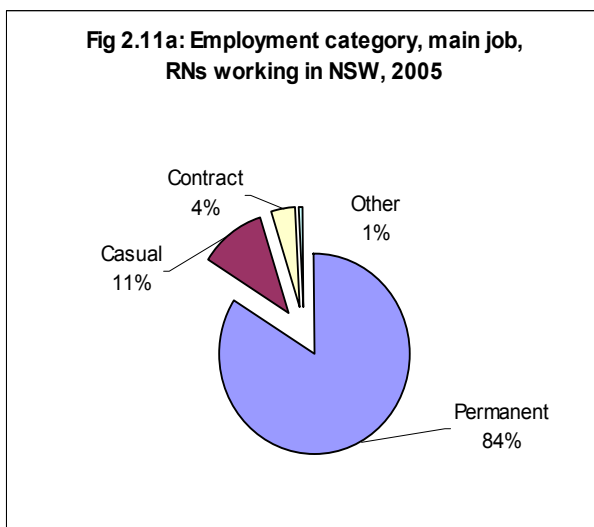
- The public health sector accounted for 33%, the private sector 57% and the other public sector 10% of the registered nursing workforce in their second job. In total, there were 4,255 registered nurses unadjusted for non response who reported being in a second job (10.5% of the total number of registered nurses in the workforce (NOTE: Estimated figure based on highest response as respondents are not directly asked if they have a second job).



- Public hospitals are the main employer of the registered nursing workforce in their main job (55% of all nurses) followed by private hospitals (13%), private aged care facilities (10%), other private services (7%), public community health services (7%), other public sector services (6%), public residential aged care (1%) and other public NSW Health (1%).

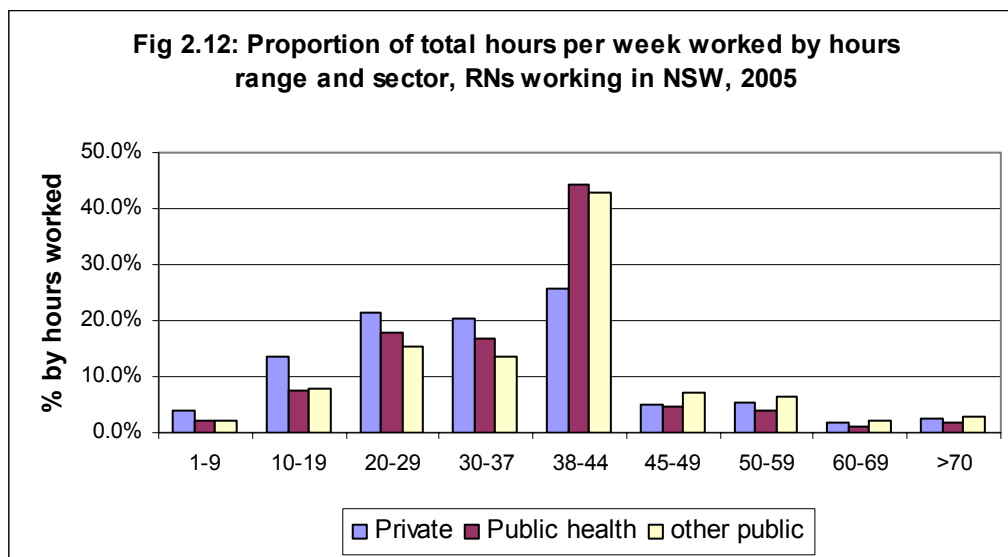


- Public hospitals are the main employer of the registered nursing workforce in their second job (27% of all registered nurses) followed by private hospitals (20%), other private services (20%), private residential aged care facilities (16%), other public sector services (10%) and public community health services (4%).



- Some 84% of nurses were permanent staff in their main job, 11% casual, 4% on contract (temporary or fixed) and 1% self employed or other; while only 27% were permanent in their second job, 64% casual, 6% on contract and 3% self employed or other.

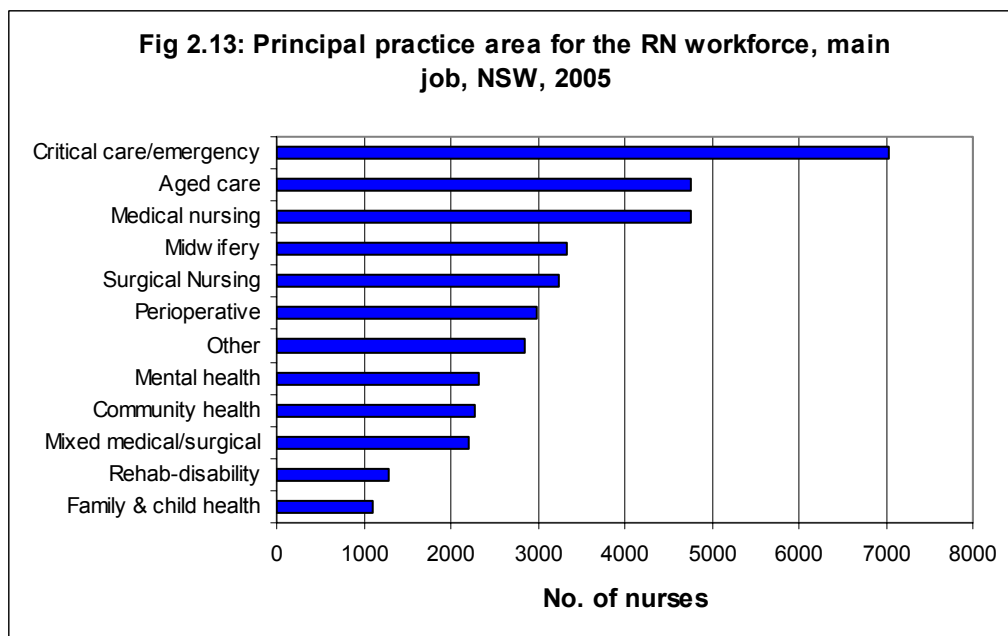
Hours worked per week:



Note: sector of main job

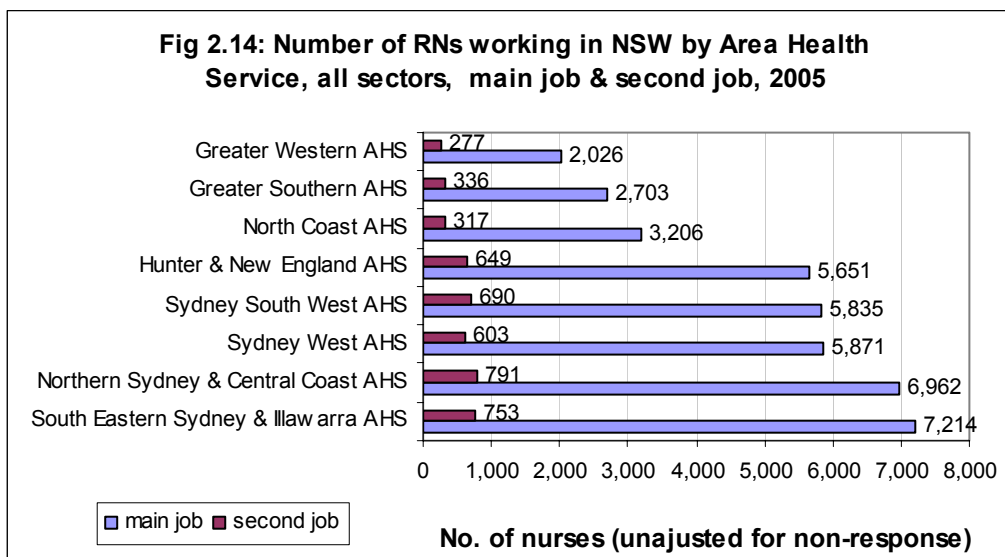
- **Based on 38 hours worked per week (excluding overtime):** Some 48.8% of registered nurses reported working part time in their **total job hours** (hours worked less than 38 hours per week). There was a significant difference by sector, with 59.7% of the nursing workforce working part-time in the private sector, 44.5% in the public health sector and 38.4% in the other public sector areas.

Principal area of nursing practice:



Critical care/emergency nursing employs the greatest proportion of the registered nursing workforce (18.4%) followed by aged care (12.5%) and medical nursing (12.4%) and in their main job. It is difficult to compare to previous surveys, as the coding frame was significantly changed between 2003 and 2004, and again in 2005.

Work location:



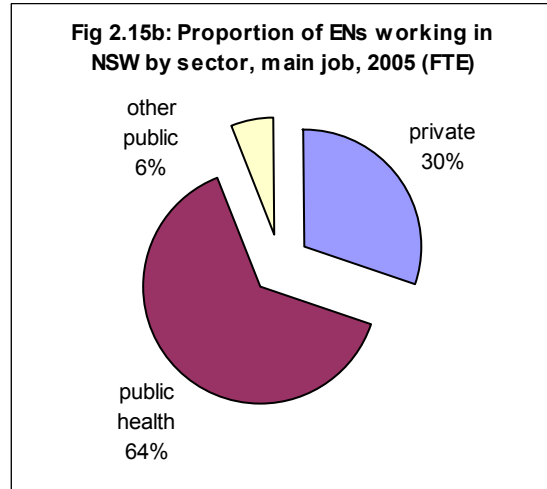
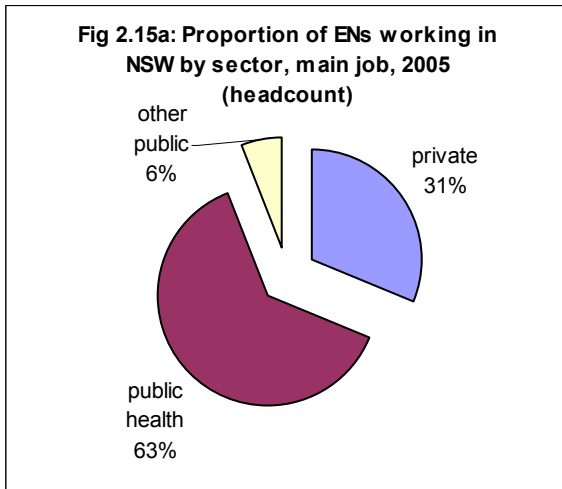
- The above graph shows that the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service (SESIAHS) had the largest number of the employed registered nursing workforce in their main job, followed by the Northern Sydney & Central Coast AHS. The Greater Western Area Health Service had the lowest number of nurses working in NSW of all of the Areas.

Characteristics of enrolled nurses working in NSW in 2005:

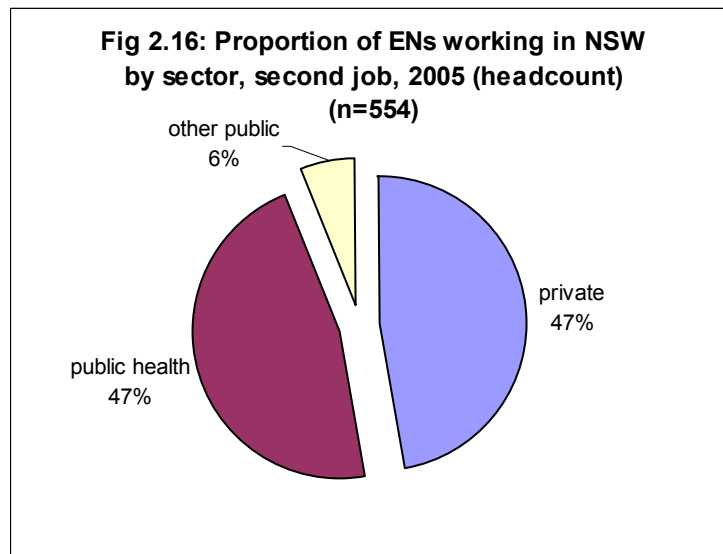
Size of the combined workforce:

- The enrolled nurse workforce consists of 6,788 headcount and 5,808.5 FTE nurses unadjusted for non response and 10,598 headcount and 9451.3 FTE nurses adjusted for non response (based on award conditions of 38 hours per week).
- The proportion of women in the enrolled nursing workforce is 92.1%, with males accounting for 7.9% of the workforce.
- Some 32.7% of the enrolled nurse workforce are aged under forty years, 42.4% are aged 40 to 49 years, 21.4% are aged 50 to 59 years, and 3.5% of the workforce are 60 years and older. This indicates a middle aged workforce overall, with the modal age range being 45 to 49 years for female, and total nurses and 40 to 44 years for males (ie the age range with the greatest number of working nurses). The average age is 43.2 years.

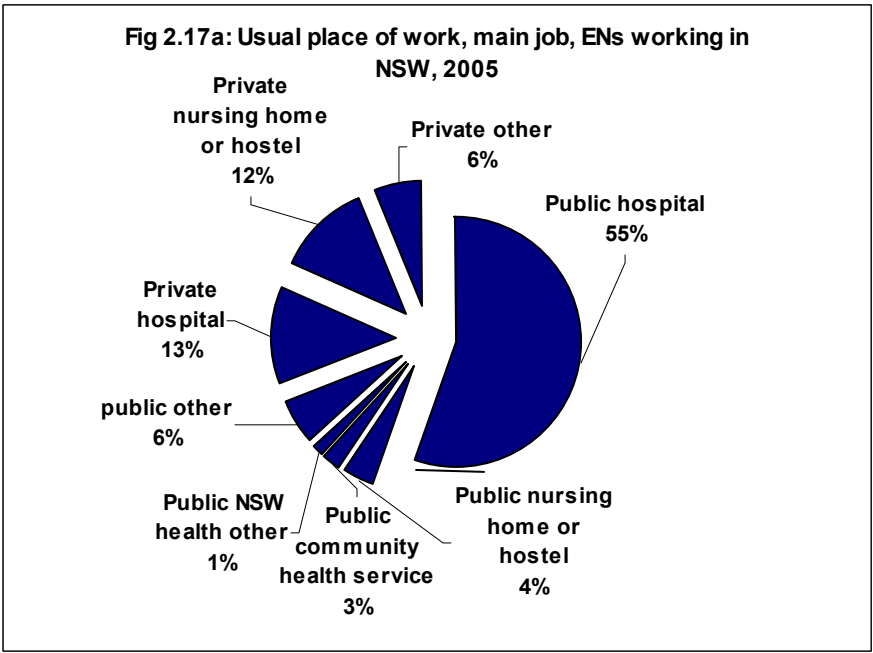
Usual place of work and employment category:



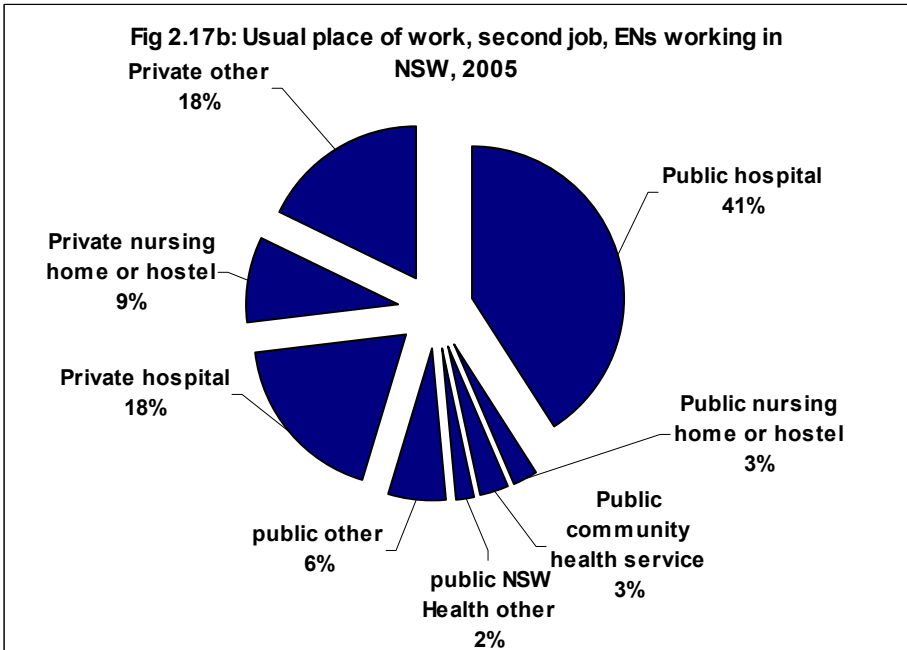
- The public health sector accounted for some 63%, the private sector 31% and the other public sector 6% (including tertiary education institutions, developmental disability facilities, other government departments) of the enrolled nursing workforce in their main job. The public health sector increases to 64%, the private sector decreases to 30% and the other public sector remains at 6% in terms of the combined FTE (full – time equivalent) enrolled nursing workforce in a second job.



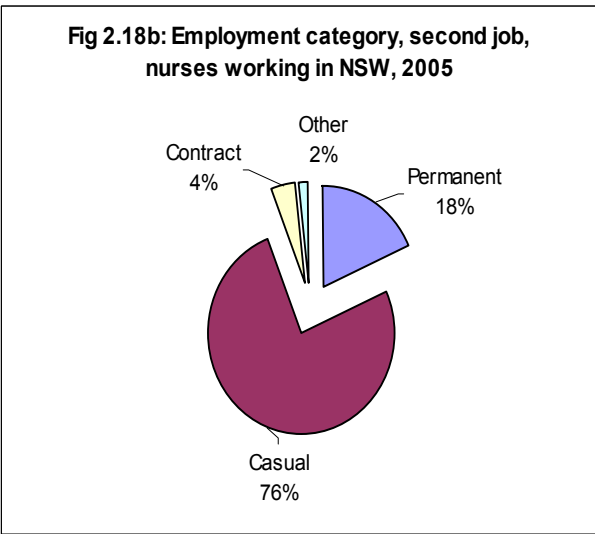
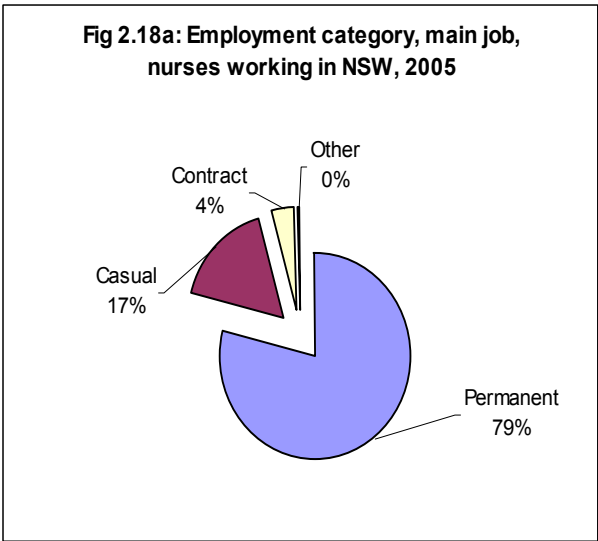
- The public health sector accounted for 47%, the private sector 47% and the other public sector 6% of the enrolled nursing workforce in their second job. In total, there were 554 enrolled nurses unadjusted for non response who reported being in a second job (8.2% of the total number of enrolled nurses in the workforce (NOTE: Estimated figure based on highest response as respondents are not directly asked if they have a second job).



- Public hospitals are the main employer of the enrolled nursing workforce in their main job (55% of all enrolled nurses) followed by private hospitals (13%), private aged care facilities (12%), other private services (6%), public community health services (3%) and other public sector services (6%).

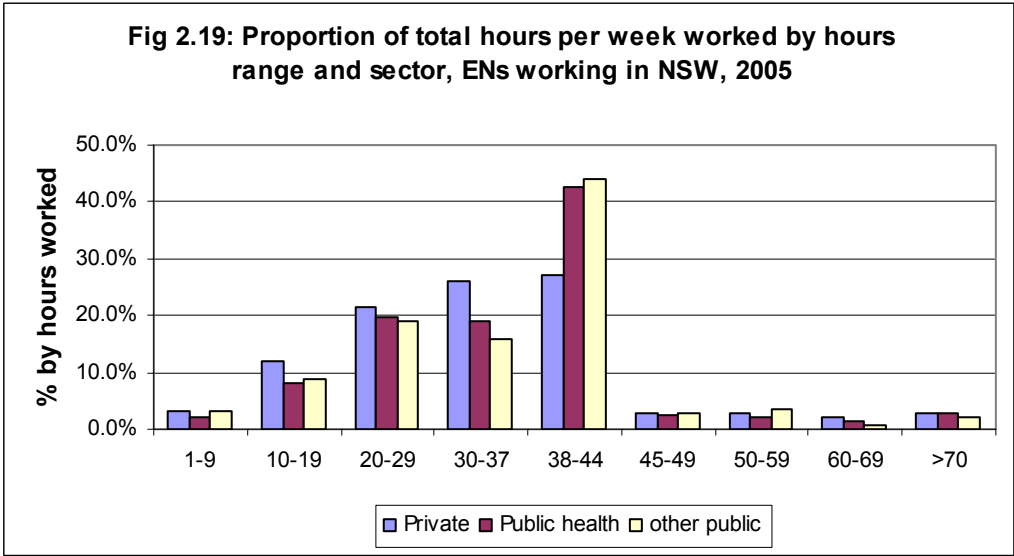


- Public hospitals are the main employer of the enrolled nursing workforce in their second job (41% of all enrolled nurses) followed by private hospitals (18%), other private services (18%), private aged care facilities (9%), other public sector services (6%) and public community health services and public residential aged care services (3% each).



- Some 79% of enrolled nurses were permanent staff in their main job, 17 % casual, 4% on contract (temporary or fixed) and 0% self employed or other; while only 18% were permanent in their second job, 76% casual, 4% on contract and 2% self employed or other.

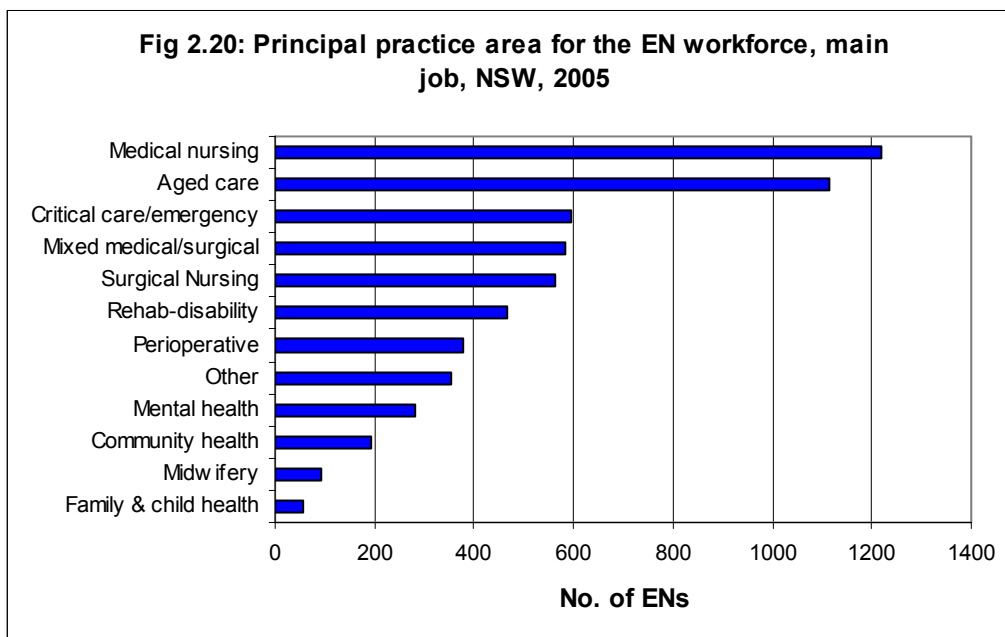
Hours worked per week:



Note: sector of main job

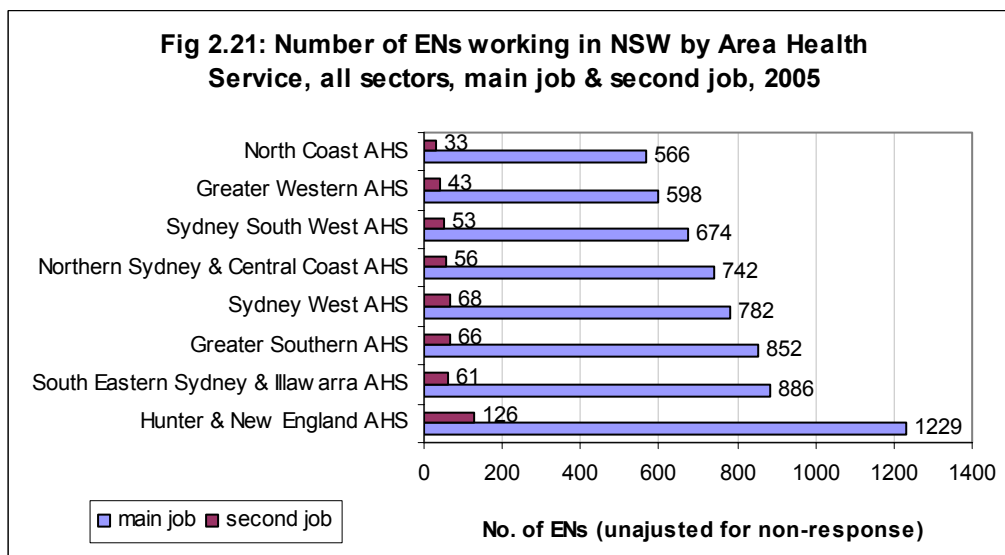
- Based on 38 hours worked per week (excluding overtime):** Some 52.8% of enrolled nurses reported working part time in their **total job hours** (hours worked less than 38 hours per week). There was a significant difference by sector, with 62.7% of the enrolled nursing workforce working part-time in the private sector, 48.4% in the public health sector and 46.9% in the other public sector areas.

Principal area of nursing practice:



Medical nursing employs the greatest proportion of the enrolled nursing workforce (20.7%) followed by aged care (18.9%) and critical care/emergency nursing (10.1%) in their main job. It is difficult to compare to previous surveys, as the coding frame was significantly changed between 2003 and 2004, and again in 2005.

Work location:



- The above graph shows that the Hunter and New England Area Health Service had the largest number of the employed enrolled nursing workforce in their main job, followed by the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service (SESAHS). The North Coast Area Health Service had the lowest number of enrolled nurses working in NSW of all of the Areas in both main and second jobs.