

# Speech pathology

## Workforce modelling factsheet

Speech pathologists are allied health professionals with expertise in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of communication and swallowing/feeding difficulties across the lifespan, supporting individuals to maximise function and optimise quality of life through holistic clinical care, collaboration, advocacy, community education, and research. Speech pathology is practised in a wide variety of settings and across a broad range of clinical areas.



### Workforce characteristics for NSW Health speech pathology workforce in 2040



**2272**  
Headcount



**98.2%**  
Female



**27.9**  
Work hours per week



**38.4**  
Years average age



**7.1%**  
Future 60+



**3.4%**  
Aboriginal workforce target



Demand is expected to grow **1.4%** (low demand scenario) to **1.5%** (high demand scenario).

Workforce modelling indicates the need to grow the NSW speech pathology workforce by around **12 to 13** new professionals per annum to meet community need in 2040 across both demand scenarios.

**SIGNIFICANT**

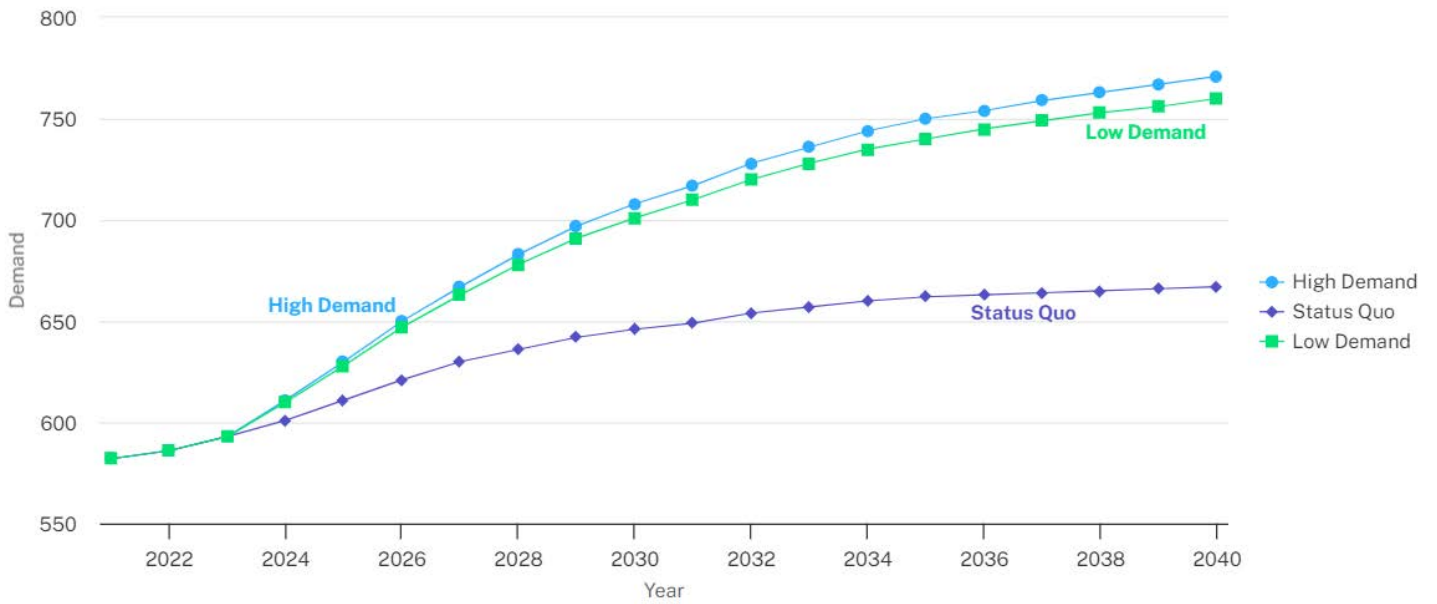
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

### Notes

- Data included is limited to the workforce employed under the relevant health professional award.
- Specialty health networks are not displayed geographically in the workforce distribution maps.
- NSW Health may engage therapists on a sessional basis.
- LHD/SHN may engage in sessional arrangements in selected circumstances.
- Workforce that cannot be aligned to a physical location have been attributed to a pre-determined facility within each LHD/N. This may impact on Headcount shown at these facilities within the distribution map.
- NSW Health does not make any representations or warranties whether expressed or implied with respect to the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in the fact sheet.

\* Note: The inclusion of added qualitative inputs within career opportunities varies from standard modelling methodology calculations and hence differs to standard modelling outcomes.

## Projected FTE growth for NSW Health speech pathology workforce to 2040



## Workforce characteristics for NSW Health speech pathology workforce in 2021



**788**  
Headcount



**28.2**  
Work hours per week



**38.2**  
Years average age



**97%**  
Female



**2.4%**  
Aged 60+



**0.5%**  
Aboriginal

### Metropolitan Sydney



**436**  
Headcount



**29**  
Work hours per week



**37.1**  
Years average age



**1.0%**  
Aged 60+

### Non-Metropolitan Sydney



**360**  
Headcount



**27.1**  
Work hours per week



**39.5**  
Years average age



**1.4%**  
Aged 60+

## Speech pathology junior entrant positions into NSW Health



2017  
72

2018  
47

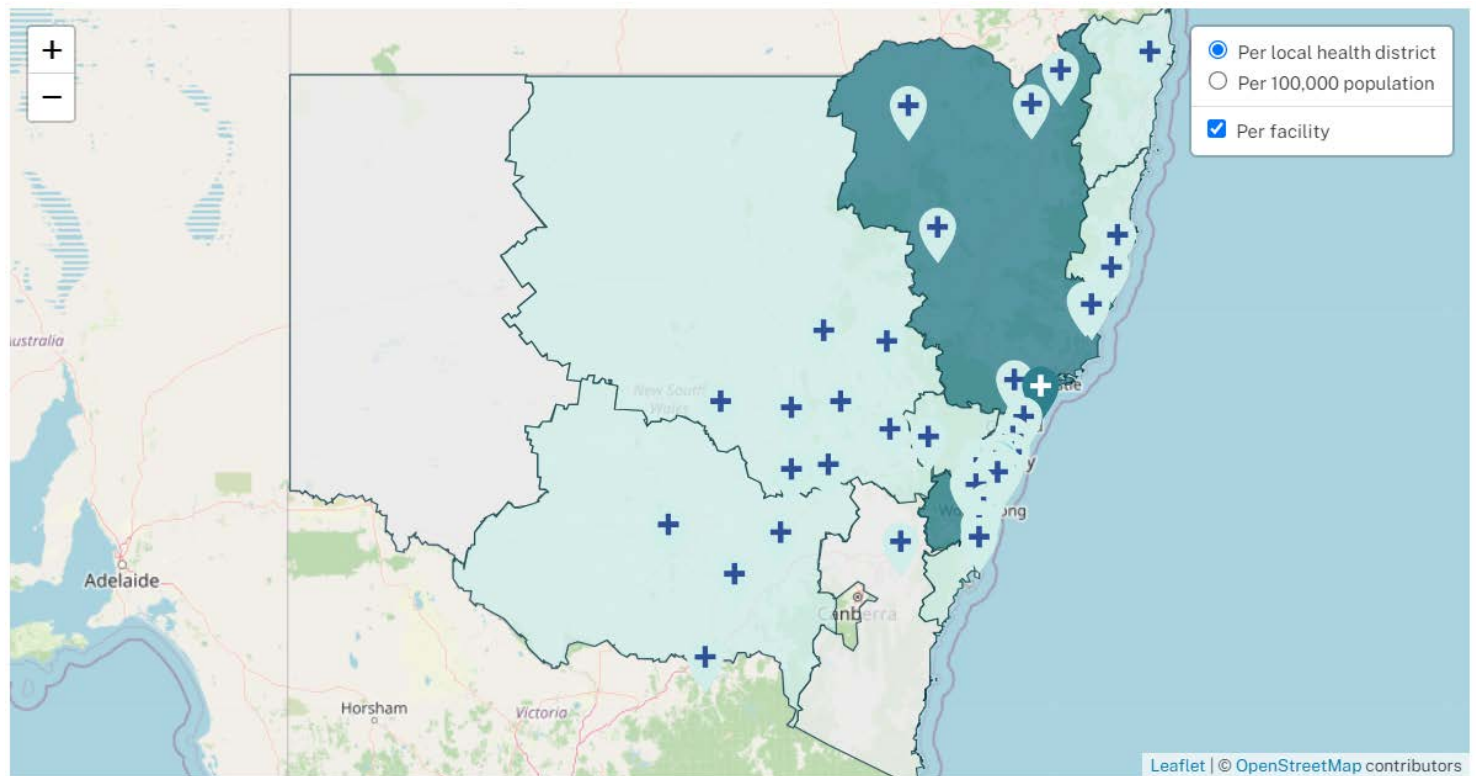
2019  
42

2020  
37

2021  
35

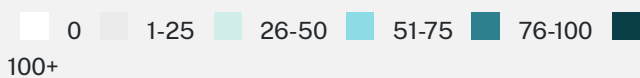
## Workforce distribution for NSW Health speech pathology workforce in 2021

The geographic distribution of the public workforce by local health district/network, by facility and per 100,000 population.



### Legends

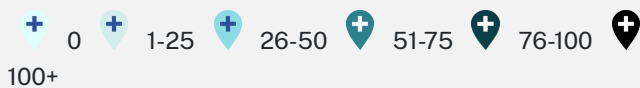
#### Per local health district



#### Per 100,000 population



#### Per facility



### Other networks

- Sydney Children's Hospitals: 20 to 50 | 1 to 5 per 100,000
- Enable NSW: 0 to 00 | 0 per 100,000
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health: 0 | 6 to 10 per 100,000

## Workforce considerations

- Population demographics and increasing incidence of complex and chronic disease may increase demand for speech pathology services.
- New government funding initiatives e.g. 'Brighter Beginnings – the first 2000 days of life' will influence speech pathology workforce movement (gains / attrition) in NSW Health (i.e. Medicare Benefits Scheme, National Disability Insurance Scheme).
- Engaging the next generation to meet new challenges through career progression and continuing professional development.
- Ensuring sustainable training pipelines, graduates, and workforce to reflect the future workforce requirements of the community, by both location, speciality and skills.
- Improvements in data capture and demand (met and unmet) is a prioritised need for the workforce.
- Potentiating top of scope opportunities such as supporting ENT clinics, is a priority for the workforce.