

## Media release

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10 November 2016

### Cost effectiveness was a top priority for the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia in 2015/16

Over the past year, the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia reduced practitioner fees, oversaw practitioner audits and collaborated with other national health boards to review continuing professional development, professional indemnity insurance and recency of practice registration standards, according to information published by AHPRA today in its [2015/16 annual report](#).

The 2015/16 annual report by AHPRA and the national health practitioner boards is a comprehensive record of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

‘By reducing registration fees for the third year in the row, we’ve eased the cost burden on practitioners while still earning sufficient income to meet our regulatory obligations,’ said Ms Julie Brayshaw, Chair of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia.

A number of initiatives were developed and put into action during 2015/16, including the establishment of reference and advisory groups to begin work on revising competency standards for occupational therapists. The Board also attended practitioner and new-graduate events and hosted its first forum with occupational therapy education providers.

‘Actively engaging with registered occupational therapists and other stakeholders is essential to ensuring patient safety,’ said Ms Brayshaw. ‘Protecting the public remains our number-one focus.’

#### **More highlights of the past year include:**

- **More health practitioners overall:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 across the 14 regulated professions than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners nationally. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, totalling 153,710.
- **A simplified renewal process:** Online registration renewals reached a new high across all professions – with over 98% of all registrants renewing online and on time, making it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.
- **Increased registration:** As of 30 June 2016, there were 18,304 occupational therapists registered across Australia, an increase of 6.4% from the previous year. The Board received 2,200 new applications for registration in 2015/16, an increase of 5.9% year on year.
- **Greater awareness of the National Scheme:** A nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public rolled out across social media and in print advertising.
- **Growth in notifications:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year across all 14 health professions, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). Just under half of all notifications were made by a patient, relative or member of the public. AHPRA closed 5,227 matters in the year.

- **Increase in new notifications occupational therapists:** In 2015/16 there were 59 notifications received nationally, an increase of 20.4% from the previous year. Notifications about occupational therapists represented just 0.6% of all notifications received by AHPRA (excluding data from the Health Professional Councils Authority in NSW).
- **Less than 1% of all statutory offence matters related to occupational therapy:** AHPRA received six new complaints about possible statutory offences by occupational therapists in the past year. All new matters related to the use of protected titles. Five statutory complaint matters relating to occupational therapists were considered and closed by AHPRA during the year.

For more data and information relating to the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia in 2015/16, please see [www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016). The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the Boards and highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

‘The regulation of over 660,000 registered health practitioners across 14 health professions and eight states and territories is an important task,’ said AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher. ‘There are many things to consider in regulation – but there is only one main focus, and that is public safety.’

Supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance can also be found on the annual report website.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Expanded, profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

#### *For more information*

- Visit [www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016)
- For online enquiries visit [www.ahpra.gov.au/enquiry](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/enquiry)
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