
AHPRA

Review of stakeholder perceptions of AHPRA and the National Boards

A Social Research Project

November 2018

Supplementary report prepared for:
The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

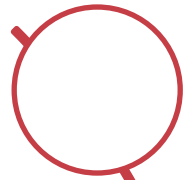
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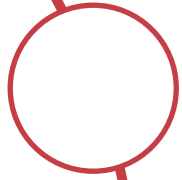
Introduction

- Truly Deeply has been engaged by the Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) to test the perception of sentiment towards AHPRA and the National Boards. This review is intended to help AHPRA and National Boards better understand what stakeholders think and feel about the organisation and to identify how to facilitate ongoing confidence and trust in the work performed by AHPRA and National Boards.
- The study has used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, specifically extended interviews (face to face and via the telephone), focus groups and online surveys.
- A single, integrated report has been provided to AHPRA documenting the key themes and results.
- A separate summary has been provided for each of the National Boards based on the results of the online survey with practitioners.
- The purpose of this report is to present a subset of findings specifically for the **Occupational Therapy Board of Australia**.

An overview of the methodology

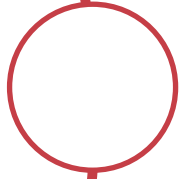


A **four stage** approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative research approaches has been used.



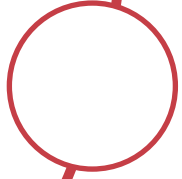
Stage 1 comprised a total of 53 qualitative interviews. This consisted of interviews with the Chair of every National Board (15); the Executive Officer of almost every National Board (13), Government health providers (3); major health employers (3); Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy group representatives (5); Co-regulatory partners (4); Professions Reference Group members (3); representatives from CALD communities (2) and 'Other' various stakeholders (5).

These interviews were conducted between August 10 and September 26, 2018.



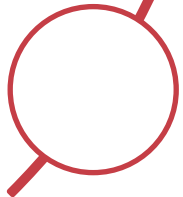
Stage 2 involved three focus groups. The three groups were conducted with i) Members of the Community Reference Group; ii) Members of the Professions Reference Group and iii) Accreditation Authority representatives.

These groups were conducted between August 14 - 22, 2018.



Stage 3 consisted of an online survey with practitioners from all 15 registered professions.

This survey was conducted between September 17 – 25, 2018.



Stage 4 consisted of an online survey with a representative sample of the Australian general public.

This survey was conducted between September 17 – 25, 2018.

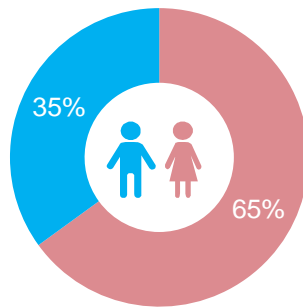
Quantitative approach

- Online surveys were conducted with practitioners as well as the broader community following the qualitative investigation. Truly Deeply developed the questionnaires in consultation with AHPRA.
- The questionnaires were developed to allow initial findings in the qualitative to be further explored and validated. Additional pre-codes and lists of words and statements were included in the survey following feedback from interviews and discussion with stakeholders.
- Respondents to the Community Survey were sourced using an external panel provider.
- Participants in the Practitioner Survey were sourced by AHPRA (using software that allowed the survey to be deployed to a random sample of practitioners in each profession).
- The practitioner sample has been weighted to ensure an equal ‘voice’ within the total sample of registered health practitioners (with the sample of ‘nurses’ and ‘midwives’ further separated). This has been done to ensure that the views of (for example) of ‘psychologists’, which accounted for 14% of responses to the survey, does not distort the views of other professions, which accounted for a much smaller response overall to the survey.
- Once the surveys were closed, statistical analysis was conducted by Truly Deeply to summarise and compare the quantitative findings.

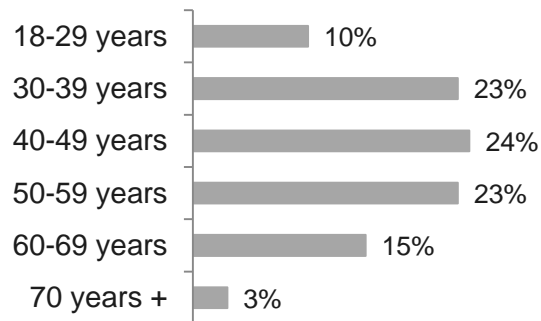
	Community Survey	Practitioner Survey
Fieldwork dates	September 19 - 25	September 19 - 27
Responses	1,020	5,694
Email invitations sent	na	100,257
Response rate	na	6.0%

Sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,694)

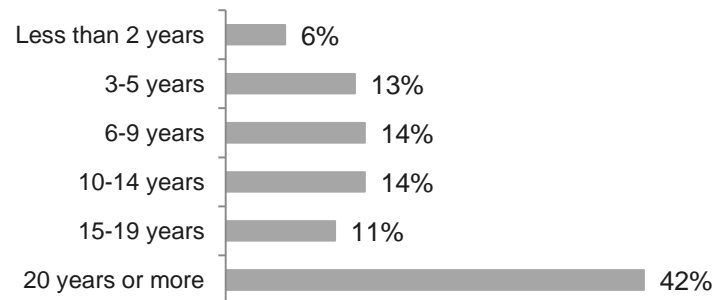
Gender



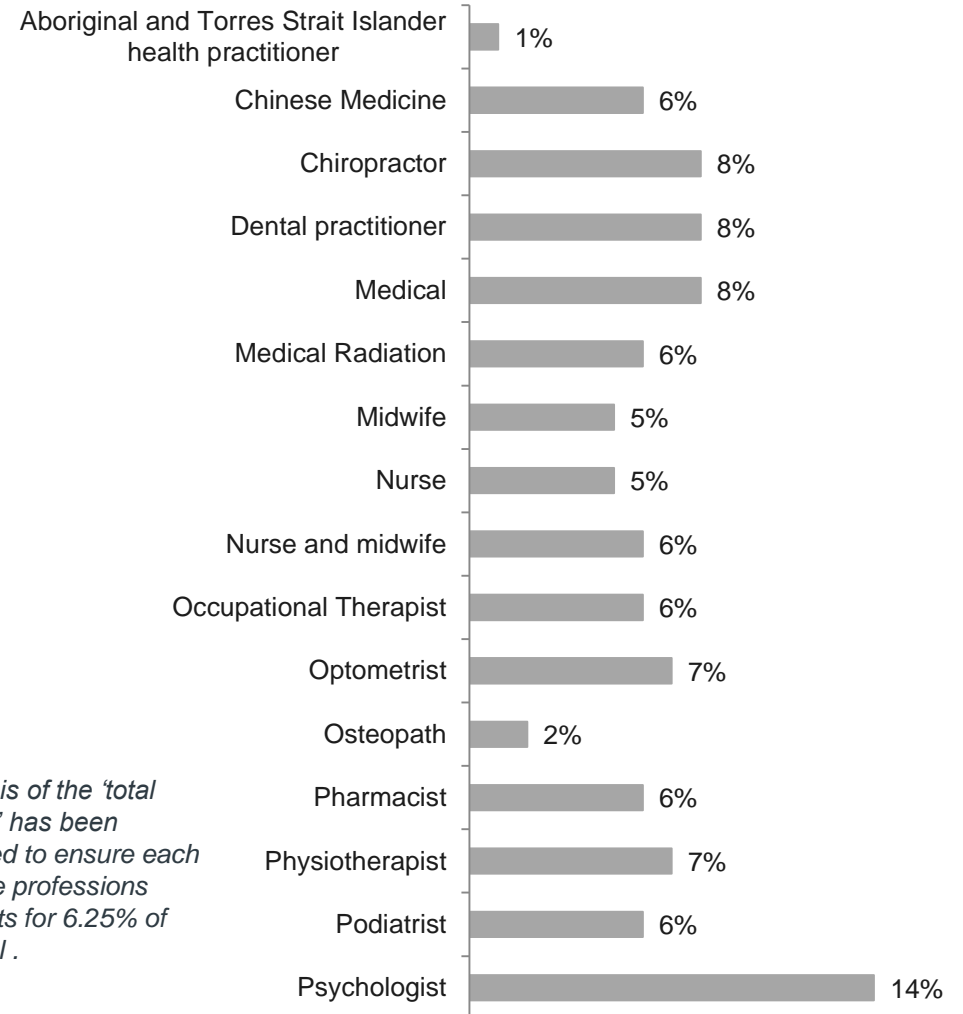
Age



Years in practice



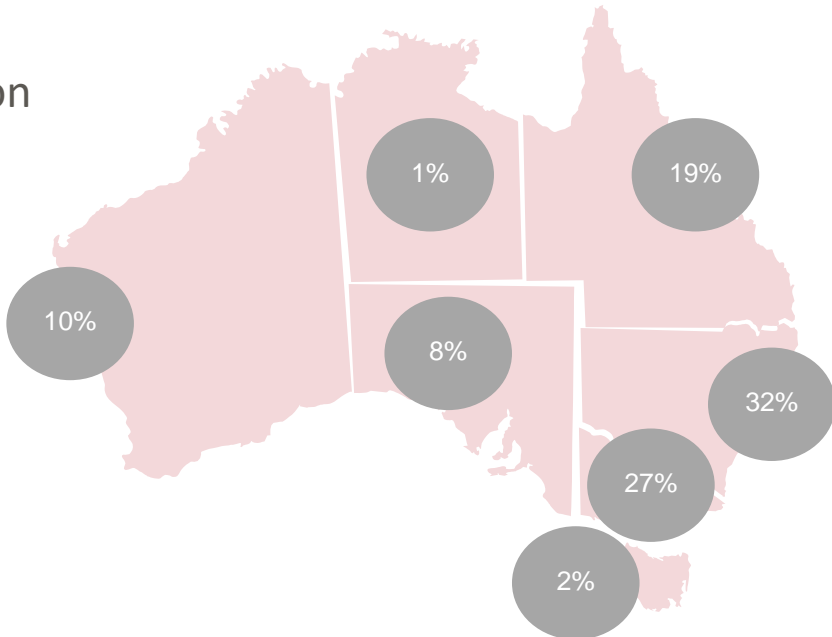
Practitioner type*



**Analysis of the 'total sample' has been weighted to ensure each of these professions accounts for 6.25% of the total.*

Sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,694)

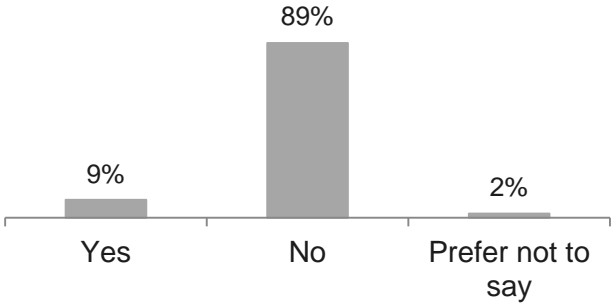
Location



Metro: 66%

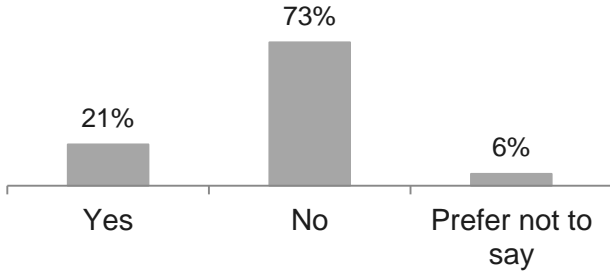
Regional : 34%

% who have had a complaint ever made against them to AHPRA or their Board as a registered Health Practitioner*



* As identified by individual respondents

% who have ever been audited to check their compliance with the mandatory registration standards*



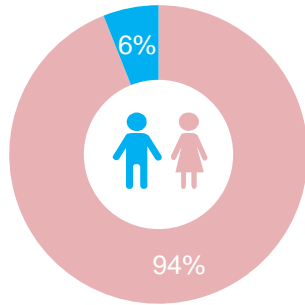
* As identified by individual respondents

Summary of results of the online survey with registered health practitioners.

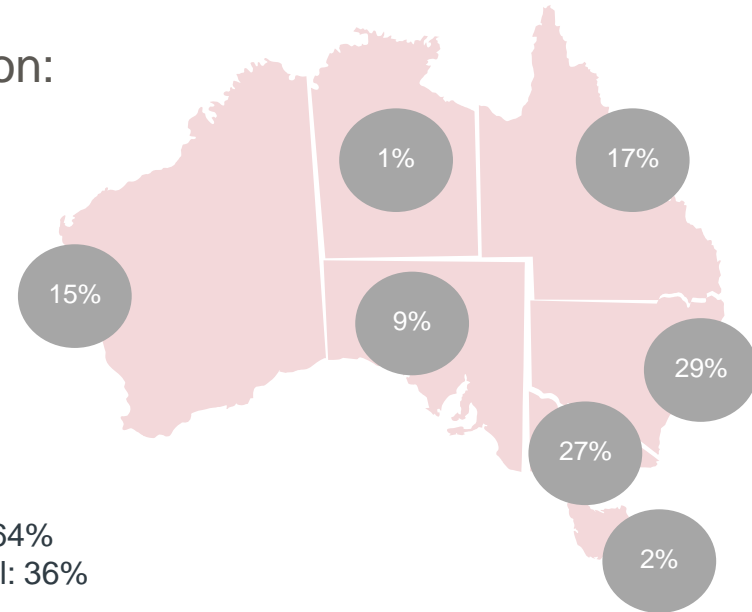
Specific insights into the responses from:
occupational therapists

Sample of occupational therapists (n=349)

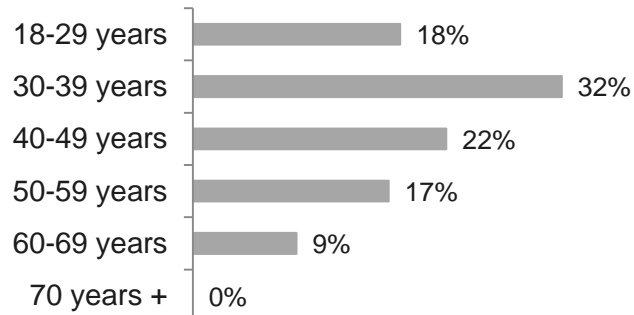
Gender:



Location:



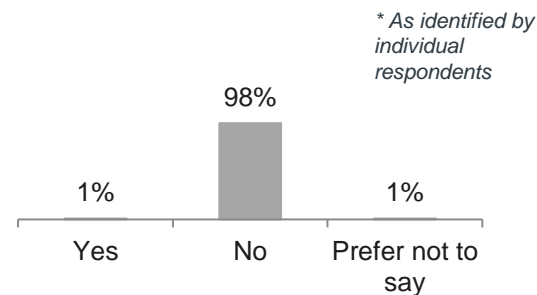
Age:



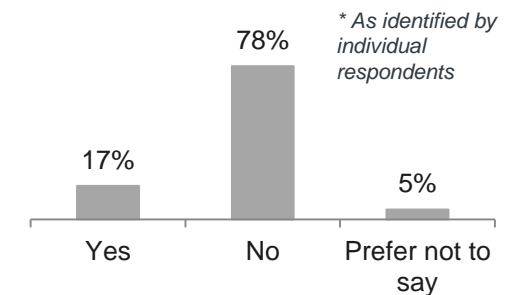
Years in practice:



% who have had a complaint ever made against them to AHPRA or their Board as a registered Health Practitioner*



% who have ever been audited to check their compliance with the mandatory registration standards*



Perceptions of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (Top 20 associations)

Q. Which of the following words or statements, if any, do you strongly associate with the (National Board)?

Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=349)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
For practitioners	51%	(+15%)
Necessary	39%	(+4%)
Administrators	33%	(-2%)
Regulators	30%	(-8%)
Advocates	28%	(+10%)
Decision-makers	27%	(0%)
Competent	22%	(+4%)
Supportive	16%	(+3%)
Shows leadership	19%	(+3%)
Accessible	16%	(+4%)

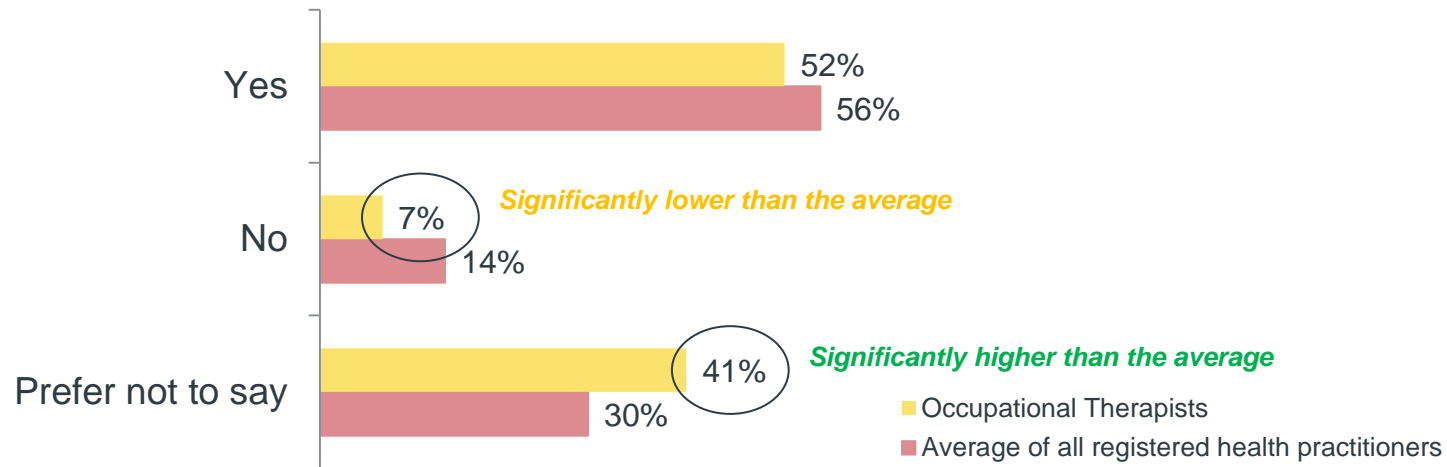
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
For the public	14%	(-9%)
Bureaucratic	14%	(-12%)
Trustworthy	15%	(+2%)
Helpful	14%	(+2%)
Good communicators	13%	(+2%)
Fair	13%	(+2%)
Approachable	14%	(+2%)
Out of touch	8%	(-4%)
Rigid	6%	(-5%)
Intimidating	5%	(-5%)

Green indicates a result *significantly higher* than the average across all professions.

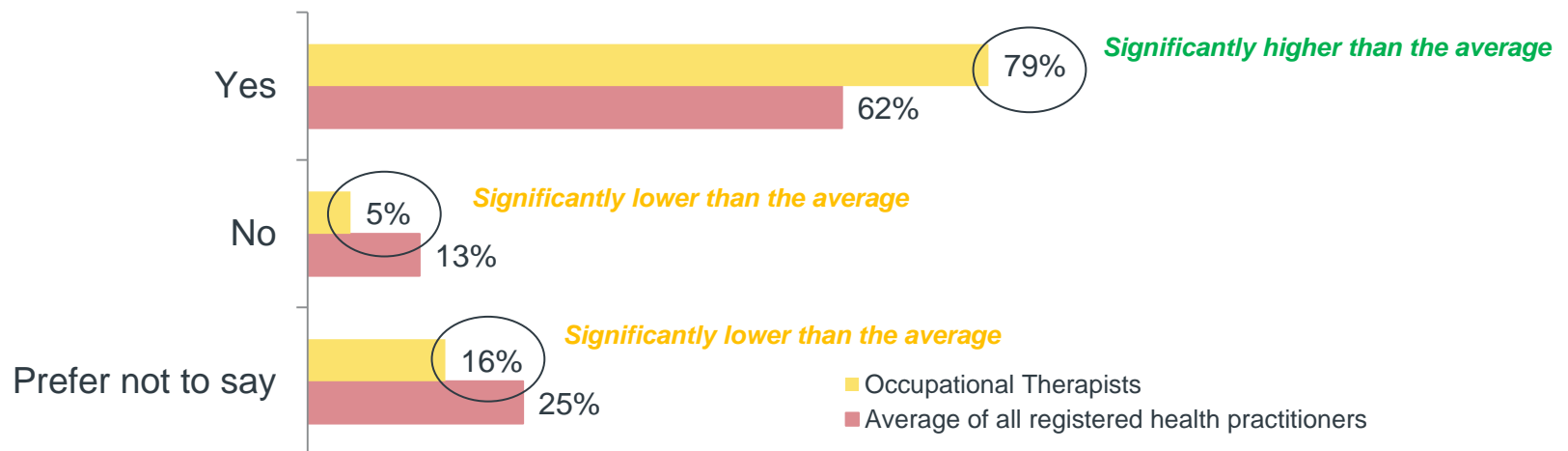
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

Q. Do you feel confident that your National Board is doing everything it can to keep the public safe?



Q. Do you trust your National Board?



What are the indicators of trust and barriers to trust in the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

Indicators of trust: **79% trust the Board**

They are very proactive on the behalf of OT's & have certainly improved in the past few years in regards to advocacy and promoting OT's.

Again no issues to date to give concern. Allows practitioners that work hard and try to serve the people well confidence that they can practice in safety. And that those who would give us a bad name will be followed up suitably.

They maintain a high standard of expectations of practising therapists.

They are professionals who work in very demanding and challenging environments. It shows that you can trust them.

No reason not to. No documentation from them or about them has been of concern.

They are so responsive to OT needs, issues and current affairs.

They have the interests of the profession at heart and it is a voluntary arrangement.

They seem transparent, and have been very helpful when I have contacted them.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **5% DO NOT trust the Board**

Unsure of their role and responsibilities.

It is not that I don't trust them, but I am unclear of their role since AHPRA has come into play. Why don't OT's have to maintain registration with our professional board? What value do they add?

No confidence in certain board members.

I don't believe that they are aligned with the reality of OTs. They are too bureaucratic and have a punitive attitude.

There are no fixed terms and people can be on them for years without current clinical experience.

They are out of touch of the needs of the profession. They do nothing to engage the profession.

I don't feel like they are in touch with the needs of practicing OT's.

I'm not sure that they are doing all they can for practitioners in terms of ensuring that political and administrative decisions being made are practical and sensible to carry out in the real world.

Perceptions of AHPRA amongst occupational therapists

(Top 20 associations)

Q. Which of the following words or statements, if any, do you strongly associate with AHPRA?

Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=349)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	65%	(+11%)
Administrators	62%	(+10%)
Necessary	53%	(+13%)
For the public	44%	(+6%)
For practitioners	37%	(+7%)
Bureaucratic	33%	(-7%)
Decision makers	29%	(+4%)
Competent	15%	(0%)
Rigid	13%	(-5%)
Accessible	13%	(0%)

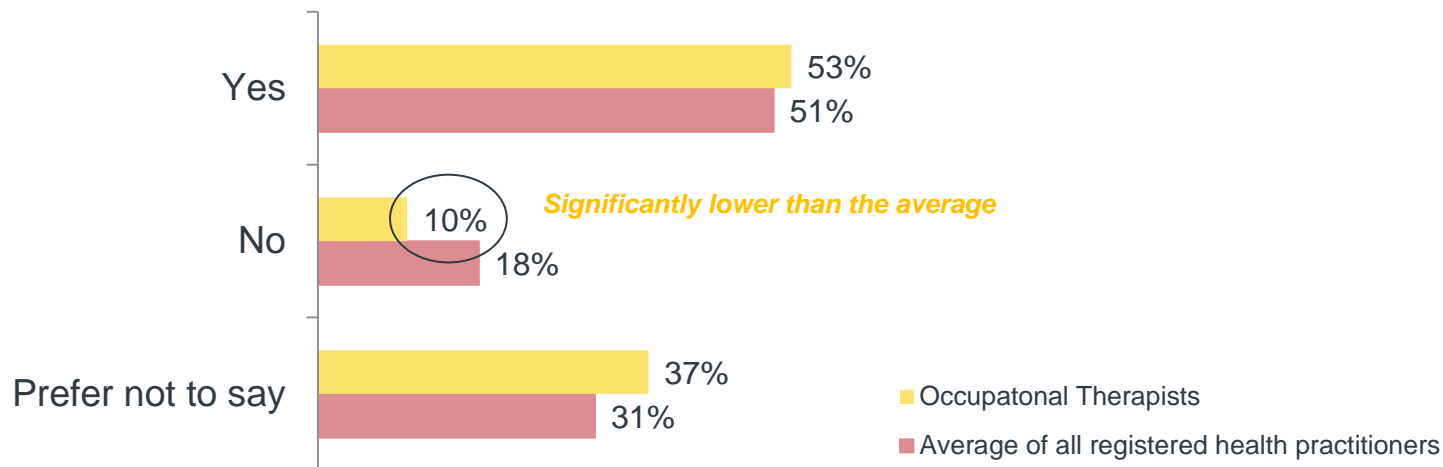
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Intimidating	12%	(-5%)
Fair	12%	(-5%)
Transparent	10%	(+1%)
Poor communicators	9%	(-5%)
Trustworthy	9%	(0%)
Responsive	9%	(+1%)
Helpful	8%	(-1%)
Good communicators	8%	(-1%)
Approachable	7%	(-2%)
Advocates	7%	(-1%)

Green indicates a result *significantly higher* than the average across all professions.

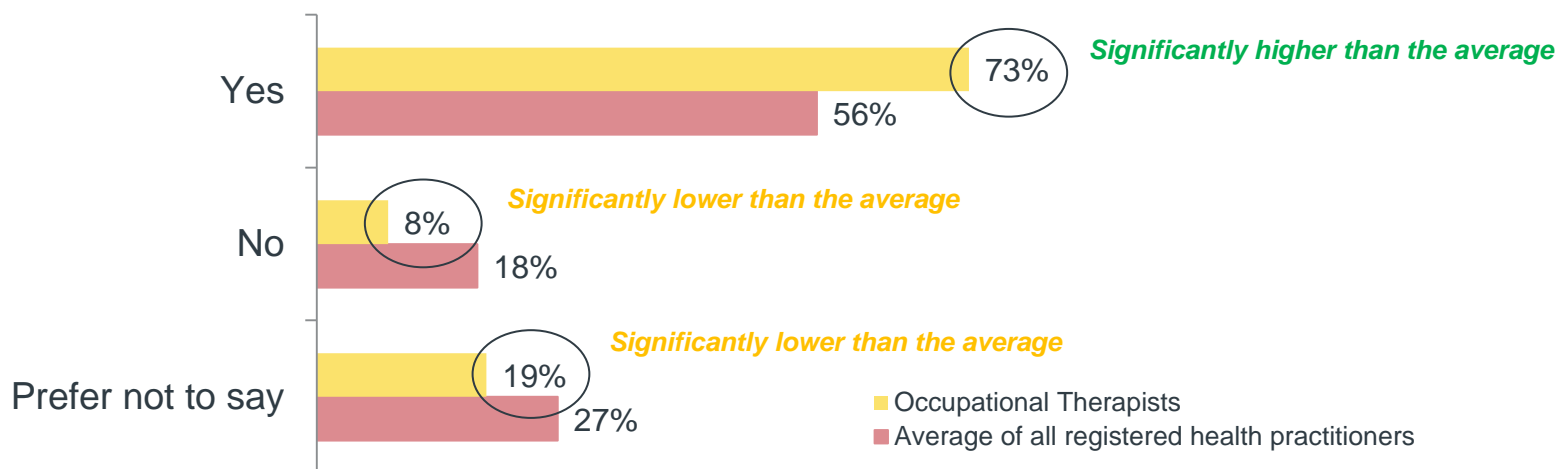
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in AHPRA amongst occupational therapists

Q. Do you feel confident that **AHPRA** is doing everything it can to keep the public safe?



Q. Do you trust **AHPRA**?



What are the indicators of trust and barriers to trust in AHPRA amongst occupational therapists

Indicators of trust: **73% trust AHPRA**

It oversees all health professionals and I have had no reason not to trust them.

Their communications, standards and code of conduct indicate a high level of understanding of roles and challenges of practitioners, and a balance between support & regulation.

They seem to have reasonably stringent procedures in place and work with National Allied Health bodies to keep them fair and reasonable.

Strong administrative processes and regulations, responsive to queries and comments.

From what I have seen during my years of experience, AHPRA has the necessary processes in place to protect the public and the professions it represents.

I see AHPRA as an independent body which safeguards the public and ensures adequate standards of practice.

Vast organisation with lots of experience.

Clear guidelines and direction. Regular communication and process.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **8% DO NOT trust AHPRA**

Communication is slow and poor. Process is very slow and at this point seems ineffective.

I don't trust them because they DON'T support practitioners and you are made to feel guilty even when you have done nothing wrong (personal experience) The process takes too long.

I have previously made a complaint as a patient and the outcome was unsatisfactory.

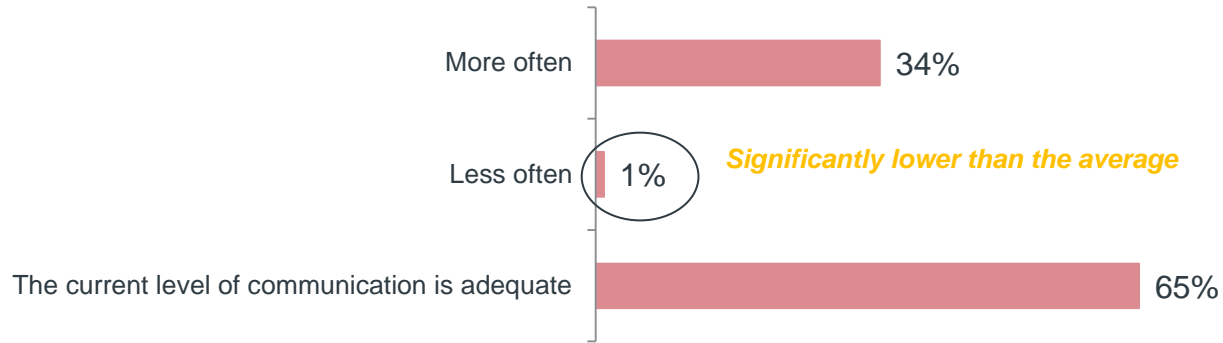
I have had extremely distressing and difficult experiences with them - perhaps one of my most traumatic life events to date. Unhelpful, unsupportive, rude and arrogant. All the qualities I would NOT expect from an organisation associated with health. I know I am not alone in feeling like I was treated as a child.

Because they take no action in a reasonable timeframe when things go wrong.

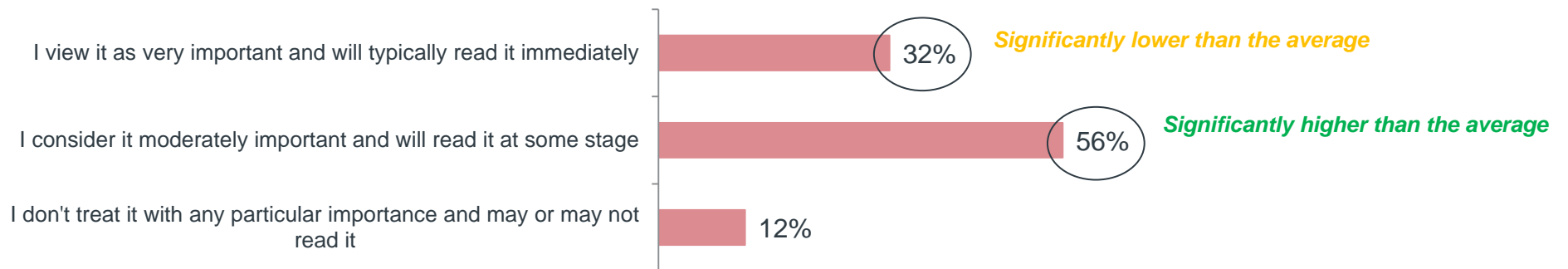
Like every impersonal bureaucratic system there is always the feeling they will chew you up and spit you out according to regulations if you get into a difficult situation.

Response to communication by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

Q. Would you like (National Board) to communicate with you.....?



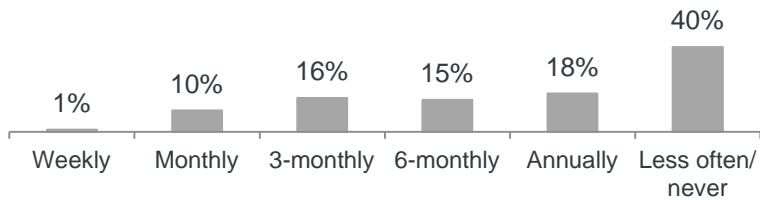
Q. How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=349)

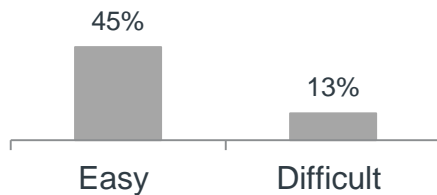
Use of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia website

Q. How often do you visit the website of (your National Board))?



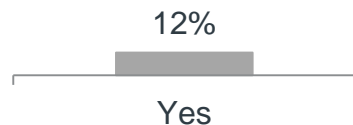
Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this board

Q. How easy or difficult is it to find the information you were looking for on the (National Board) website?



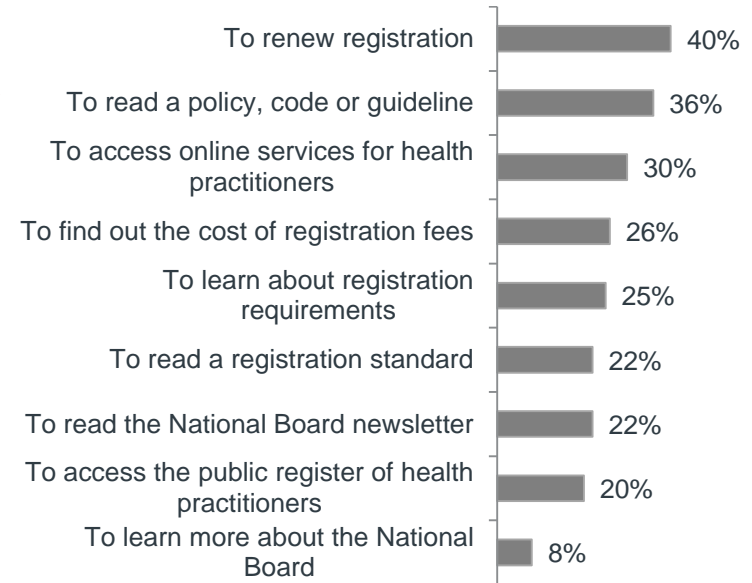
Base: Practitioners who have visited that board's website

Q. Is there any information you have looked for on the website of (National Board) but not been able to find?



Base: People who have visited that board's website

Reasons for visiting the National Board website



Additional information sought by practitioners include (but not limited to)...

- Professional growth and level guidelines
- Code of Ethics
- Mental Health Registration
- Help with NDIS registration issues
- Exact dates of registration to inform & plan PD
- A rural and remote policy
- Professional growth and level guidelines

Additional feedback from occupational therapists

Sample of open ended responses *(full list of responses provided separately)*

I find APHRA more important than the OT board due to minimal benefits and high costs of registration - most OTs therefore are non-members.

Communication between the two is frustrating and time consuming within a busy practice. Streamlining processes to avoid ping-pong between the 2 organisations playing phone tag because of mixed messages would be of great value.

I didn't understand the difference between AHPRA and the national boards. I thought all the roles were performed by AHPRA.

I would like to see AHPRA continue with their good work and information given to health practitioners.

Boards are always out of touch with rural therapists.

I think National Boards might sit under AHPRA and I just don't understand the connection between them. I am confused about their roles...? Will look at the website/s more after this survey! I suspect many therapists are in the same boat.

Regulation is necessary and helps to ensure the capability of a workforce, but this regulation needs to be even handed, reasonable and fair and not unfairly discriminate or disadvantage members of a workforce - please have someone independently review your current registration requirements to help foster improvement.

The process of registration for occupational therapists from the UK who want to work in Australia is expensive and time consuming. We have a national shortage of OTs due to NDIS. We could attract short term OTs from the UK if the process was easier.

I never get any communication from AHPRA except to pay money.

If we are registered with AHPRA and have oversight from our Board, why are we now subject to additional and expensive conditions to be registered with the NDIS? This makes a joke of the current regulatory requirements.

Please make rules that are reasonable and easy to follow.

I don't believe there is a clear understanding of the role of each board. It would be helpful for practitioners to know the role of each and how they interact.

The boards PD training is too expensive.

More information

For further information about this study please contact:

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