



# 2019

## Occupational Therapists



Occupational therapists are registered health practitioners who work with people to improve their health and wellbeing, with a focus on physical and mental health that may be related to a person's injury or illness, or to an accident or developmental impairment. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in everyday life.

To gain registration as an occupational therapist, practitioners must complete a minimum four-year undergraduate, or two-year postgraduate Master program of study approved by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

### CONTENTS

#### Workforce

#### Quick Facts

#### Table 1: Occupational Therapists

#### Figure 2, 3: Gender and age

#### Table 2 : Replacement rate

#### Table 3, 4: Average hours per week and clinical FTE by sector

#### Figure 4: Average hours per week by gender and age group

#### Table 5, 6: Principal role and principal work setting

#### Table 7, 8: Principal scope of practice and advanced scope of practice

#### Table 9: Initial qualification country

#### Table 10: Years worked and years intended to work

#### Table 11: Distribution by state and territory

#### Table 12 and 13: Distribution of workforce and tele-health by Modified Monash Model (MMM2019)



2019

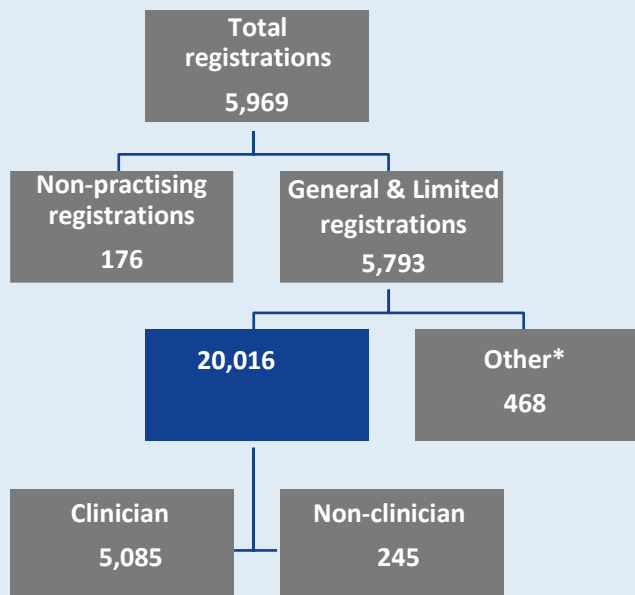
Occupational  
Therapists



1

# Workforce

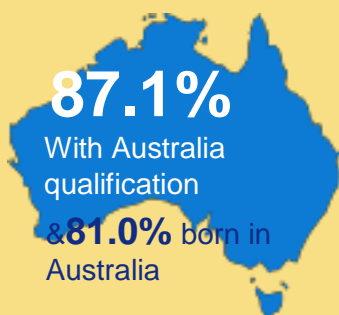
Figure 1: Occupational Therapists: Workforce status, 2019



*\*Other\* includes: working but on long leave, working outside the profession, looking for work, overseas, and retired.*

## Quick Facts - 2019

Quick facts for Occupational Therapists



**77.5%**  
in metropolitan areas (MM1)



**90.2%**  
female



**33.7**  
Average weekly hours



**36.6**  
Average age



**0.6%**  
identified as  
Aboriginal and/or  
Torres Strait Islander



Between 2015 and 2019, the total number of Occupational Therapists with general or limited registration increased by 31.0% from 17,929 to 23,480 (a compound annual growth rate of 7.0%). The number of employed Occupational Therapists ('workforce') increased 33.2% from 15,022 to 20,016 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 7.4%).

The number of employed Occupational Therapists who worked as clinicians increased 34.1% from 13,298 to 17,836 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 7.6%). Clinicians are Occupational Therapists who indicated that the principal role of their main job was clinician (including managers and supervisors also providing clinical services). Non-clinicians are Occupational Therapists who indicated that the principal role of their main job was administrator (including managers not providing clinical services), teacher, educator, research or other.

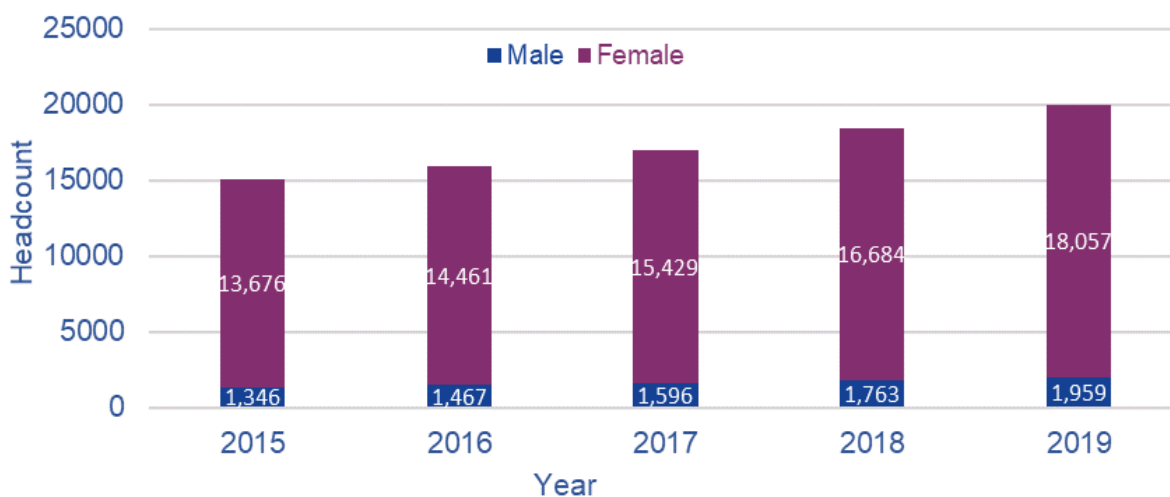
The following analysis of the Occupational Therapy 'workforce' is drawn from the number of the Occupational therapist with general or limited registration who were employed (20,016 in 2019 as indicated by blue shading in figure 1) unless otherwise stated.

**Table 1: Occupational Therapists, 2015 – 2019**

|            | 2015   | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   | Annual growth |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Registered | 17,929 | 19,001 | 20,145 | 21,569 | 23,480 | 7.0%          |
| Employed   | 15,022 | 15,928 | 17,025 | 18,447 | 20,016 | 7.4%          |
| Clinicians | 13,298 | 14,126 | 15,077 | 16,434 | 17,836 | 7.6%          |

Source: NHWDS Occupational Therapists, 2015-2019

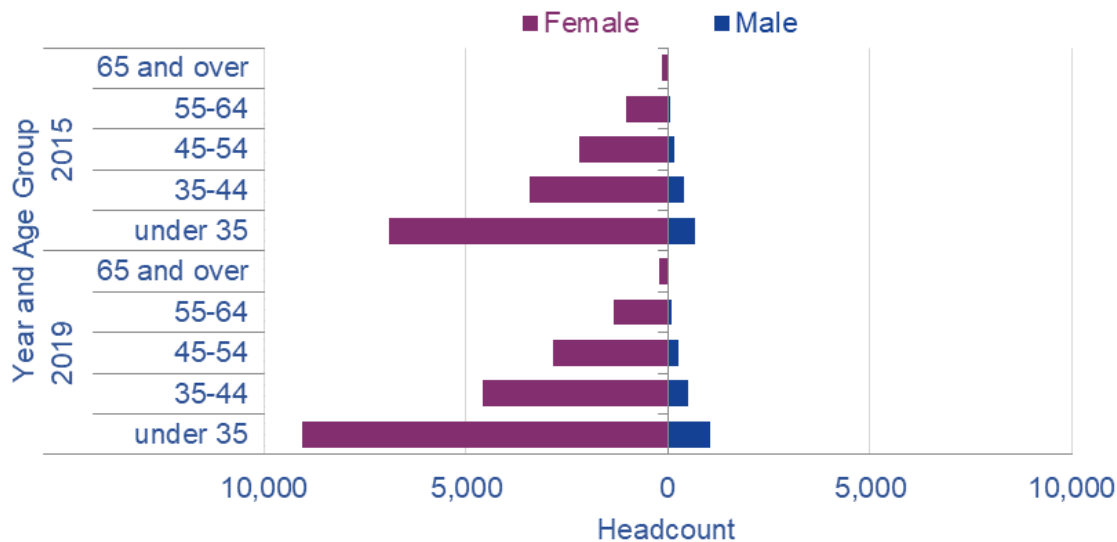
**Figure 2: Gender distribution, 2015-2019**



Source: NHWDS Occupational Therapists, 2015 – 2019



Figure 3: Age and gender distribution, 2015 and 2019



Source: NHWDS Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019

Table 2: Replacement rate, 2015 – 2019

|                         | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| New entrants            | 1,474      | 1,413      | 1,416      | 1,940      | 1,919      |
| Exits                   | 447        | 453        | 446        | 662        | 376        |
| <b>Replacement rate</b> | <b>3.3</b> | <b>3.1</b> | <b>3.2</b> | <b>2.9</b> | <b>5.1</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 - 2019

Table 3: Average hours per week, 2015 – 2019

|                     | 2015        | 2016        | 2017        | 2018        | 2019        |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Clinical hours*     | 27.7        | 27.9        | 27.8        | 28.3        | 28.8        |
| Non-clinical hours^ | 5.3         | 5.4         | 5.4         | 5.1         | 4.9         |
| <b>Total hours</b>  | <b>33.0</b> | <b>33.3</b> | <b>33.2</b> | <b>33.5</b> | <b>33.7</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 - 2019

Due to rounding figures may not sum to the expected total

\* Clinical hours are the reported weekly hours worked in clinical roles (including managers and supervisors also providing clinical services)

^ Non-clinical hours are the reported weekly hours worked in non-clinical roles (including teacher, researcher, administrator or other)



**Table 4: Clinical full time equivalent (FTE) by sector, 2015 and 2019**

| Sector         | 2015            |             | 2019            |             |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                | Clinical FTE    | %           | Clinical FTE    | %           |
| Private sector | 4,854.2         | 44.3%       | 8,422.6         | 55.5%       |
| Public sector  | 6,105.3         | 55.7%       | 6,740.7         | 44.5%       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>10,959.5</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>15,163.2</b> | <b>100%</b> |

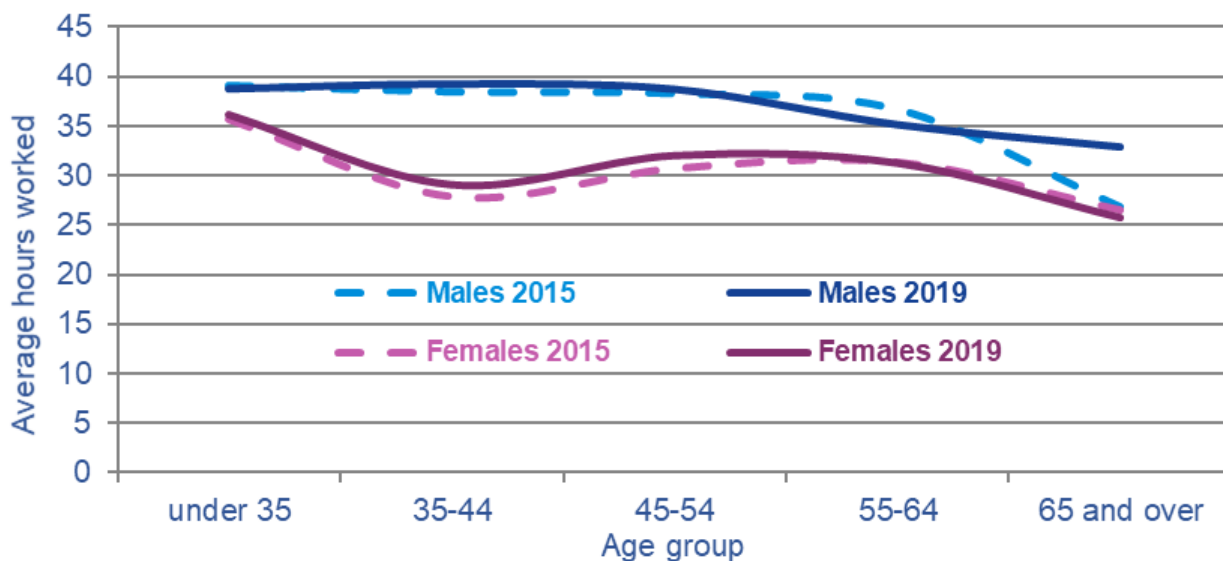
Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019

Includes Occupational Therapists who reported working hours in public and / or private sectors in their clinical roles

Due to rounding figures may not sum to the expected total

Full time equivalent (FTE) based on 38 hours per week

**Figure 4: Average hours per week by gender and age group, 2015 and 2019**



Source: NHWDS Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019

**Table 5: Principal role, 2015 and 2019**

| Principal role      | 2015          |             | 2019          |             |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                     | Headcount     | %           | Headcount     | %           |
| Clinician           | 13,298        | 88.5%       | 17,836        | 89.1%       |
| Administrator       | 885           | 5.9%        | 1,144         | 5.7%        |
| Teacher or educator | 407           | 2.7%        | 507           | 2.5%        |
| Researcher          | 197           | 1.3%        | 221           | 1.1%        |
| Other               | 235           | 1.6%        | 308           | 1.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>15,022</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>20,016</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019



**Table 6: Principal work setting, 2015 and 2019**

| Principal work setting                      | 2015          |             | 2019          |             |
|---|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|   | Headcount     | Avg. hours  | Headcount     | Avg. hours  |
| Hospital                                    | 3,130         | 34.5        | 3,725         | 34.8        |
| Other community health care service         | 2,525         | 33.2        | 3,047         | 33.4        |
| Group private practice                      | 1,326         | 32.5        | 2,134         | 33.3        |
| Disability service                          | 1,070         | 32.2        | 1,700         | 34.2        |
| Solo private practice                       | 1,124         | 29.1        | 1,604         | 31.1        |
| Outpatient service                          | 1,199         | 32.4        | 1,439         | 33.3        |
| Residential aged care facility              | 495           | 32.3        | 1,289         | 35.4        |
| Educational facility                        | 784           | 32.1        | 990           | 32.1        |
| Rehabilitation/physical development service | 891           | 35.2        | 940           | 34.0        |
| Other private practice                      | 409           | 32.3        | 935           | 34.3        |
| Other government department or agency       | 562           | 32.5        | 683           | 34.0        |
| Other                                       | 519           | 34.2        | 529           | 34.5        |
| Other commercial/business service           | 363           | 36.0        | 298           | 35.6        |
| Domiciliary service                         | 302           | 30.6        | 268           | 30.9        |
| Other residential health care facility      | 96            | 37.7        | 92            | 34.2        |
| Medical centre                              | -             | -           | 61            | 32.8        |
| Defence forces                              | 53            | 38.2        | 58            | 34.8        |
| Health promotion service                    | 62            | 31.8        | 55            | 34.2        |
| Aboriginal health service                   | 32            | 36.7        | 42            | 33.5        |
| Locum private practice                      | 21            | 24.5        | 38            | 35.0        |
| Community drug and alcohol service          | 17            | 31.4        | 35            | 33.5        |
| Correctional service                        | 22            | 35.4        | 34            | 38.0        |
| Hospice                                     | 15            | 34.1        | 12            | 30.7        |
| Sports centre/clinic                        | 5             | 35.6        | 8             | 29.8        |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>15,022</b> | <b>33.0</b> | <b>20,016</b> | <b>33.7</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019

'NP' denotes figure that are not published (suppressed) for confidentiality purposes



**Table 7: Principal scope of practice, 2015 – 2019**

| Principal scope of practice | 2015          |             | 2019          |             |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                             | Headcount     | %           | Headcount     | %           |
| Paediatrics                 | 2,765         | 18.4%       | 4,068         | 20.3%       |
| Rehabilitation              | 3,006         | 20.0%       | 3,433         | 17.2%       |
| Aged care                   | 2,521         | 16.8%       | 3,364         | 16.8%       |
| Disability                  | 1,118         | 7.4%        | 2,470         | 12.3%       |
| Mental health               | 1,806         | 12.0%       | 2,377         | 11.9%       |
| Occupational health         | 1,132         | 7.5%        | 1,103         | 5.5%        |
| Hand therapy                | 507           | 3.4%        | 643           | 3.2%        |
| Neurological                | 452           | 3.0%        | 578           | 2.9%        |
| Driving assessment          | 62            | 0.4%        | 87            | 0.4%        |
| Other                       | 1441          | 9.6%        | 1556          | 7.8%        |
| Unknown / not stated        | 212           | 1.4%        | 337           | 1.7%        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>15,022</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>20,016</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019

**Table 8: Advanced scope of practice, 2015 – 2019**

| Advanced scope of practice     | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| No. of Occupational Therapists | 1,990 | 2,143 | 2,219 | 2,178 | 2,217 |
| % of total employed            | 13.2% | 13.5% | 13.0% | 11.8% | 11.1% |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 - 2019

**Table 9: International qualification, 2015 and 2019**

| Country              | 2015          |             | 2019          |             |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                      | Headcount     | %           | Headcount     | %           |
| Australia            | 12,936        | 86.1%       | 17,428        | 87.1%       |
| Overseas             | 1,176         | 7.8%        | 1,437         | 7.2%        |
| Unknown / not stated | 910           | 6.1%        | 1,151         | 5.8%        |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>15,022</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>20,016</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2015 and 2019



**Table 10: Years worked and years intended to remain in the workforce by principal role, 2019**

| Principal role      | Average years worked | Average years intended to work |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Clinician           | 10.9                 | 22.1                           |
| Administrator       | 17.7                 | 17.3                           |
| Teacher or educator | 18.7                 | 17.2                           |
| Researcher          | 16.4                 | 20.3                           |
| Other               | 12.6                 | 19.6                           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>11.6</b>          | <b>21.6</b>                    |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2019

**Table 11: Distribution by State/Territory, 2019**

| State/Territory             | Headcount     | Full time equivalent (FTE) | Average weekly hours | Population        | FTE per 100,000 population |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| New South Wales             | 5,703         | 5,058.3                    | 33.7                 | 8,089,817         | 62.5                       |
| Victoria                    | 5,241         | 4,667.4                    | 33.8                 | 6,596,039         | 70.8                       |
| Queensland                  | 4,049         | 3,686.5                    | 34.6                 | 5,094,510         | 72.4                       |
| South Australia             | 1,541         | 1,347.6                    | 33.2                 | 1,751,963         | 76.9                       |
| Western Australia           | 2,663         | 2,278.7                    | 32.5                 | 2,621,509         | 86.9                       |
| Tasmania                    | 305           | 252.2                      | 31.4                 | 534,457           | 47.2                       |
| Australia Capital Territory | 324           | 291.0                      | 34.1                 | 426,704           | 68.2                       |
| Northern Territory          | 182           | 175.8                      | 36.7                 | 245,929           | 71.5                       |
| Unknown / not stated        | 8             | 8.8                        | 41.9                 | -                 | -                          |
| <b>Australia</b>            | <b>20,016</b> | <b>17,766.2</b>            | <b>33.7</b>          | <b>25,365,571</b> | <b>70.0</b>                |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2019

ABS 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, June 2019

Full time equivalent (FTE) based on 38 hours per week





**Table 12: Distribution by Modified Monash Model (MMM), 2019**

| Modified Monash               | Headcount     | Full time equivalent | Average weekly hours | Population        | FTE per 100,000 population |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| MM1 - Metropolitan            | 15,508        | 13,806.4             | 33.8                 | 18,320,373        | 75.4                       |
| MM2 - Regional centres        | 1,930         | 1,731.5              | 34.1                 | 2,245,754         | 77.1                       |
| MM3 - Large rural towns       | 1,396         | 1,203.8              | 32.8                 | 1,587,466         | 75.8                       |
| MM4 - Medium rural towns      | 582           | 499.3                | 32.6                 | 968,583           | 51.6                       |
| MM5 - Small rural towns       | 396           | 333.3                | 32.0                 | 1,748,340         | 19.1                       |
| MM6 - Remote communities      | 136           | 126.2                | 35.3                 | 281,794           | 44.8                       |
| MM7 - Very remote communities | 60            | 56.8                 | 36.0                 | 212,587           | 26.7                       |
| Unknown / not stated          | 8             | 8.8                  | 41.9                 | -                 | -                          |
| <b>Australia</b>              | <b>20,016</b> | <b>17,766.2</b>      | <b>33.7</b>          | <b>25,365,571</b> | <b>70.0</b>                |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2019

Full time equivalent (FTE) based on 38 hours per week

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/modified-monash-model-fact-sheet>

Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2019

ABS estimated resident population (unpublished)

**Table 13: Telehealth practitioners by Modified Monash (MMM), 2019**

| Modified Monash Model         | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| MM1 - Metropolitan            | 65.4%      |
| MM2 - Regional centres        | 12.9%      |
| MM3 - Large rural towns       | 9.9%       |
| MM4 - Medium rural towns      | 5.7%       |
| MM5 - Small rural towns       | 2.8%       |
| MM6 - Remote communities      | 2.1%       |
| MM7 - Very remote communities | 1.2%       |

Source: NHWDS, Occupational Therapists, 2019

MMM breakdown for tele-health refers to the location of the Occupational Therapists not the location of the person receiving the service

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/modified-monash-model-fact-sheet>

Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2019



## Commonwealth of Australia 2020

This work is copyright. You may download, display, print and reproduce the whole or part of this work in unaltered form for your own personal use or, if you are part of an organisation, for internal use within your organisation, but only if you or your organisation do not use the reproduction for any commercial purpose and retain this copyright notice and all disclaimer notices as part of that reproduction. Apart from rights to use as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 or allowed by this copyright notice, all other rights are reserved and you are not allowed to reproduce the whole or any part of this work in any way (electronic or otherwise) without first being given the specific written permission from the Commonwealth to do so. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights are to be sent to the Communication Branch, Department of Health, GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, or via e-mail to [copyright@health.gov.au](mailto:copyright@health.gov.au).

Enquiries concerning this report and its reproduction should be directed to:

Department of Health  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601  
[healthworkforcedata@health.gov.au](mailto:healthworkforcedata@health.gov.au)

## References

- 1) National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS) Occupational Therapists 2015-2019 (<http://hwd.health.gov.au>)
- 2) ABS 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, June 2019
- 3) ABS estimated resident population (unpublished)