



2019

Optometrists



Optometrists are registered healthcare practitioners trained to diagnose vision problems, prescribe optical appliances, and treat a range of eye conditions.

To gain registration as an optometrist, practitioners must complete a five year undergraduate, a five year combined undergraduate/Masters (or 3.5 year accelerated program), or a four-year Master program of study approved by the Optometry Board of Australia.

CONTENTS

Workforce

Quick Facts

Table 1: Optometrists

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 endorsement

Table 7: Principal work setting

Table 8: Initial qualification country

Table 9: Years worked and years intended to work

Table 10: Distribution by state and territory

Table 11 and 12: Distribution of workforce and tele-health by Modified Monash Model (MMM2019)



2019

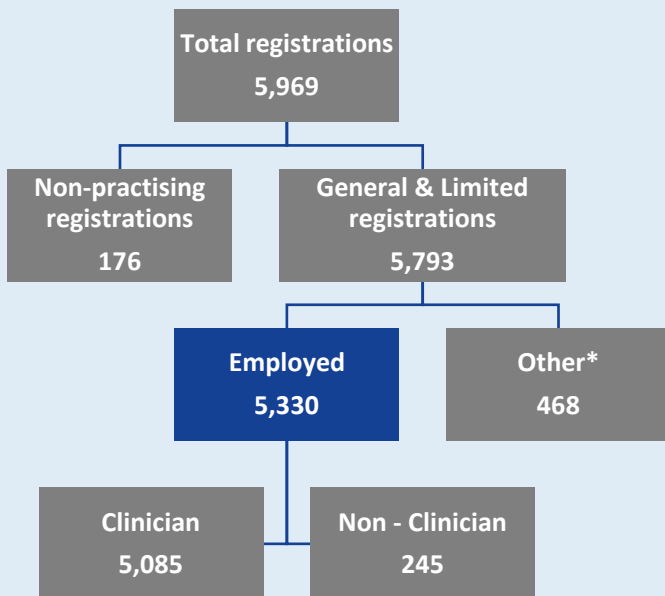
Optometrists



1

Workforce

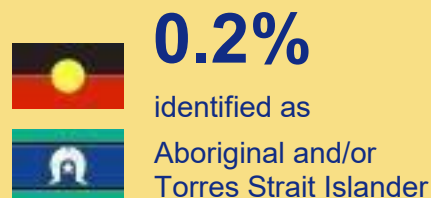
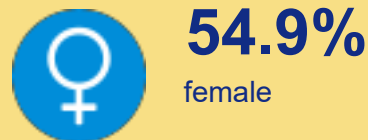
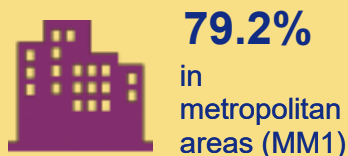
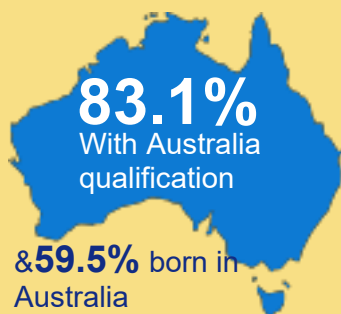
Figure 1: Optometrists: Workforce status, 2019



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

Quick Facts - 2019

Quick facts for Optometrists





Between 2015 and 2019, the total number of Optometrists with general or limited registration increased by 17.4% from 5,084 to 5,969 (a compound annual growth rate of 4.1%). The number of employed Optometrists ('workforce') increased 17.0% from 4,557 to 5,330 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 4.0%).

The number of employed Optometrists who worked as clinicians increased 16.9% from 4,349 to 5,085 over the same period (a compound annual growth rate of 4.0%). Clinicians are Optometrists who indicated that the principal role of their main job was clinician (including managers and supervisors also providing clinical services). Non-clinicians are Optometrists who indicated that the principal role of their main job was administrator (including managers not providing clinical services), teacher, educator, research or other.

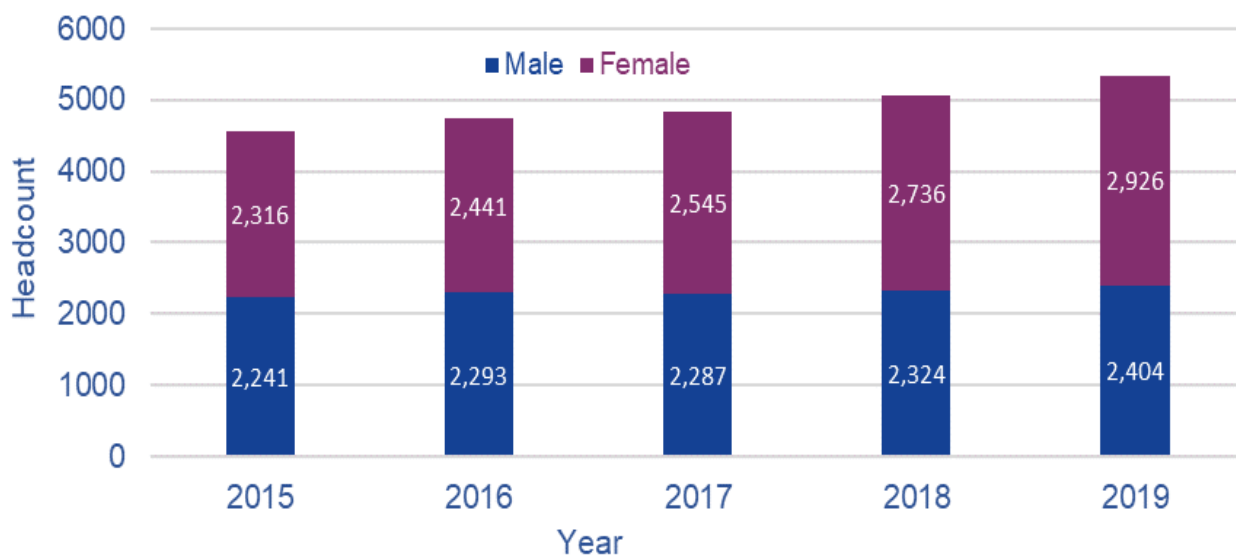
The following analysis of the Optometry 'workforce' is drawn from the number of the Optometrists with general or limited registration who were employed (5,330 in 2019 as indicated by blue shading in figure 1) unless otherwise stated.

Table 1: Optometrists, 2015 – 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Annual growth
Registered	5,084	5,266	5,399	5,632	5,969	4.1%
Employed	4,557	4,734	4,832	5,060	5,330	4.0%
Clinicians	4,349	4,511	4,609	4,816	5,085	4.0%

Source: NHWDS Optometrists, 2015-2019

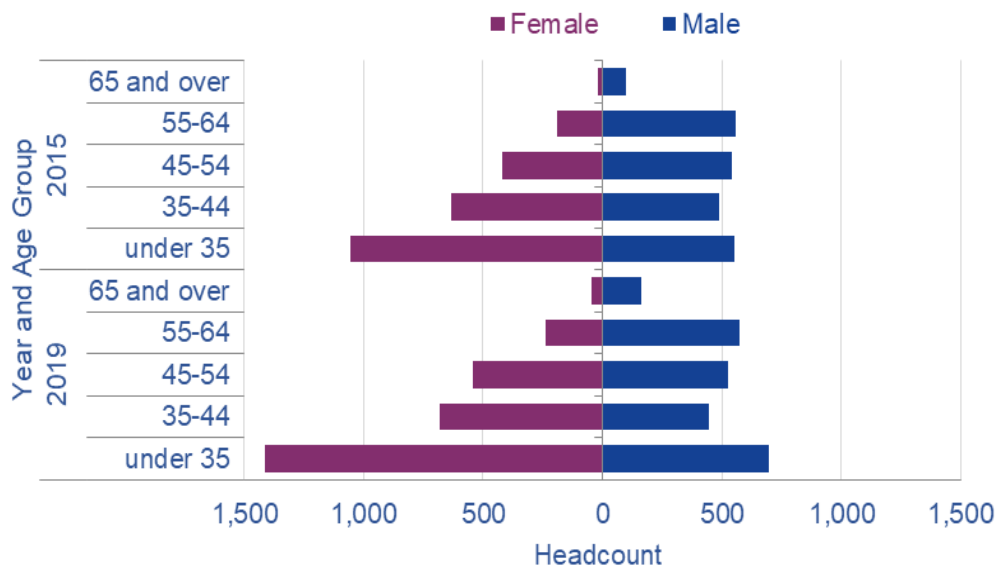
Figure 2: Gender distribution, 2015-2019



Source: NHWDS Optometrists, 2015 – 2019



Figure 3: Age and gender distribution, 2015 and 2019



Source: NHWDS Optometrists, 2015 and 2019

Table 2: Replacement rate, 2015 – 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
New entrants	311	236	232	331	393
Exits	93	73	112	110	79
Replacement rate	3.3	3.2	2.1	3.0	5.0

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 - 2019

Table 3: Average hours per week, 2015 – 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Clinical hours*	32.4	32.2	32.1	32.2	32.0
Non-clinical hours^	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.6
Total hours	35.4	35.1	35.0	34.9	34.6

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 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	3,684.7	94.7%	4,280.6	95.3%
Public sector	206.4	5.3%	210.9	4.7%
Total	3,891.1	100%	4,491.5	100%

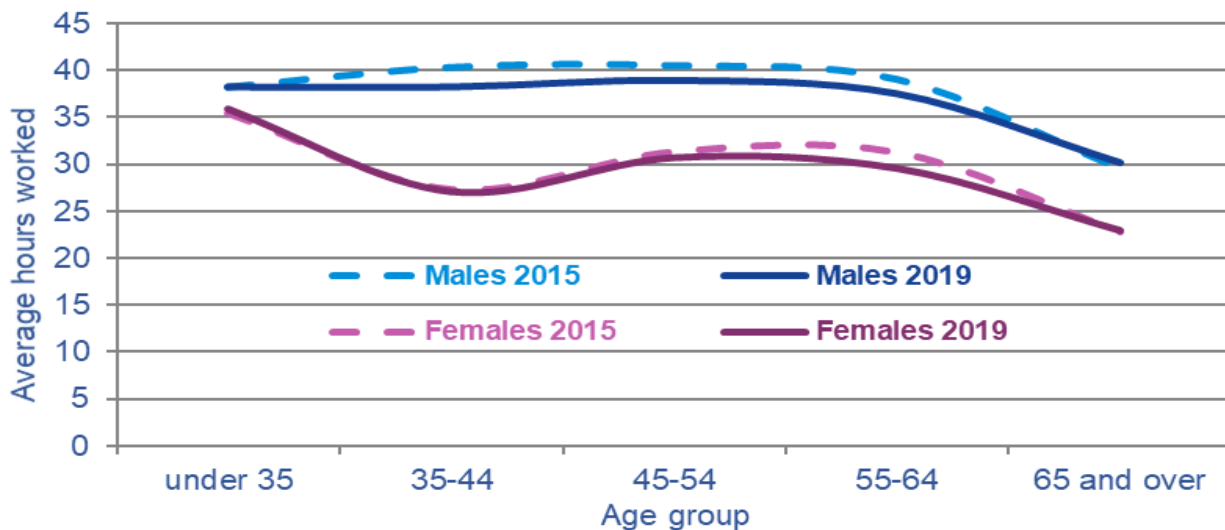
Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 and 2019

Includes Optometrists 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 Optometrists, 2015 and 2019



Table 5: Principal role, 2015 and 2019

Principal role	2015		2019	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Clinician	4,349	95.4%	5,085	95.4%
Administrator	61	1.3%	79	1.5%
Teacher or educator	61	1.3%	79	1.5%
Researcher	68	1.5%	61	1.1%
Other	18	0.4%	26	0.5%
Total	4,557	100%	5,330	100%

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 and 2019

Table 6: Endorsements, 2015 – 2019

Type of endorsement	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scheduled Medicines	2,172	2,460	2,721	3,043	3,449
% of employed	47.7%	52.0%	56.3%	60.1%	64.7%

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 - 2019



Table 7: Principal work setting, 2015 and 2019

Principal work setting	2015		2019	
	Headcount	Avg. hours	Headcount	Avg. hours
Group private practice	2,105	35.3	2,460	34.5
Solo private practice	1,457	37.3	1,475	36.2
Locum private practice	417	28.3	529	28.5
Commercial/business service	260	38.1	459	37.6
Educational facility	131	36.9	124	34.3
Other	85	32.0	107	36.0
Community health care service	51	35.2	64	31.7
Medical centre	NP	-	58	35.4
Hospital	11	26.5	18	29.3
Residential health care facility	17	32.2	18	33.5
Aboriginal health service	20	38.5	14	38.1
Remaining work settings	NP	19.7	4	27.7
Total	4,557	35.4	5,330	34.6

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 and 2019

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

Table 8: Initial qualification country, 2015 and 2019

Country	2015		2019	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Australia	3,697	81.1%	4,428	83.1%
Overseas	666	14.6%	709	13.3%
Unknown / not stated	194	4.3%	193	3.6%
Total	4,557	100%	5,330	100%

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2015 and 2019



Table 9: 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	16.7	18.9
Administrator	21.2	14.4
Teacher or educator	20.2	17.9
Researcher	17.7	21.7
Other	19.7	21.2
Total	16.9	18.9

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2019

Table 10: Distribution by State/Territory, 2019

State/Territory	Headcount	Full time equivalent (FTE)	Average weekly hours	Population	FTE per 100,000 population
New South Wales	1,797	1,625.6	34.4	8,089,817	20.1
Victoria	1,423	1,282.1	34.2	6,596,039	19.4
Queensland	1,103	1,020.5	35.2	5,094,510	20.0
South Australia	346	319.3	35.1	1,751,963	18.2
Western Australia	435	395.9	34.6	2,621,509	15.1
Tasmania	99	86.4	33.2	534,457	16.2
Australia Capital Territory	89	83.0	35.4	426,704	19.4
Northern Territory	32	32.5	38.5	245,929	13.2
Unknown / not stated	6	6.6	41.7	-	-
Australia	5,330	4,851.8	34.6	25,365,571	19.1

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2019

ABS 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, June 2019

Australia includes unknown state / territory

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



Table 11: Distribution by Modified Monash Model (MMM), 2019

Modified Monash	Headcount	Full time equivalent	Average weekly hours	Population	FTE per 100,000 population
MM1 - Metropolitan	4,221	3,796.5	34.2	18,320,373	20.7
MM2 - Regional centres	436	411.0	35.8	2,245,754	18.3
MM3 - Large rural towns	377	361.1	36.4	1,587,466	22.7
MM4 - Medium rural towns	179	170.8	36.3	968,583	17.6
MM5 - Small rural towns	71	64.9	34.8	1,748,340	3.7
MM6 - Remote communities	23	24.0	39.6	281,794	8.5
MM7 - Very remote communities	17	17.0	37.9	212,587	8.0
Unknown / not stated	6	6.6	41.7	-	-
Australia	5,330	4,851.8	34.6	25,365,571	19.1

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 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 12: Telehealth practitioners by Modified Monash (MMM), 2019

Modified Monash Model	Percentage
MM1 - Metropolitan	80.5%
MM2 - Regional centres	4.0%
MM3 - Large rural towns	10.1%
MM4 - Medium rural towns	2.7%
MM5 - Small rural towns	1.3%
MM6 - Remote communities	1.3%
MM7 - Very remote communities	-

Source: NHWDS, Optometrists, 2019

MMM breakdown for tele-health refers to the location of the Optometrists 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.

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

Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601
healthworkforcedata@health.gov.au

References

- 1) National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS) Optometrists 2015-2019 (<http://hwd.health.gov.au>)
- 2) ABS 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, June 2019
- 3) ABS Estimated Resident Population (unpublished)