

Occupational Therapy

2016 Factsheet

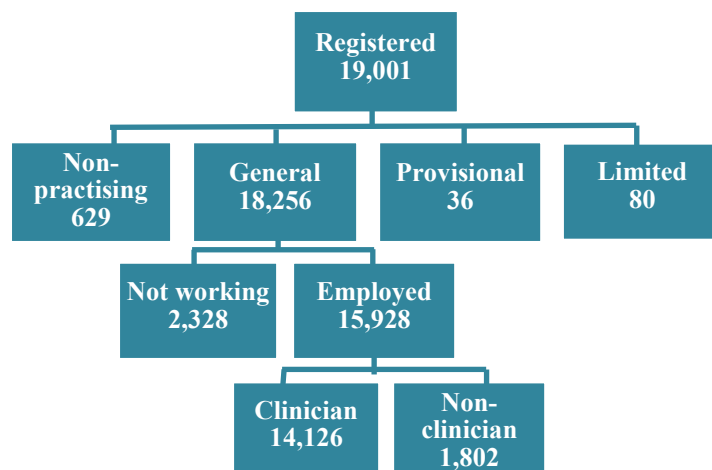


Occupational therapists are registered health practitioners who work with people to improve their health and wellbeing, with a focus on physical and mental health that may be related to a person's injury or illness, or to an accident or developmental impairment. The primary goal of occupational therapy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

Persons seeking to gain registration must complete a minimum four year undergraduate, or two year postgraduate master program of study approved by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

Workforce

Figure 1: Breakdown of occupational therapy workforce, 2016



'Non-clinician' includes roles reported by survey respondents that did not fit predefined survey categories.

The registered workforce has increased by 20.5% (3,232) from 2013 to 2016, with an average yearly growth rate of 6.4%.

Note: Analysis of the occupational therapy workforce contained in this document is based on the number of registered and employed occupational therapists (15,928 in 2016) unless otherwise stated.

Table 1: Headcount of occupational therapy workforce, 2013-2016

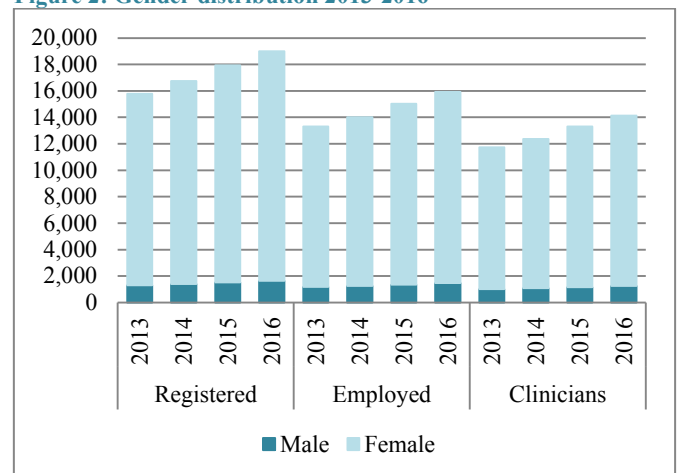
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Registered	15,769	16,757	17,929	19,001
Employed	13,309	14,023	15,022	15,928
Clinicians	11,837	12,449	13,298	14,126

Demographics

In 2016, 90.8% of the registered and employed occupational therapy workforce was female, down from 91.1% in 2013.

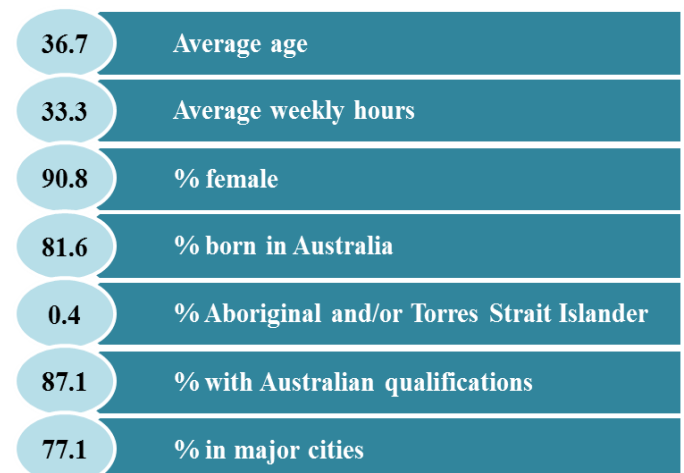
The average age of the workforce was 36.7 years in 2016; up from 36.5 in 2013.

Figure 2: Gender distribution 2013-2016



Quick Facts - 2016

Figure 3: Summary of registered and employed occupational therapy workforce, 2016



Hours Worked

Occupational therapists worked an average of 33.3 hours per week in 2013 and 2016. Average hours per week remained stable over this period with a slight decrease in hours in 2014 to 33.2 and 33.0 in 2015.

Table 2: Average hours per week 2013-2016

Average hours worked	2013	2014	2015	2016
Clinical	28.1	27.7	27.7	27.9
Non-clinical	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.4
Total	33.3	33.2	33.0	33.3

In 2016, female occupational therapists worked an average of 32.7 hours per week, down slightly from 32.8 in 2013. Male occupational therapists worked an average of 38.7 hours per week, up slightly from 38.6 in 2013.

In 2016, males aged 35-44 worked the longest hours per week on average at 39.3.

Table 3: Average hours worked per week by gender and age group, 2013 vs 2016

Age Group	Males - average hours		Females - average hours	
	2013	2016	2013	2016
20-34	39.0	38.8	36.1	35.6
35-44	39.3	39.3	27.6	28.3
45-54	37.3	38.9	31.1	31.4
55-64	36.0	35.4	31.3	31.4
65-74	28.0	25.2	25.9	26.5
75-99	np	np	np	21.3
Total	38.6	38.7	32.8	32.7

Note: 'np' denotes that the hours have been excluded from this table for confidentiality reasons.

Replacement Rate

In 2016, there were 3.1 new registrants for every occupational therapist that did not renew their registration from 2015, a decrease from the 2015 rate of 3.3, but in 2014 the rate was also 3.1.

Job Role

The 2016 workforce survey asked respondents to report their principal role (the main job in which they worked the most hours in the last week).

Principal Role

In 2016, a total of 14,126 (88.7%) occupational therapists worked as a clinician in their principal role, compared to 11,837 (88.9%) of the workforce in 2013.

Table 4: Headcounts by principal role, 2013 vs 2016

Principal role	Total Employed	
	2013	2016
Clinician	11,837	14,126
Administrator	786	948
Teacher or educator	324	434
Researcher	188	178
Other	174	242
Total	13,309	15,928

Principal Work Sector (public/private)

The 2016 workforce survey asks respondents to report the clinical hours worked in their principal role (their main job in which they worked the most hours in the last week) in either the public or private sector.

In 2016, 44.1% (7,020) of occupational therapists worked clinical hours in the public sector, down from 49.8% (6,630) in 2013, while 43.0% (6,849) worked clinical hours in the private sector, up from 37.7% (5,022) in 2013.

Table 5: Headcounts by sector in which clinical hours were worked, 2013 vs 2016

Employment sector	Total Employed	
	2013	2016
Public sector only	6,630	7,020
<i>Proportion (%)</i>	49.8%	44.1%
Private sector only	5,022	6,849
<i>Proportion (%)</i>	37.7%	43.0%
Both	588	713
<i>Proportion (%)</i>	4.4%	4.5%
Total	13,309	15,928

Note: 'Not applicable' responses have been excluded from this table but are included in the total

Principal Work Setting

In 2016, 20.0% (3,186) of occupational therapists worked in a hospital setting. The next most common work setting at 16.6% (2,646) was in other community health care services (e.g. community nursing/home support).

Table 6: Principal work setting by headcount and average hours worked, 2013 vs 2016

Principal work setting	2013		2016	
	Headcount	Avg. total hours	Headcount	Avg. total hours
Hospital	2,712	34.8	3,186	34.9
Other community health care service	2,425	32.7	2,646	32.8
Group private practice	1,085	33.4	1,501	33.2
Outpatient service	1,016	32.9	1,245	32.3
Solo private practice	954	29.0	1,184	29.2
Disability service	934	33.2	1,167	33.1
Rehabilitation/physical development service	971	35.3	927	35.4
Educational facility	620	32.7	825	32.6
Residential aged care facility	268	30.4	654	32.8
Other government department or agency	569	32.8	618	33.6
<i>Remaining work settings</i>	1,755	np	1,975	np
Total	13,309	33.3	15,928	33.3

Note: 'np' indicates that the average total hours are not available for this combined category.

Principal Scope of Practice

In 2016, 19.4% (3,083) of occupational therapists reported rehabilitation as the principal scope of practice in their principal role, down from 20.9% (2,777) in 2013. This was followed by 18.7% (2,971) in paediatrics, up from 17.4% (2,320) in 2013, and 16.8% (2,673) in aged care, up from 16.4% (2,189) in 2013.

Table 7: Headcounts by principal scope of practice of employed occupational therapists, 2013 vs 2016

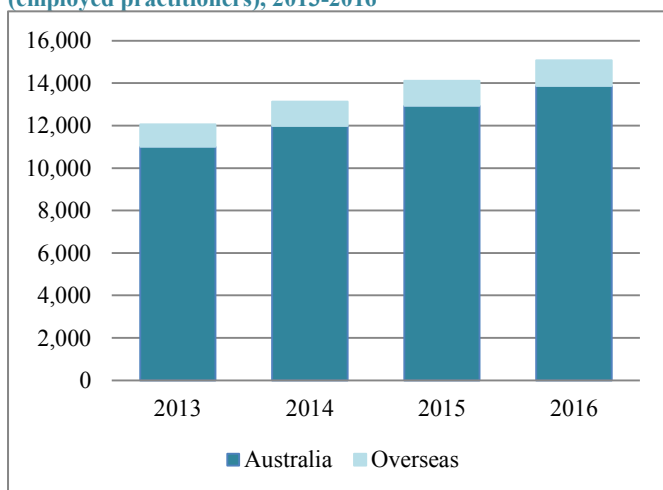
Principal scope of practice	Headcount	
	2013	2016
Rehabilitation	2,777	3,083
Paediatrics	2,320	2,971
Aged care	2,189	2,673
Mental health	1,581	1,924
Other	1,260	1,554
Disability	916	1,279
Occupational health	1,127	1,189
Hand therapy	426	542
Neurological	425	480
Not stated/unknown	236	170
Driving assessment	52	63
Total	13,309	15,928

Initial Qualification

The workforce survey asked health professionals where they obtained their initial qualification.

In 2016, 87.1% (13,875) of occupational therapists responded that they obtained their initial qualification(s) in Australia, and 7.5% (1,198) responded that they had obtained their initial qualification(s) overseas.

Figure 4: Country where the initial occupational therapy qualification was obtained – Australia or overseas (employed practitioners), 2013-2016

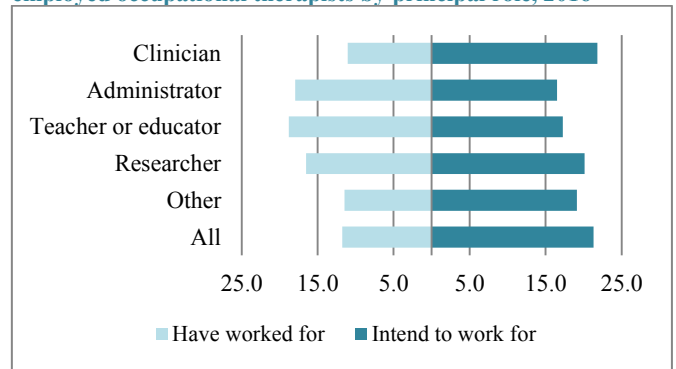


Working Intentions

In 2016, occupational therapists had worked an average of 11.8 years in the profession and intended to work for another 21.3 years.

In 2013, occupational therapists had worked for 11.3 years and intended to work for another 20.6 years.

Figure 5: Years worked, and years intended to work for employed occupational therapists by principal role, 2016



Distribution

State and Territory

Nationally there was an increase in the rate of occupational therapists per 100,000 population from 57.5 in 2013 to 65.8 per 100,000 in 2016.

In 2016, Western Australia had the highest rate of occupational therapists with 86.6 per 100,000 population, an increase of 10.4 per 100,000 from 2013.

In 2016, New South Wales was listed as the principal place of practice for 29.1% (4,640) of the occupational therapy workforce, followed by Victoria at 24.9% (3,972).

FTE (1.0 FTE is equivalent to one full-time worker) was lower than headcount at the national level, most particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, indicating that a larger number of occupational therapists may be working part-time in these state.

Table 8: Distribution of employed occupational therapists by state/territory, 2016

2016 State & Territory	Headcount	Total FTE	Avg. total hours	² Rate per 100,000 population
NSW	4,640	4,065.7	33.3	60.0
VIC	3,972	3,475.5	33.3	64.3
QLD	3,140	2,783.5	33.7	64.8
SA	1,261	1,082.8	32.6	73.6
WA	2,215	1,915.2	32.9	86.6
TAS	256	215.7	32.0	49.5
ACT	286	258.3	34.3	70.9
NT	157	145.8	35.3	63.9
Total	15,928	13,942.7	33.3	65.8

Note: 'Not stated/Unknown' responses are excluded from this table but are included in the total

²3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2015-16

Remoteness Area

In 2016, 92.3% (14,687) of the occupational therapy workforce worked in either major cities or inner regional locations. The average total hours worked increased with remoteness, from 33.4 hours in major cities to 39.5 hours in very remote areas.

Table 9: Distribution by remoteness area, 2016

2016 Remoteness Area	Headcount	Total FTE	Avg. total hours	³ Rate per 100,000 population
Major cities	12,273	10,776.5	33.4	71.2
Inner regional	2,414	2,058.5	32.4	55.0
Outer regional	1,079	949.9	33.5	51.7
Remote	117	112.0	36.4	38.0
Very remote	44	45.7	39.5	22.7
Total	15,928	13,942.7	33.3	65.8

Note: 'Not stated/Unknown' responses are excluded from this table but are included in the total ³ABS - 3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia, 2016

Other Work Location Outside of Major Cities

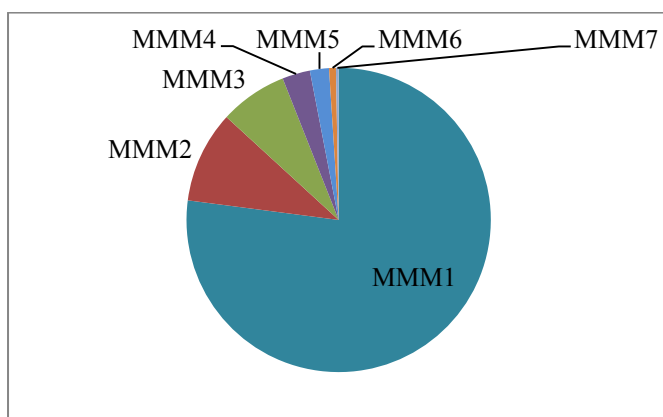
The 2016 workforce survey asked respondents who had noted their principal and second job location as a major city if they had also worked in either a regional, rural or remote location.

In 2016, 9.2% (1,459) of occupational therapists reported that they had, worked in a regional, rural or remote location: 45.0% (656) of respondents had worked in inner regional, 27.2% (397) had worked in outer regional, 6.4% (94) had worked in remote, and 4.9% (71) had worked in very remote locations.

Modified Monash Model

In 2016, the majority (77.1%) of the workforce were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification system, down from 77.7% in 2013 (see www.doctorconnect.gov.au for more information on the MMM).

Figure 6: Proportion of the workforce by MMM location - 2016



Tele-Health

Tele-health is the use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance. A question was added in the 2016 workforce survey to determine the average hours per week practiced via tele-health in the previous year.

A total of 8.6% (1,369) of the workforce provided a response to the tele-health question. On average the respondents practiced via tele-health for 9.2 hours per week.

In 2016, 64.4% of occupational therapists that provided tele-health services were located in a major city.

Table 10: Tele-health workforce remoteness location – 2016

Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
64.4%	17.8%	14.3%	2.3%	1.2%

Note: The tele-health workforce remoteness location refers to the location of the occupational therapist, not the location of the person receiving the service.

References

- 1) National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS): Allied Health Practitioners 2013-2016.
- 2) ABS - 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2015-16, Released 30/06/17.
- 3) ABS - 3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia, 2016.

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