
AHPRA

Review of stakeholder perceptions of AHPRA and the National Boards

A Social Research Project

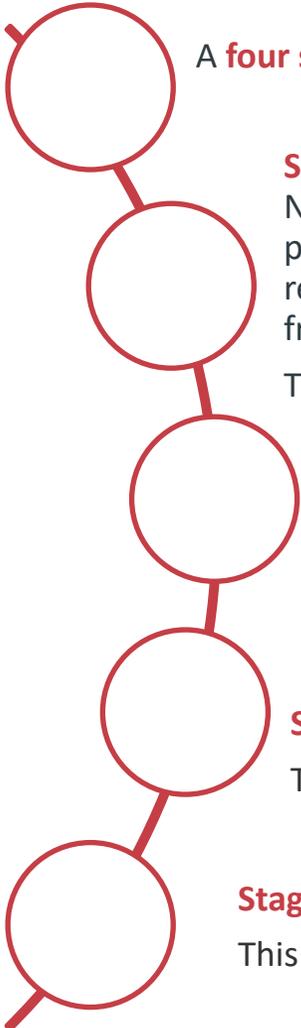
November 2018

Supplementary report prepared for:
The Osteopathy Board of Australia

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 **Osteopathy 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.

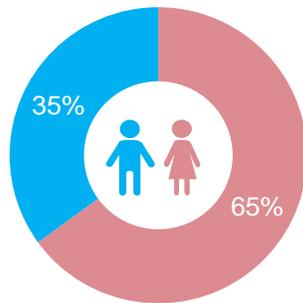
Quantitative approach

- 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.

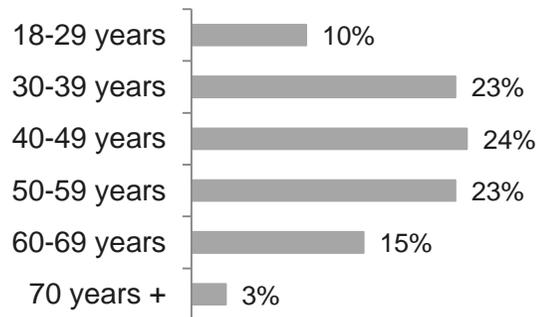
	Community Survey	Practitioner Survey
Fieldwork dates	September 19 - 25	September 19 - 27
Responses	1,020	5,694
Email invitations sent	na	100,257
Response rate	na	6.0%

Sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,694)

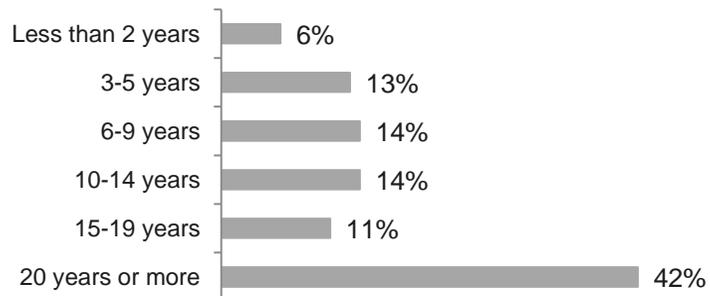
Gender



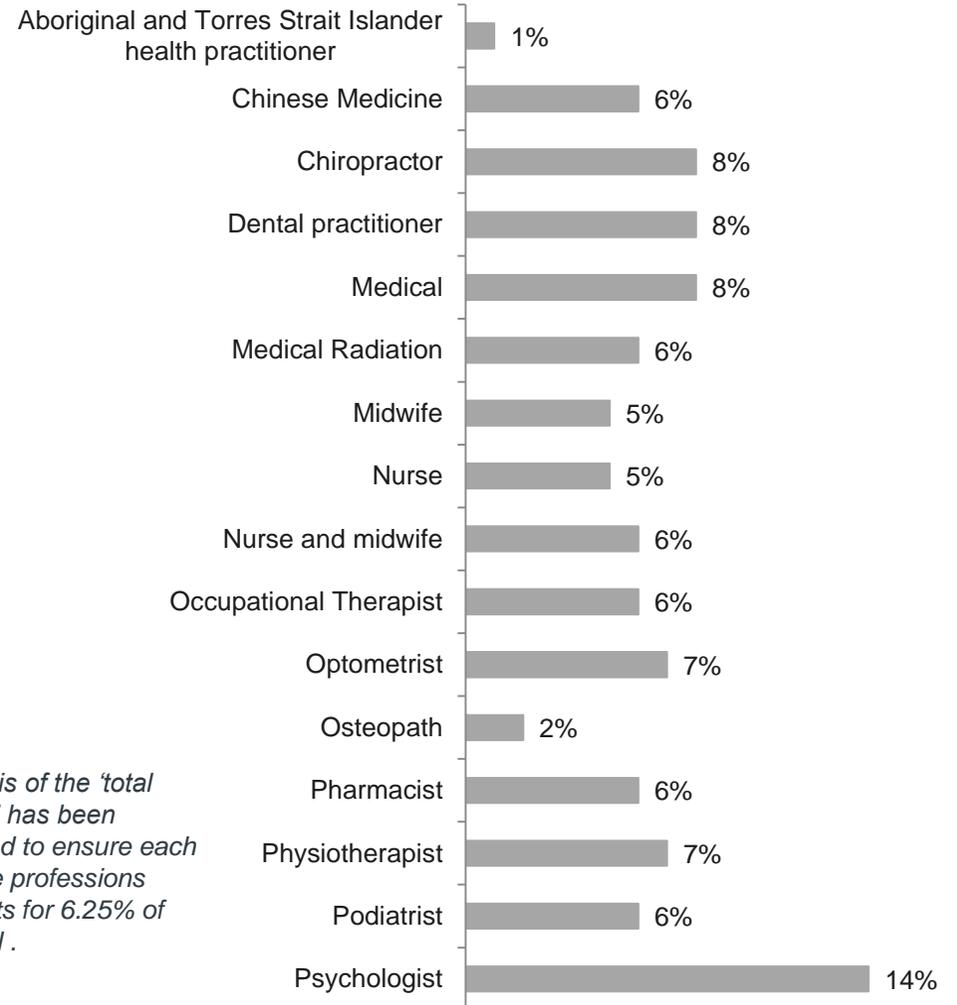
Age



Years in practice



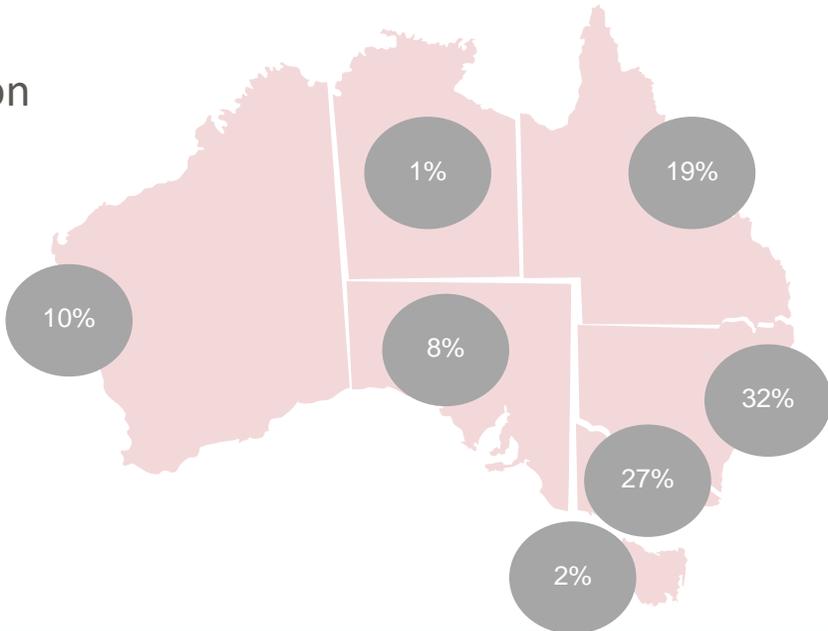
Practitioner type*



**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)

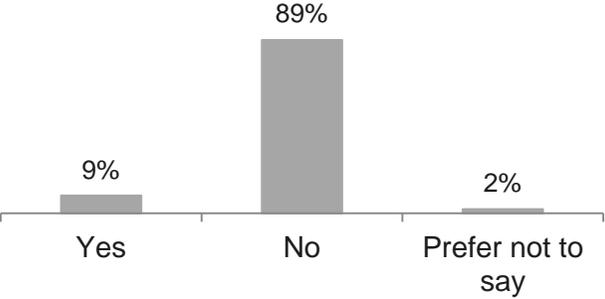
Location



Metro: 66%

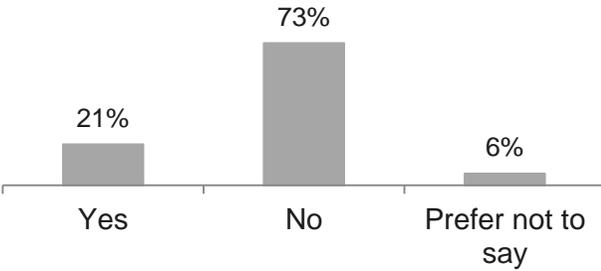
Regional : 34%

% 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*



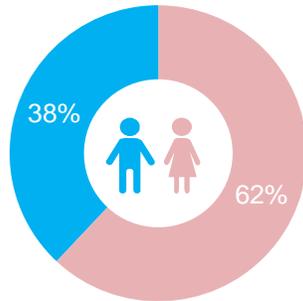
* As identified by individual respondents

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

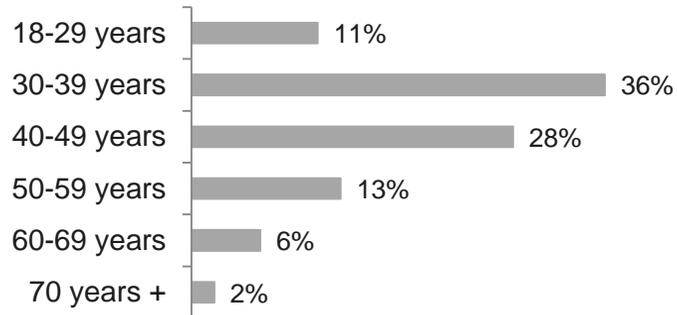
Specific insights into the responses from:
osteopaths

Sample of osteopaths (n=112)

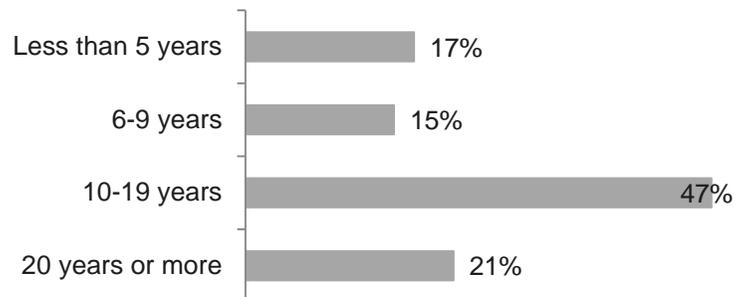
Gender:



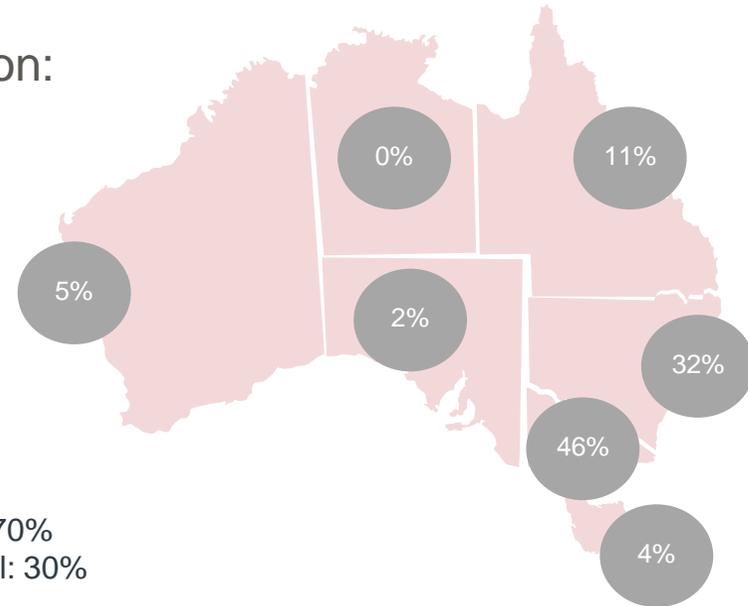
Age:



Years in practice:

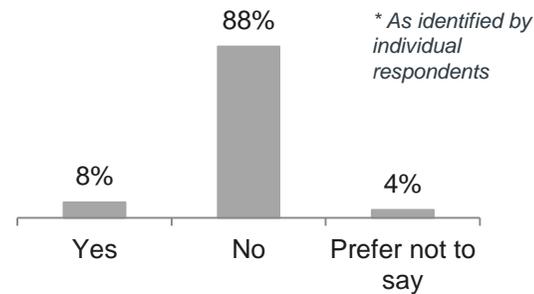


Location:

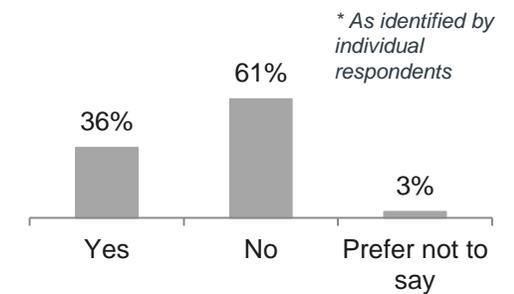


Metro: 70%
Regional: 30%

% 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 Osteopathy 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=112)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
For practitioners	44%	(+8%)
Necessary	43%	(+8%)
Administrators	42%	(+7%)
Regulators	39%	(+1%)
Decision-makers	35%	(+8%)
Advocates	30%	(+12%)
Bureaucratic	26%	(0%)
For the public	25%	(+2%)
Competent	25%	(+7%)
Helpful	23%	(+11%)

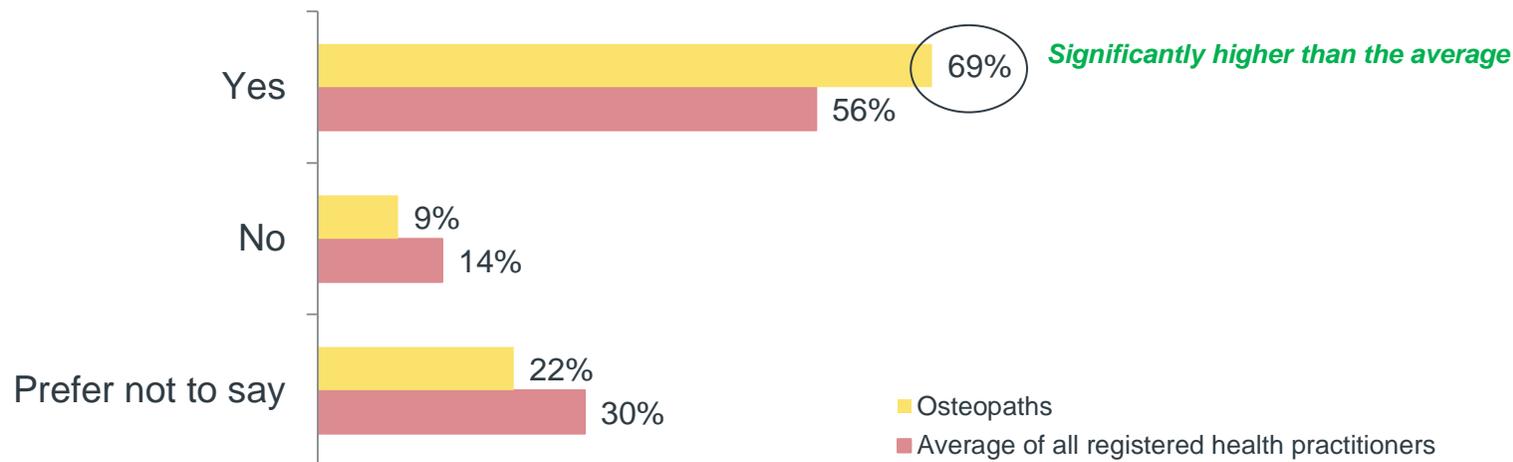
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Supportive	22%	(+9%)
Good communicators	21%	(+10%)
Trustworthy	20%	(+7%)
Accessible	18%	(+6%)
Responsive	17%	(+10%)
Approachable	17%	(+5%)
Shows leadership	15%	(+2%)
Fair	13%	(+2%)
Listens	12%	(+4%)
Intimidating	12%	(+2%)

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

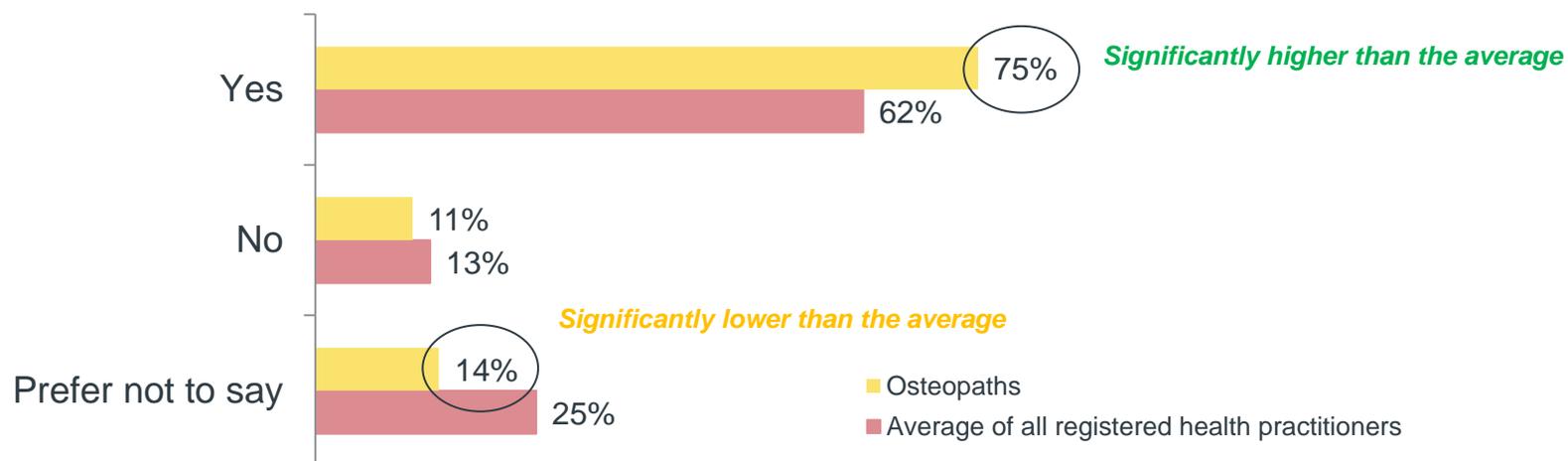
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in the Osteopathy 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 Osteopathy Board of Australia

Indicators of trust: **75% trust the Board**

They have our interests in need. Make sure that we are treated fairly among the community. Make sure practitioners don't break the rules.

I believe that they are, in general, a conservative cohort of practitioners that primarily focus on the safety of the public but are also good advocates for Osteopathy as it is a relatively small profession.

They work in the interest of the practitioner and the public and advocate for the profession.

They are supportive and fighting for the rights of Osteopaths.

I have only seen them make good actions on cases brought to them and I feel they still have the practitioners interests in mind.

They have an interest of representing the profession and communicating with AHPRA. They appear to be honest and open and communicate regularly to members via email updates, etc.

I have no reason to distrust them. They seem to do an excellent job.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **11% DO NOT trust the Board**

Appointees are not made on merit because of state based system - need the optimum skill mix to be trusted to undertake functions. Need to include experts in regulation/accreditation which may be from outside osteopathy profession.

Inconsistent, non transparent and non communicative with regard to processes for return to practice. Timelines are terrible for practitioners trying to get registered, especially in difficult rural positions.

The board seems to change their position statements on a regular basis and it feels like certain voices in Osteopathy are given more clout than others. I do not believe the OBA is protecting the public with their guidelines, but rather protecting themselves.

The board seems like an organisation that we as practitioners generally don't have a lot to do with. Sometimes the members of the board are very cliquey within the industry. I also feel like there are a lot of practitioners out there who are really struggling financially and the board is out of touch with these types of issues and the pressures faced by many practitioners.

Perceptions of AHPRA amongst Osteopaths

(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=112)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	65%	(+11%)
Administrators	58%	(+6%)
Bureaucratic	49%	(+9%)
For the public	46%	(+8%)
Necessary	40%	(0%)
Decision makers	33%	(+8%)
For practitioners	29%	(-1%)
Controlling	25%	(+8%)
Intimidating	23%	(+6%)
Rigid	22%	(+4%)

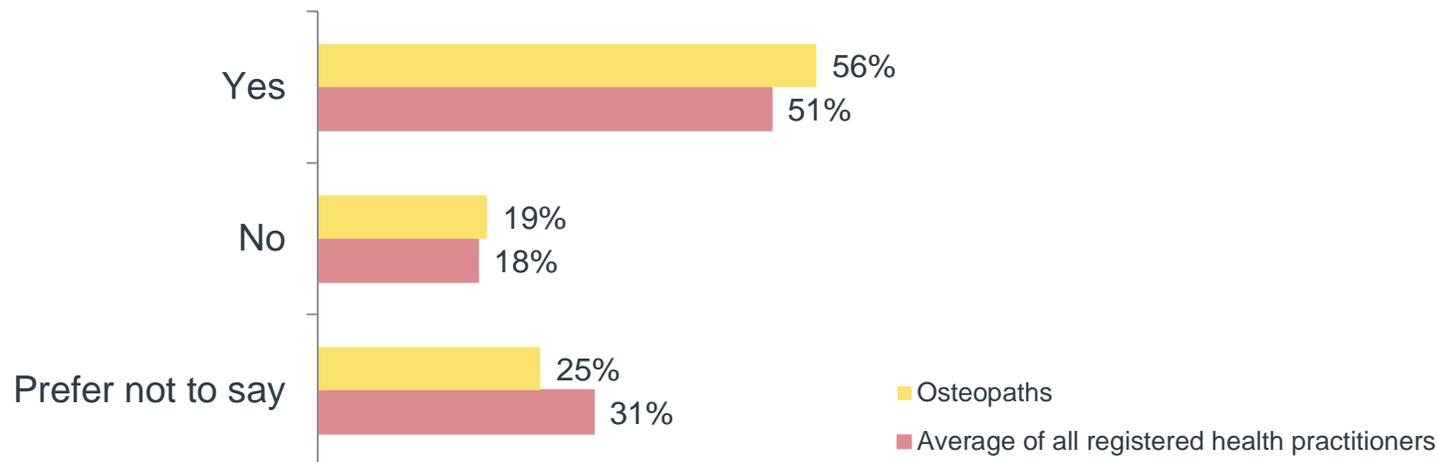
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Poor communicators	15%	(+1%)
Out of touch	14%	(+2%)
Competent	12%	(-3%)
Fair	11%	(+1%)
Trustworthy	11%	(+2%)
Accessible	10%	(-3%)
Approachable	9%	(0%)
Helpful	9%	(0%)
Responsive	9%	(+1%)
Zealous	8%	(+3%)

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

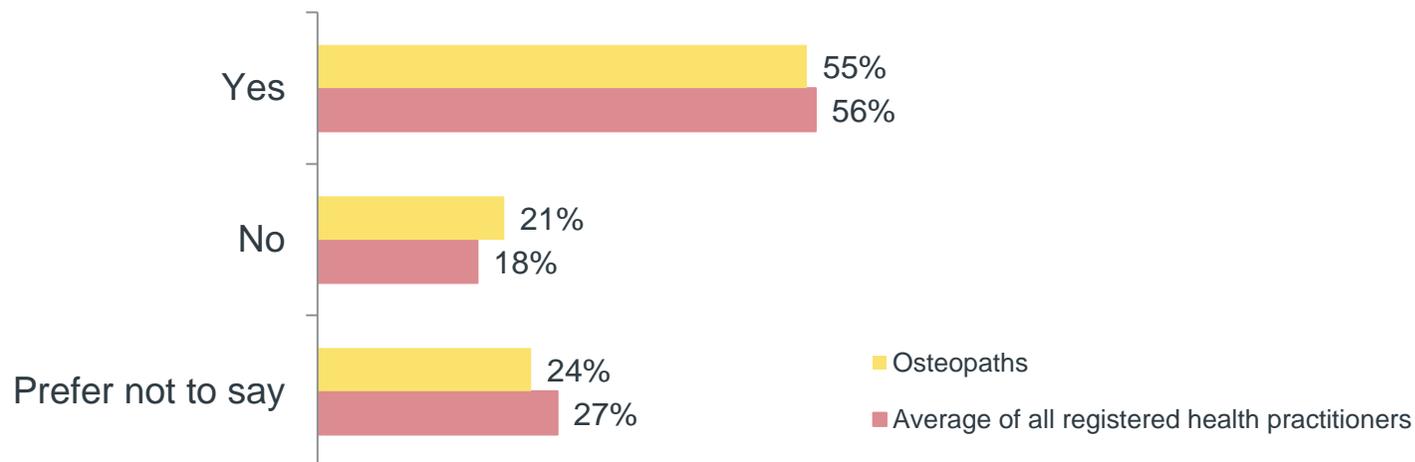
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in AHPRA amongst osteopaths

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 osteopaths

Indicators of trust: **55% trust AHPRA**

I trust that they are fair and are there to help practitioners maintain high standards thereby helping to keep the public safe.

They seem to be fair both ways in terms of practitioners side and the public they are looking out for. In my view AOA has been great in getting and explaining AHPRA's position and what it's AOA osteopath members need to do.

Fair, easy to follow guidelines for requirements of practitioners. Keeping a standard to keep public safe.

I believe they do have the best interest of Practitioners and the public as their primary concern. Clearly you can not please everyone, with all aspects of governance. But I do trust AHPRA is doing the best it can, in an honest fashion.

They send out helpful information.

I have been audited and the process was thorough. I also know if several other audits taking place and appropriate outcomes following from those audits.

They have high standards for practitioners to meet and maintain.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **21% DO NOT trust AHPRA**

Too bureaucratic and slow; funds could be better used to undertake functions.

Rigid advertising regulations. Rigid requirements for studies to prove efficacy of treatments.

Recent rulings on health pros in other fields that suggest they care more about bureaucracy than patient care.

AHPRA is outdated and does nothing for the health profession. For those health professionals that display unprofessional misconduct it is good that they get rid of them, but AHPRA in relation to helping any health profession itself is negligent.

Experience of previous audit process was appalling - bureaucratic, pedantic, impersonal, and drawn-out.

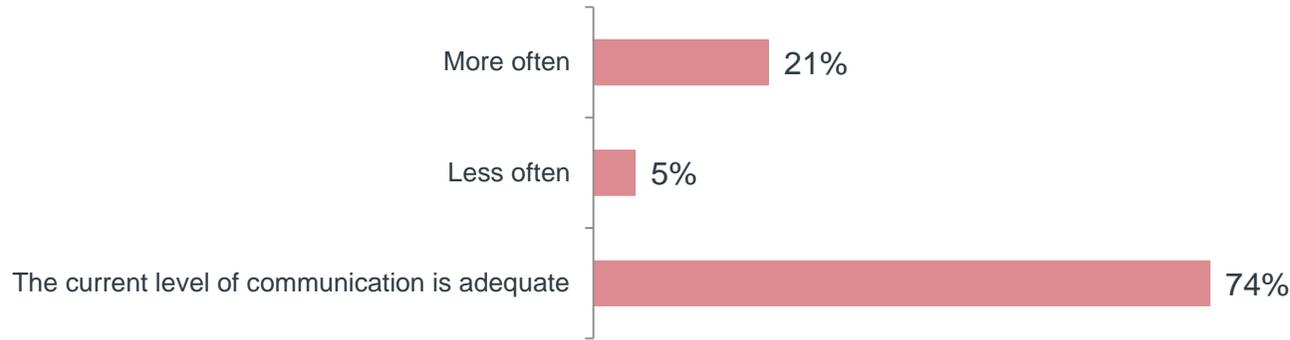
Questions were either not answered or poorly answered and left me more confused than before.

Seem to have a bias against certain professions.

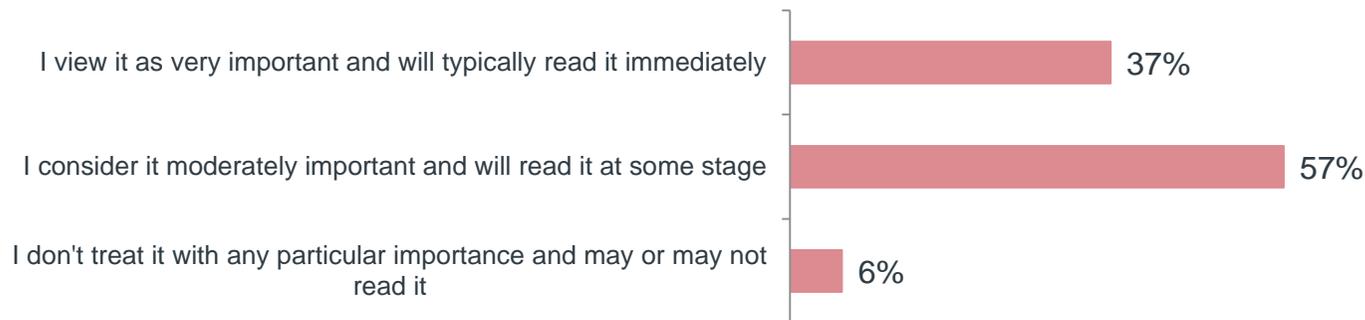
I am also not quite sure I believe the auditing process is completely random after a series of events would suggest otherwise.

Response to communication by the Osteopathy Board of Australia

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



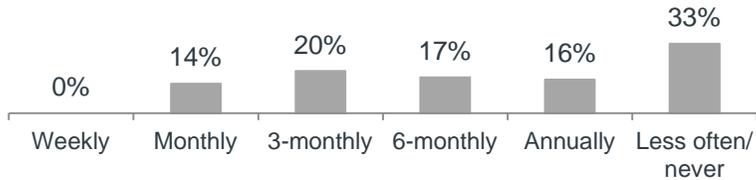
Q. *How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?*



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=112)

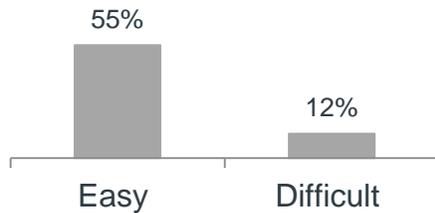
Use of the Osteopathy Board of Australia website

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)...

- CPD requirements (particularly information regarding mandatory topics)
- Legal information
- Prescription details
- Mandatory modules for CPD
- Plain English explanation of Audit process

Additional feedback from osteopaths

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

Over Bureaucratic, over regulating, just over the top. Just because someone is given a job to regulate something doesn't mean they have to go overboard. I'm glad I'm retiring soon. I'm sorry for the young ones who now have to conform to all these rules and regulations which will only increase as their careers progress. They are so preoccupied with all the new rules and regulations that it is killing the art of Osteopathy and turning it into very basic physical therapy.

A necessary evil but totally under the thumb of "the good thinking society" and " the friends of the science in medicine".

AHPRA are bullies who target specific professions.

I am glad there is a national organisation. The state based system was very difficult.

Overall positive however I think they are too concerned about investigating minor advertising breaches due to friends of science in medicine complaints than investigating actual dodgy practitioners and practices (targeting the wrong people).

I feel that AHPRA needs to take a bit more control of registrations as each professional board has their own agendas and as such there is still inconsistencies between them which can be frustrating.

Both are doing a good job. Guidelines make sense, information is easy to find and if something has changed, both are good at letting you know. Public is safe, practitioners feel supported.

Great at protecting the public but not so great at helping practitioners who get into trouble, and their regulations can be limiting for the profession.

I was not certain of the role distinctions between the boards and AHPRA. I thought they worked closely together - with the board advising AHPRA of the guidelines and requirements of each profession, but AHPRA doing the audits and administration of registration.

While I believe that they are important to help protect the safety of the population I feel that they are judgemental without investigation. You are guilty without any chance to answer their decision.

Need to stop the excessive influence of groups like Friends of Science in Medicine who are simply a group supported by the Australian and Victoria sceptics and have their own agenda that is not necessarily in the interests of the public.

A necessary evil!

More information

For further information about this study please contact:

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