

Media release

November 2011

First national optometry data released

The first ever comprehensive national data on optometry is now available with the release of Optometry Board of Australia information in the AHPRA and National Boards' annual report

Nearly 30% of optometrists are aged between 24 and 35, there are almost as many females as males in the profession and about 33% of the profession is based in New South Wales, according data now published in the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards' annual report.

The release of the 2010-11 annual report gives an essential, first-ever insight into Australia's 530,115 health practitioners across 10 professions regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). One in 44 Australians a registered health practitioner.

As well as profiling the professions and practitioners, the report provides the first national data on notifications (complaints) involving health practitioners and the actions taken by national boards to protect public safety.

Chair of the Optometry Board of Australia, Mr Colin Waldron, said the annual report demonstrated transparent and accountable reporting by AHPRA and the national board about their work in regulating the profession and protecting the public.

"The introduction of the National Scheme on 1 July 2010 represents an unparalleled reform of health practitioner regulation. This annual report provides comprehensive data about the first year of operation of the national scheme, across all areas of operation of AHPRA and the national boards," Mr Waldron said.

"There is now clear evidence that the national scheme is sound, robust and a great asset for the Australian community," he said.

Important information about the optometry profession published in the report includes:

- There were 4,442 optometrists registered to practise in Australia on 30 June 2011
- Just more than 33% of optometrists are based in New South Wales
- Only about 15% of optometrists are aged 60 and just over 50% of registrants are male (making it, along with osteopathy, the most even distribution of men and women across the professions)
- 970 (nearly 22%) optometry practitioners have their registration endorsed for scheduled medicines
- There were 55 notifications lodged about registered optometrists during the year (not including concerns about advertising), representing notifications about 1.1% of all registered optometrists

- In NSW, the Optometry Council* took immediate action on the registration of one practitioner during the year and imposed conditions on their registration

The annual report is an important source of information about the Board's activities in 2010-11. Achievements for the Optometry Board of Australia during the year included; establishing constructive working relationships with stakeholders; focusing on consulting on a proposal that therapeutic qualifications become a requirement for general registration from 2014; and working to increase the profession's understanding of the national scheme and the new requirements for individual practitioners.

Mr Waldron encouraged optometry practitioners, patients, employers, educators and the Australian community to read the 2010-11 annual report, published at www.ahpra.gov.au under *Legislation and publications > AHPRA publications*.

More information about the National Scheme

More summaries of annual report data are published on the AHPRA website:

- [registrations](#)
- [criminal records checks](#)
- [notifications](#)
- [state and territory roundup: breakdown by profession and](#)
- [national information about other regulated health practitioner professions.](#)

For more information

- Refer to the [AHPRA Annual Report](#)
- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200

**AHPRA and the National Boards are responsible for the management of notifications against practitioners across Australia, except in NSW, where the Health Professional Councils, supported by the Health Professions Council Authority (HPCA), are responsible.*