
AHPRA

Review of stakeholder perceptions of AHPRA and the National Boards

A Social Research Project

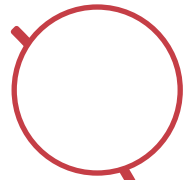
November 2018

Supplementary report prepared for:
The Physiotherapy Board of Australia

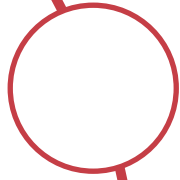
Introduction

- 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 **Physiotherapy Board of Australia**.

An overview of the methodology

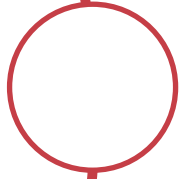


A **four stage** approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative research approaches has been used.



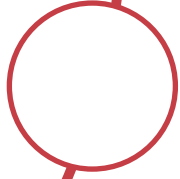
Stage 1 comprised a total of 53 qualitative interviews. This consisted of interviews with the Chair of every National Board (15); the Executive Officer of almost every National Board (13), Government health providers (3); major health employers (3); Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy 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.



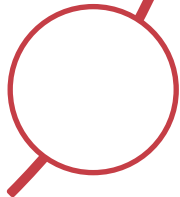
Stage 2 involved three focus groups. The three groups were conducted with i) Members of the Community Reference Group; ii) Members of the Professions Reference Group and iii) Accreditation Authority representatives.

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.

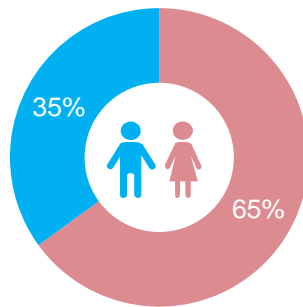
Quantitative approach

- 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.

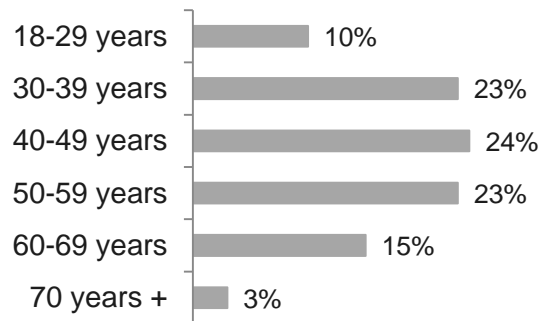
	Community Survey	Practitioner Survey
Fieldwork dates	September 19 - 25	September 19 - 27
Responses	1,020	5,694
Email invitations sent	na	100,257
Response rate	na	6.0%

Sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,694)

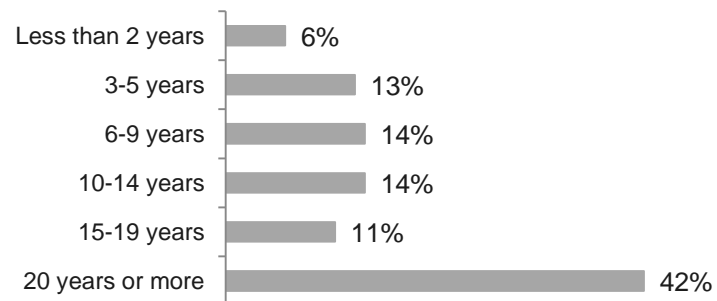
Gender



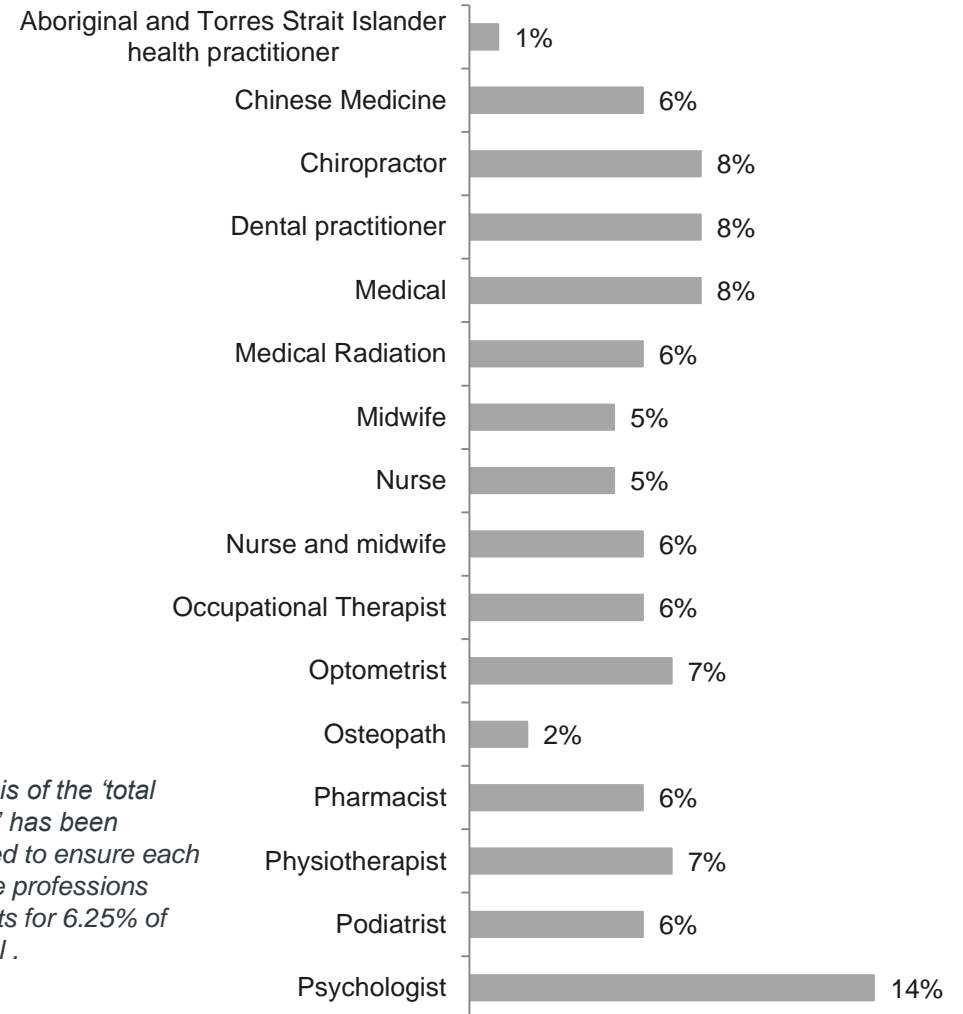
Age



Years in practice



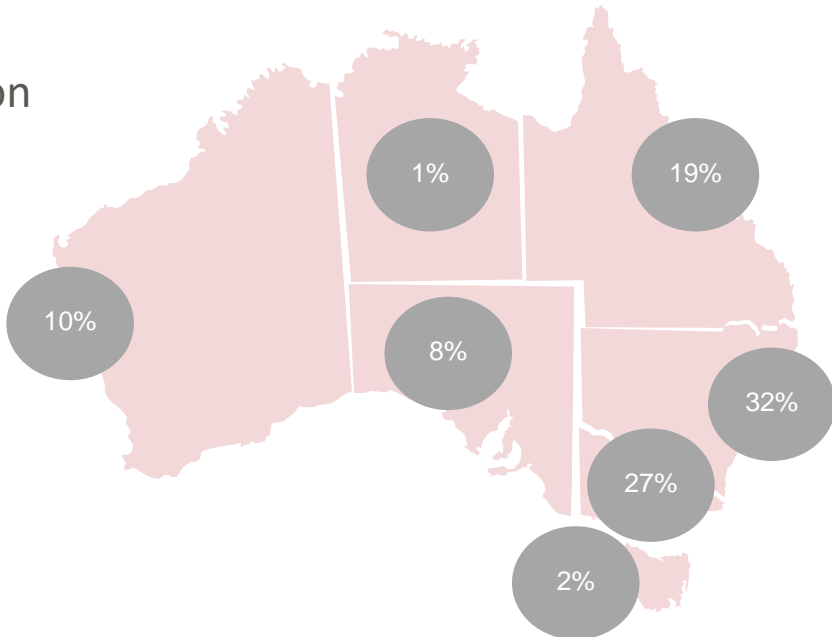
Practitioner type*



**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)

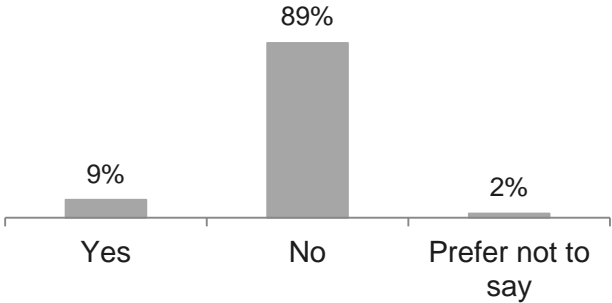
Location



Metro: 66%

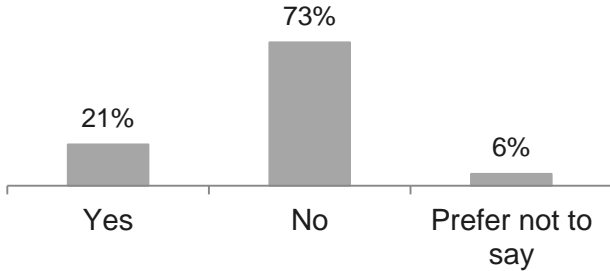
Regional : 34%

% 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*



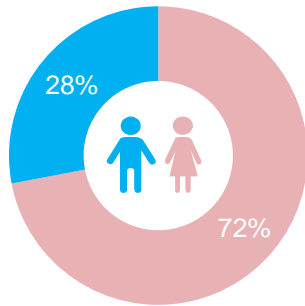
* As identified by individual respondents

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

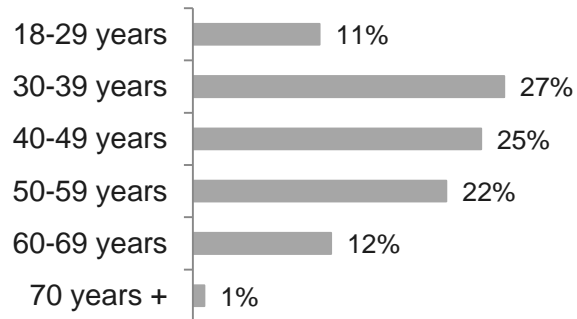
Specific insights into the responses from:
physiotherapists

Sample of physiotherapists (n=380)

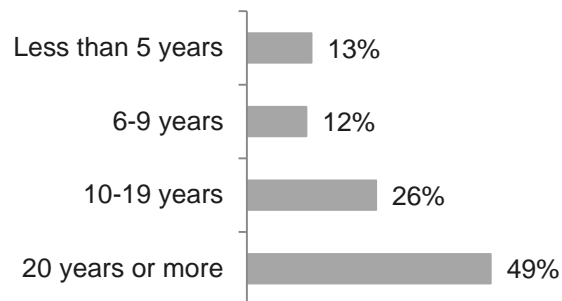
Gender:



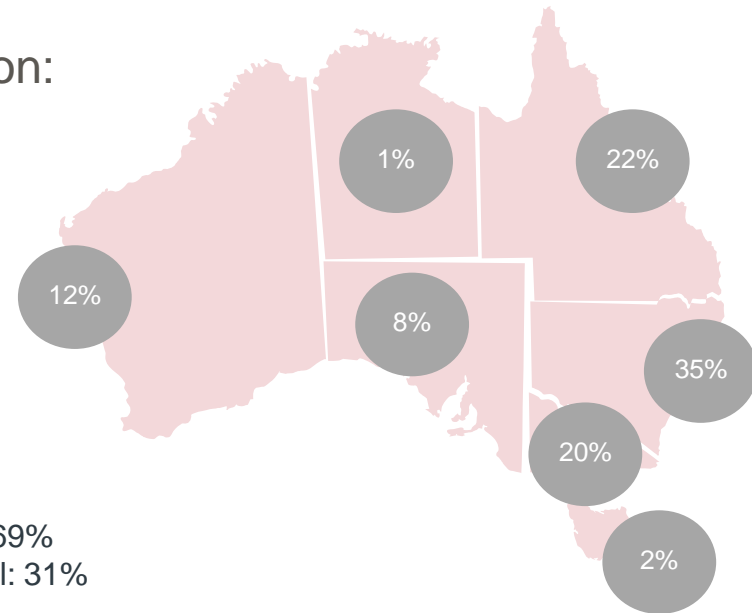
Age:



Years in practice:

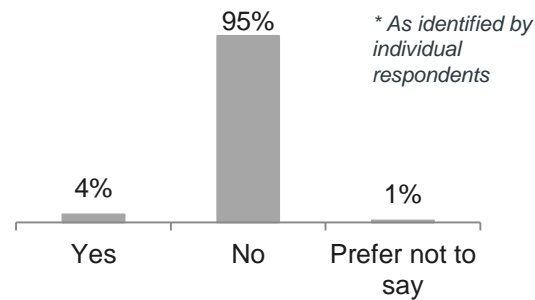


Location:

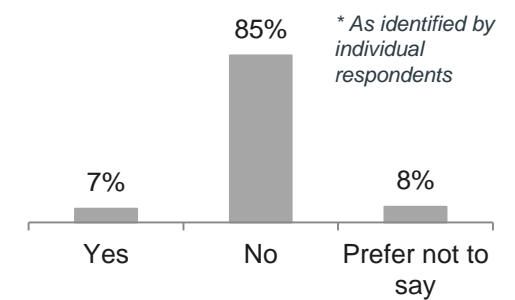


Metro: 69%
Regional: 31%

% 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 Physiotherapy 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=380)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
For practitioners	44%	(+8%)
Necessary	39%	(+4%)
Administrators	37%	(+2%)
Regulators	34%	(-4%)
Decision-makers	31%	(+4%)
Advocates	24%	(+6%)
Competent	22%	(+4%)
For the public	20%	(-3%)
Bureaucratic	20%	(-6%)
Shows leadership	17%	(+4%)

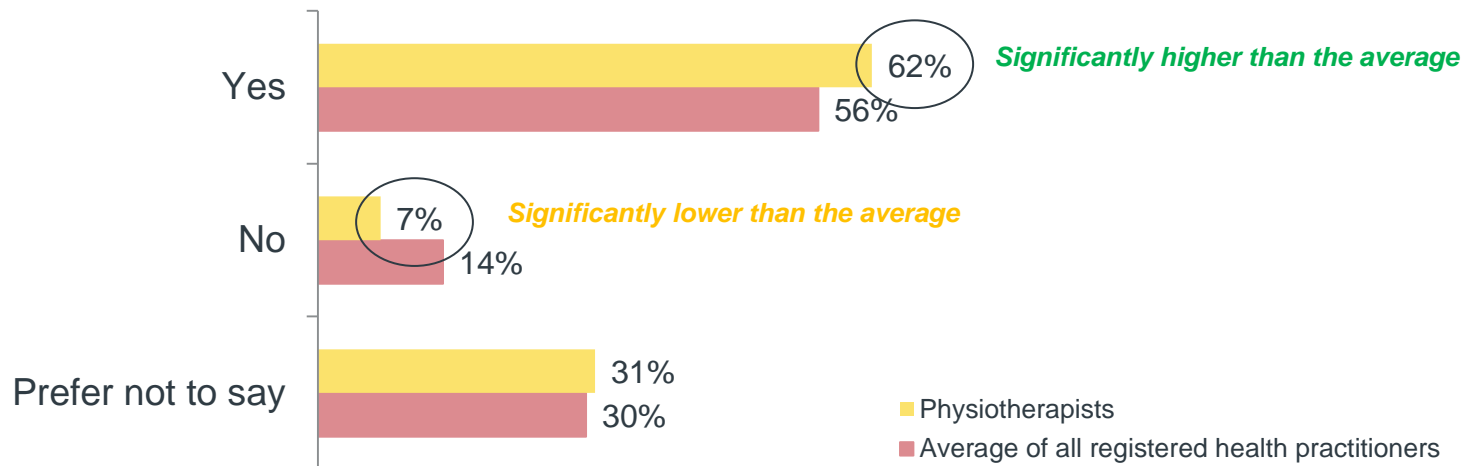
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Trustworthy	15%	(+2%)
Accessible	13%	(+1%)
Good communicators	13%	(+2%)
Supportive	12%	(-1%)
Fair	12%	(+1%)
Helpful	10%	(-2%)
Approachable	10%	(-2%)
Responsive	10%	(-)
Out of touch	8%	(-4%)
Rigid	7%	(-4%)

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

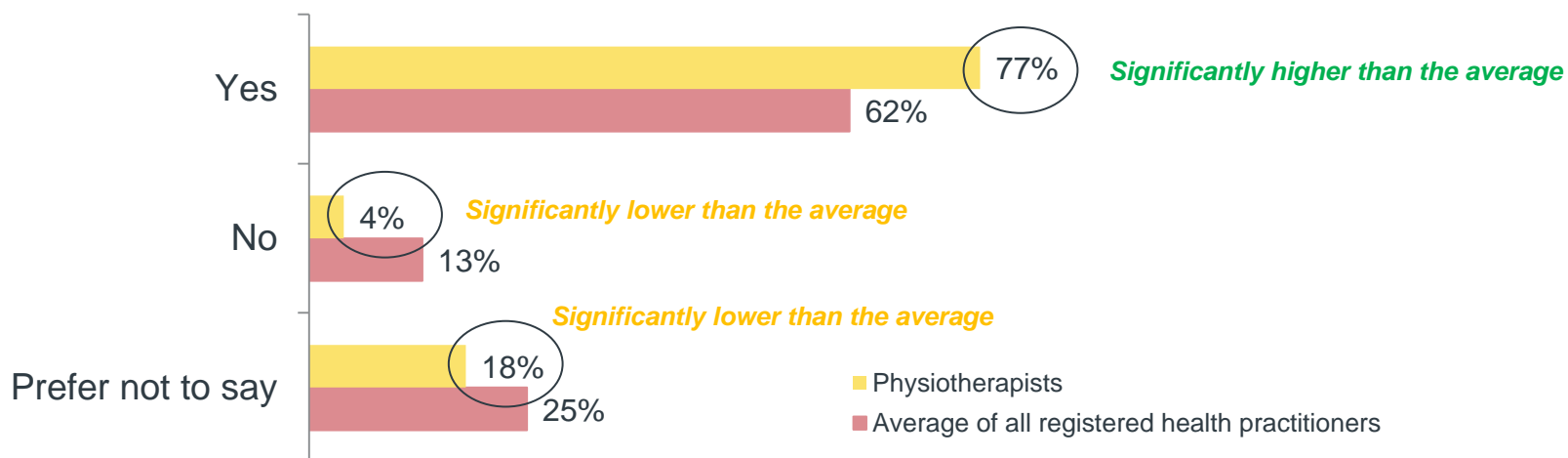
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

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

Indicators of trust: **77% trust the Board**

I assume they are doing a good job and that there is regulations and checks to ensure this is happening.

Elected by general physios.

Have no reason not to. Board has decent people on it, including practitioners.

Balanced group of professionals advocating for our profession.

It is a well established organisation which is closely regulated by the government.

The members of the Board competently carry out their responsibilities under the legislative framework.

I have worked with several of the representatives on PBA in other capacities where they have always been trustworthy.

Seems responsive, need to regulate practitioners, good communication.

Detailed processes to get registered in this country therefore reassured that high levels of consumer protection and monitoring are in place.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **4% DO NOT trust the Board**

Remote administration that can make decisions which affect everyone without appropriate consultation.

Out of touch. Not staying in touch with the changing climate of health care in Australia.

They claim to be involved in evaluating skill level to protect the public, but the universities actually do the evaluating and administer registration exams. This board is just another bureaucratic money grab that doesn't do anything.

Trusted for the public. Not trusted for the profession.

Failure to administer the National Law.

Can't trust what you don't know and see.

I don't think they are good at lobbying for significant changes in the public and private sectors. E.g. why is the 20 min pain relief still happening in aged care facilities, mostly to increase revenue.

They have not done anything for me.

Perceptions of AHPRA amongst physiotherapists

(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=380)

Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	59%	(+5%)
Administrators	58%	(+6%)
Necessary	51%	(+11%)
For the public	43%	(+5%)
For practitioners	35%	(+5%)
Bureaucratic	32%	(-8%)
Decision makers	24%	(-1%)
Competent	22%	(+7%)
Accessible	17%	(+4%)
Trustworthy	14%	(+5%)

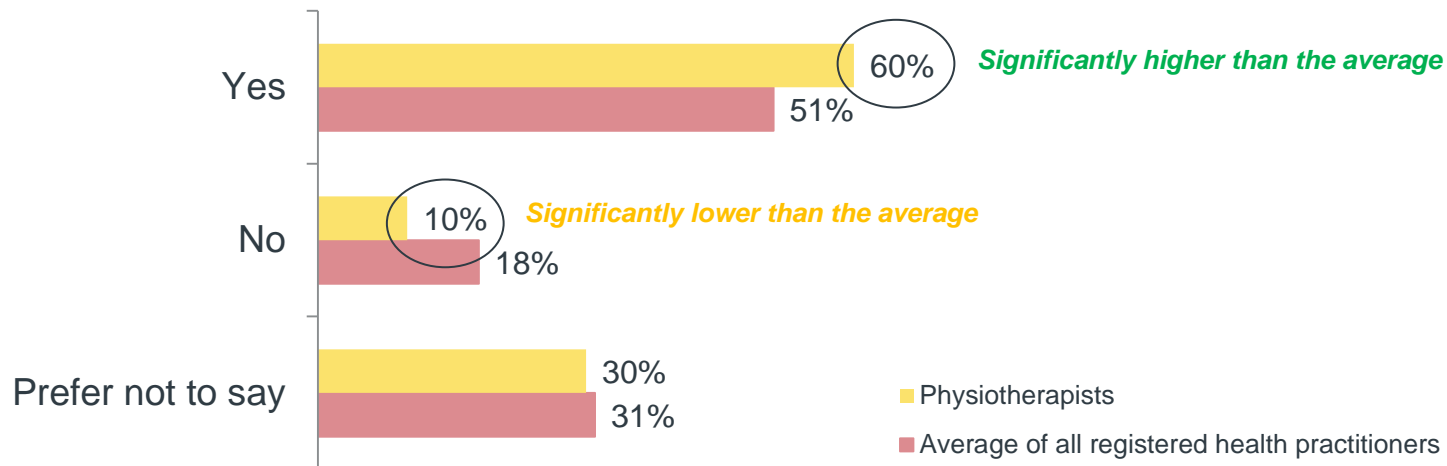
Perception	% of practitioners with that perception of AHPRA	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Rigid	13%	(-5%)
Fair	11%	(+1%)
Advocates	11%	(+3%)
Controlling	9%	(-8%)
Poor communicators	9%	(-5%)
Good communicators	9%	(-)
Responsive	9%	(+1%)
Transparent	9%	(+2%)
Intimidating	8%	(-9%)
Approachable	8%	(-1%)

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

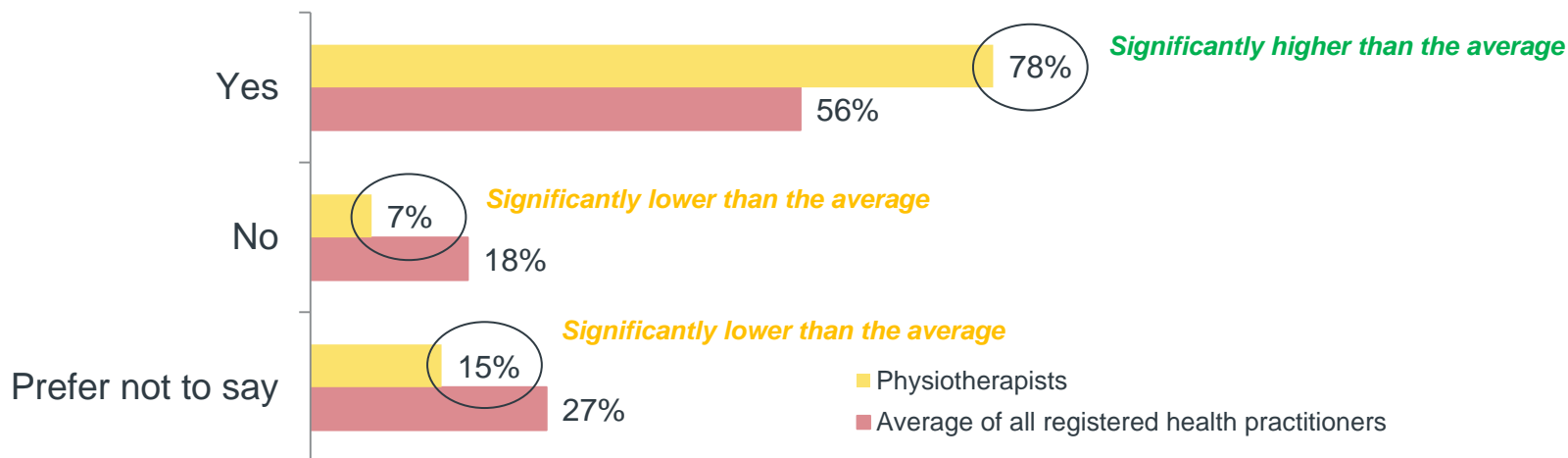
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in AHPRA amongst physiotherapists

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 physiotherapists

Indicators of trust: **78% trust AHPRA**

It has a public register of deregistered practitioners, as well as a public register of registered practitioners that the general public can look up and check the reputation of - this transparency keeps the public safe.

Long standing organisation, clear rules, high standards.

Read regular newsletters re AHPRA's role / administration. Believe AHPRA members are acting in our and clients best interest.

Have had no reason not to trust them. Appear to be doing a fair job.

They are very accurate at administering the regulations under which they operate.

Open communication, consistent, never given me reason not to trust.

They do follow through with queries or concerns and it appears they have a system and process in place however they are not responsive and fail to communicate in a timely manner.

It shows fairness towards the public and practitioners.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **7% DO NOT trust AHPRA**

I dislike the complaints process as it seems to only support the public. There is no support for the clinician.

They appear currently to be inefficient and poorly organised.

Poor communicators, slow processes.

They have lost my documents twice in previous registrations, and I have had lots of complains.

They are a threat - could deny registration & affect my career unfairly. I doubt I have any say or influence on their decisions.

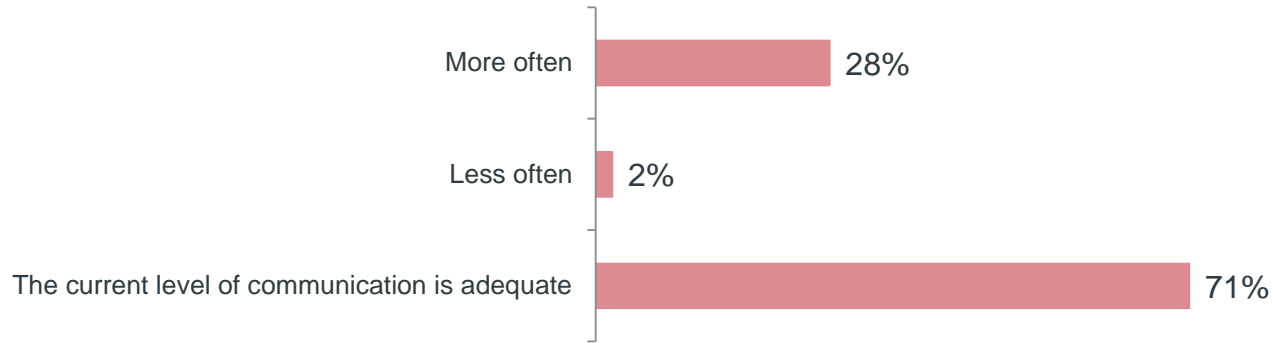
Failure to administer the National Law. No action on Practitioners false advertising.

Look at AHPRA's inadequately slow responses in some cases that have let patients be at continued risk of predatory or incompetent practitioners.

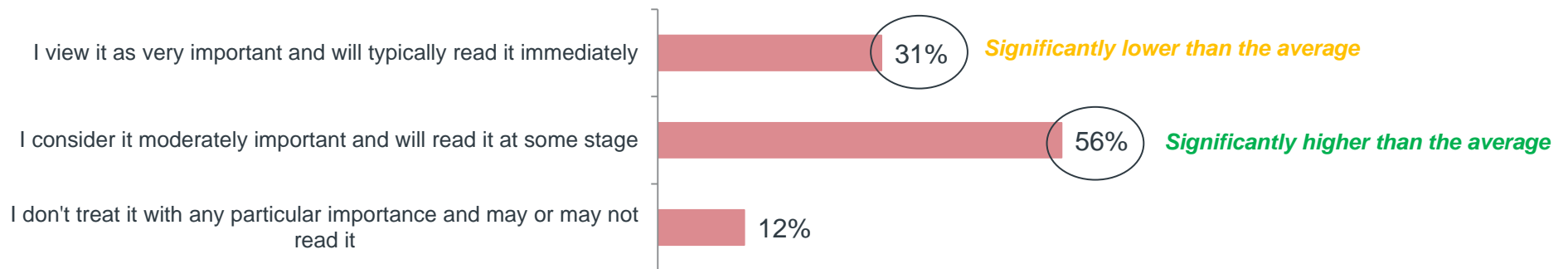
I have personally seen overseas trained therapists gain registration while they have been performing very poorly in the workplace.

Response to communication by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

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



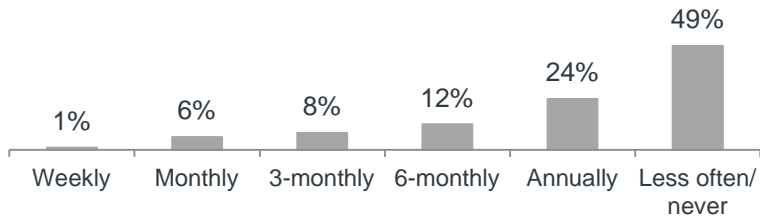
Q. How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=380)

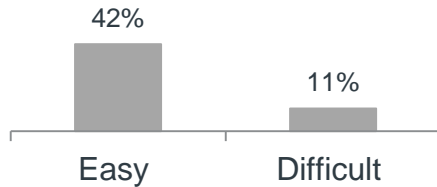
Use of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia website

Q. How often do you visit the website of (your National Board)?



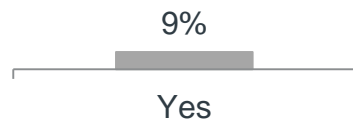
Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this board

Q. How easy or difficult is it to find the information you were looking for on the (National Board) website?



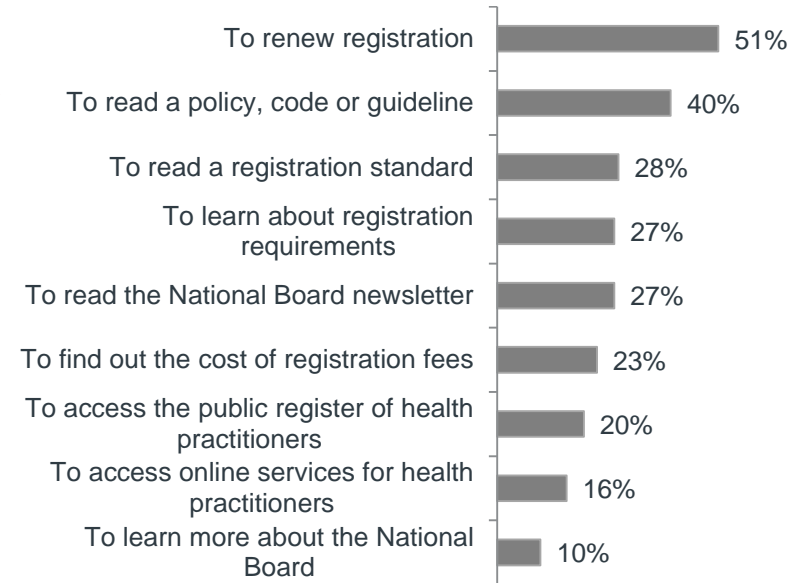
Base: Practitioners who have visited that board's website

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)...

- *Standard procedure*
- *Change in registration by age and gender over the last decade*
- *Relevant PD links*
- *Policies that we should have*
- *Social media policies, review policies, registration policies*
- *Limited Registration Requirements for International Therapists*

Additional feedback from physiotherapists

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

Unsure about difference between them, but have definitely received communication from the national board.

AHPRA needs to do more to understand the needs of business owners. Whilst their role is to protect the public, the lack of perceived understanding of the commercial reality of business is a real challenge.

Yes, I don't think the boards or AHPRA are doing enough to support health professional wellbeing.

I dread emails from AHPRA. Having heard nothing from them for a decade I have now had three complaints in 2 years (2 dismissed and 1 no action). One of the complainants had never been to the clinic and another was an advertising complaint that had no grounds. These things should not sit on my record; it tarnishes 20 years in health and has guided my decision to move on to managing a business rather than working in it as I now feel grossly exposed as a clinician.

Some registration procedures take too long to be done, please improve that. I have been treated disrespectfully on the phone when calling AHPRA.

I am unaware of what the Board does now that APRHA has taken over registration. I believe they investigate complaints against practitioners but am not sure what amount of time that involves or what outcomes may be.

Seem more interested in disciplining practitioners and enforcing standards than advocating for health professionals and making our job easier.

Stop practitioners misleading and false advertising.

Keep updating us with current standards or changes to key regulations so we are aware of what we need to update/consider in our professions in the future.

The National Board has NEVER sent information/newsletters to me, you'd barely know they exist.

I think they are both important but slow to respond or to or take action with patient complaints. Wait times when ringing are excessive. The web portal is clunky. Needing to rely on external surveys like this is an indication to me that maybe they have little insight into how they are perceived and they are more interested in image than function.

I didn't know there was any difference between AHPRA and the physio board.

Faster communication with faster response times would be highly appreciated.

More information

For further information about this study please contact:

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