

**Occupational therapy
labour force
1998**

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
COTRB	Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DEWRSB	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business
NOOSR	National of Overseas Skills Recognition

Symbols and other usages

Throughout this publication, data may not add to the totals shown due to the estimation process for non-response.

Throughout this publication, percentages may not add up to 100.0 due to rounding.

Italics within a table denote a subtotal.

– denotes nil.

. . denotes not applicable.

n.a. denotes not available.

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics for national health survey, population census and other population data; the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs for tertiary education data; and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for migration data.

1 Introduction

In 1990, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) commissioned the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to develop national health labour force statistics about the major registrable health professions. Data collections based on a national minimum data set were developed addressing the workforce planning needs of the health professions, government, service providers and educational institutions. The inaugural Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey was conducted in late 1998–early 1999.

Occupational therapy

Occupational therapists are allied health professionals who provide support to a wide range of people with physical, psychological or developmental injuries or disabilities. They assess individuals' capabilities, develop mental or physical activities to aid the recovery of disease or injury, develop and implement intervention programs to enable individuals to (re)integrate into society, and promote health issues. Occupational therapists work in a wide variety of settings including private practice, hospitals, government services, nursing homes, community centres, etc.

Occupational therapists practising in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, or the Northern Territory need to be registered with the relevant State or Territory registration board. Occupational therapists do not require registration to practise in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory. However, occupational therapists who work for government-funded agencies in these jurisdictions generally need appropriate qualifications for full membership of OT Australia, the national association of occupational therapists.

As medical knowledge and techniques advance, so will the number of people surviving otherwise terminal accidents or illnesses. Therefore, the need for occupational therapists is expected to increase as the population ages and the occurrence of serious illness or injury increases. Unemployment amongst registered occupational therapists is quite low. The Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business predicts that job prospects for occupational therapists are good and that employment growth is expected to be strong (DEWRSB 2000).

1.1 AIHW Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) conducted the Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey with the assistance of registration boards and the national and some State branches of OT Australia in late 1998–early 1999. Information from this survey provided a detailed description of occupational therapists in the States surveyed and forms the foundation of this report.

Registration boards in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory mailed out copies of the survey to all registered occupational therapists with their renewals of registration. OT Australia, and their State branches in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, distributed the surveys to all members and to known employers of occupational therapists. New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania did not participate in the distribution of the survey. Therefore, sections of this report refer to 'selected States and Territories' in place of 'Australia'.

Lack of registration boards across all States and Territories of Australian inhibits the formation of a national snapshot of occupational therapists. Of the five jurisdictions surveyed, there were an estimated 3,586 registered occupational therapists, of whom 3,115 were employed. Occupational therapists are typically female, aged 25–34, work full-time in salaried positions, and work in public hospitals.

AIHW labour force estimates

Occupational therapists may register in more than one State or Territory. In estimating the occupational therapy labour force, it is therefore important to reduce as much as possible the consequent duplication in statistics.

The estimation of the number and characteristics of currently employed occupational therapists in each State and Territory was based on the responses of those occupational therapists employed solely or mainly in the State or Territory of registration. Those occupational therapists who were on extended leave for three months or longer were also included in the employed workforce estimates.

It was assumed for all estimates that non-respondents to the survey had the same labour force characteristics as had respondents. Therefore, the survey data were scaled up to the registration numbers by distributing the non-response numbers on the basis of this assumption for all applicable States and Territories. With regard to Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (which did not have registration boards), estimates of the number of practising occupational therapists in 1998 were based on the number of employed occupational therapists in the 1996 census and the growth between the 1991 and 1996 censuses. The survey data were then scaled up to these estimates.

These processes will overestimate the number of occupational therapists in the labour force if respondents with registrations in multiple jurisdictions, or respondents not in the occupational therapy labour force, are under-represented in the survey responses.

Throughout this report the term ‘registrations’ was used to indicate the number of people registered in a State or Territory where a registration board exists, as well as the estimated number of occupational therapists in the jurisdictions where there is no such organisation.

Response rate

Based on the total number of registrations (or estimated number of workers) in each State or Territory surveyed, the response rate to the survey was 62.3%, ranging from 47.1% in Victoria to 91.6% in Queensland (Table 1).

Table 1: Occupational therapists: estimated survey response rate, States and Territories, 1998

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total ^(a)
Registration board	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	..
Respondents	n.a.	738	906	553	n.a.	n.a.	53	48	2,298
Registrations ^(b)	..	1,567	989	952	515 ^(c)	..	101	79	3,688
	(per cent)								
Response rate	..	47.1	91.6	58.1	..	..	52.5	60.8	62.3

(a) Total excludes NSW, SA and Tas figures.

(b) Vic and ACT are estimates of the total occupational therapy labour force for these jurisdictions.

(c) The number of registered occupational therapists in SA in December 1998 is an estimated midpoint from July 1998 and July 1999 figures.

1.2 Additional data sources

Additional data in this report came from a variety of sources:

- the Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs; and
- the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts the national Census of Population and Housing every five years. Respondents to the census are asked to indicate their occupation during the week of the census. The census data counts only those occupational therapists who are in clinical practice, not those in administration, education or research. Despite this, information from the census makes it possible to examine the trends in numbers and characteristics of the occupational therapy labour force. Table 2 presents the number of occupational therapists in clinical practice in each State and Territory in 1991 and 1996, as well as the estimated number of occupational therapists in clinical practice in 1998.

Table 2: Occupational therapists in clinical practice, States and Territories, 1991, 1996 and estimated 1998

Census year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
1991	1,070	1,040	520	500	320	100	80	30	3,660
1996	1,413	1,157	647	587	325	124	70	40	4,363
Estimated 1998 ^(a)	1,866	1,287	805	689	330	154	61	53	5,245

(a) Estimated number of occupational therapists in clinical practice in 1998 was calculated on growth between 1991 and 1996 censuses applied to 1996 figures.

Source: ABS Censuses of Population and Housing, 1991 and AIHW 2001.

The ABS also conducts the National Health Survey every six years, with the most recent survey in 1995. A random sample of households is surveyed regarding a broad range of health and wellbeing issues. Information from the 1995 survey was used to determine the number of people who consulted an occupational therapist in the two weeks preceding the survey in that year.

The Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs

The Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) requires all universities to provide data on students and university course completions. This information provides the number and characteristics of the new entrants to occupational therapy.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) obtains data on the number of occupational therapists arriving into Australia to work, and the number of permanent residents leaving Australia to find employment overseas.

2 The occupational therapy labour force

2.1 Trends in the occupational therapy labour force

On census day in August 1996, 4,365 people in Australia indicated that their occupation was an occupational therapist, an increase of 19.3% since the 1991 census (Table 3). This increase was slightly less than the growth of most other allied health professions. For example, the number of physiotherapists rose 24.9% between 1991 and 1996, the number of employed podiatrists rose 28.2% and speech pathologists rose by 33.5% (AIHW 2001).

Of the 4,365 employed occupational therapists, only 274 (6.3%) were male (Table 3). The gender distribution in the occupational therapy labour force barely changed from 1986 to 1996. In 1986, 93.1% of occupational therapists were female. This increased to 93.7% in 1991, and remained constant in 1996.

Table 3: Employed occupational therapists: sex, 1986, 1991, and 1996

Year	Males	Females	Persons	% Female
	(number)			
1986	190	2,580	2,770	93.1
1991	230	3,430	3,660	93.7
1996	274	4,091	4,365	93.7
	(percentage change)			
1986 to 1991	21.1	32.9	32.1	0.6
1991 to 1996	19.1	19.3	19.3	—
1986 to 1996	44.2	58.6	57.6	0.6

Source: ABS Censuses of Population and Housing, 1986, 1991 and AIHW 2001.

The occupational therapy workforce has grown rapidly. There was a 57.6% increase in numbers between the 1986 and 1996 censuses (Table 4). The 25–34 age group was the largest group at each census, however the proportion of the workforce in this age group has declined from 43.7% to 37.6% between 1986 and 1996. This is because a large group (1,210) of occupational therapists aged 25–34 in 1986 moved through to the 35–44 age group in the 1996 census.

Table 4: Employed occupational therapists: age, 1986, 1991, and 1996

Year	Age (years)						Total
	<25	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	
	(number)						
1986	560	1,210	580	330	90	10	2,770
1991	590	1,510	930	490	130	10	3,660
1996	720	1,640	1,214	608	169	14	4,365
	(per cent)						
1986	20.2	43.7	20.9	11.9	3.2	0.4	100.0
1991	16.1	41.3	25.4	13.4	3.6	0.3	100.0
1996	16.5	37.6	27.8	13.9	3.9	0.3	100.0
	(percentage change)						
1986 to 1991	5.4	24.8	60.3	48.5	44.4	—	32.1
1991 to 1996	22.0	8.6	30.5	24.1	30.0	40.0	19.3
1986 to 1996	28.6	35.5	109.3	84.2	87.8	40.0	57.6

Source: ABS Censuses of Population and Housing, 1986, 1991 and AIHW 2001.

The results of the Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey reflect findings from the ABS censuses that occupational therapy remains a female dominated field. Females made up an estimated 94.9% of the employed occupational therapists in 1998 (Table A.2). This was slightly higher than the reported 93.7% in the 1996 census (see Table 3). This small difference is likely to be due to several factors relating to survey design and methodology. Due to the small number of males employed in occupational therapy, caution should be used when interpreting results based on sex.

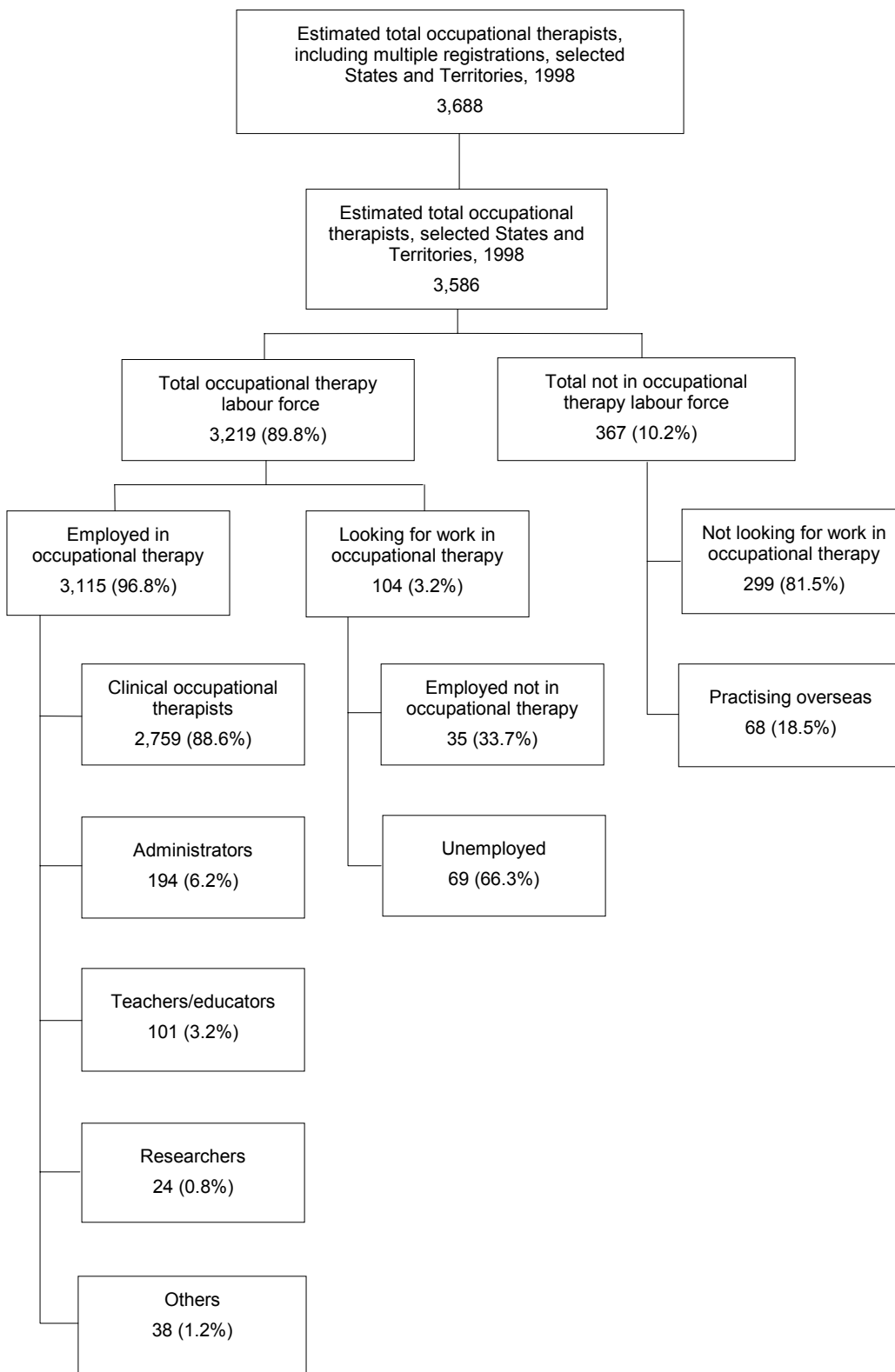
The age distribution of the employed occupational therapists in the Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey was similar to the age distribution in the 1996 census. Results from the survey showed that the 25–34 year age group was the largest group at 1,239 (39.8%) followed by the 35–44 year age group at 893 (28.7%) (Table A.2).

2.2 Employed occupational therapists

2.2.1 Job and client characteristics

Employment status of occupational therapists

The estimated total number of registered occupational therapists in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory at the end of 1998 was 3,586. The occupational therapy labour force in these jurisdictions comprised 3,219 therapists, of whom 3,115 (96.8%) were employed and 104 (3.2%) were looking for work in occupational therapy (Figure 1). Of the employed occupational therapists, 2,759 (88.6%) were clinicians and 357 (11.4%) were in non-clinical roles such as administrators, educators



Source: Tables 25 & A.1

Figure 1: Estimated occupational therapy labour force, 1998

or researchers. Not included in the occupational therapy labour force were 367 (10.2%) registered occupational therapists either not looking for work in occupational therapy (299) or practising overseas (68).

Sections of this report discuss 'employed occupational therapists' as a whole, while others deal with 'clinical occupational therapists' only.

The total number of clinical occupational therapists in the surveyed jurisdictions (2,759) compares closely with the corresponding total using the 1998 census-derived estimates for these jurisdictions (2,895) (see Tables 2 and A.2). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the estimated total of 5,245 clinical occupational therapists derived from the census information is an approximate indication of the total number of clinical occupational therapists that were working in Australia in 1998.

Geographic location

There are marked variations in the supply of occupational therapists among the States and Territories, and between metropolitan and rural areas. In 1998, there were 29.9 occupational therapists per 100,000 population across the five States surveyed (Table A.2). Queensland had the lowest rate of 22.2 occupational therapists per 100,000 population, while Western Australia had the highest at 43.0. Metropolitan centres, large rural, small rural and remote areas in Victoria each had more occupational therapists per 100,000 population than did Melbourne. Small rural centres, other rural centres and remote areas in Queensland, as well as other rural centres in the Northern Territory fared the worst where access to an occupational therapist was concerned. The supply in these areas ranged between 7.1 and 11.8 occupational therapists serving 100,000 people.

Type of job

Of the 2,759 clinical occupational therapists, more than three quarters (78.7%) were salaried workers (Table 5). Clinical occupational therapists worked principally in hospitals and day procedure centres, followed by community health services (35.8% and 20.5% respectively). Only five (0.2%) clinical occupational therapists worked in a tertiary education institution. The majority (78.5%) of clinical occupational therapists working on their own or in a group practice were self-employed.

Table 5: Employed clinical occupational therapists: setting of main job and type of job, selected States and Territories, 1998

Work setting	Type of job							Total	% Setting
	Self-employed	Sessional appointments	Fee for service	Contract	Salaried	Locum	Other		
Hospital/day procedure centre	7	7	4	20	893	57	—	988	35.8
Nursing home/hostel	5	9	4	14	73	5	—	111	4.0
Other residential	—	—	—	4	21	5	—	30	1.1
Community health service	5	—	5	21	493	39	—	564	20.5
Rehabilitation service	21	2	5	46	341	7	—	423	15.3
Own/group practice	161	4	11	13	18	—	—	205	7.4
Schools	9	5	5	13	157	4	—	193	7.0
Tertiary education institution	2	—	—	2	—	2	—	5	0.2
Government facility	7	—	4	9	66	4	—	89	3.2
Mining, industrial or commercial sector	11	—	4	4	13	—	—	30	1.1
Other	2	2	2	13	96	2	4	120	4.3
Total	230	29	43	157	2,172	125	4	2,759	100.0
% Job type	8.3	1.0	1.6	5.7	78.7	4.5	0.1	100.0	

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Clients

The AIHW Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey indicated that occupational therapists work with clients of all ages as well as a variety of diagnostic categories. Almost a quarter of all clinical occupational therapists worked in the field of general rehabilitation (24.1%), while the next largest field was developmental disability (22.0%) (Table 6). Adults aged between 19 and 64 (30.1%) were the largest group of occupational therapy clients and people aged over 65 were the second most common group (22.4%). Approximately 15% of occupational therapy clients were children under 13 years. Only 0.5% of all clinical occupational therapists reported working mainly with adolescents. However, this does not provide a complete picture, as some adolescents may have been treated by occupational therapists who worked with mixed age groups.

Table 6: Employed clinical occupational therapists: principal diagnostic category and client age group, selected States and Territories, 1998

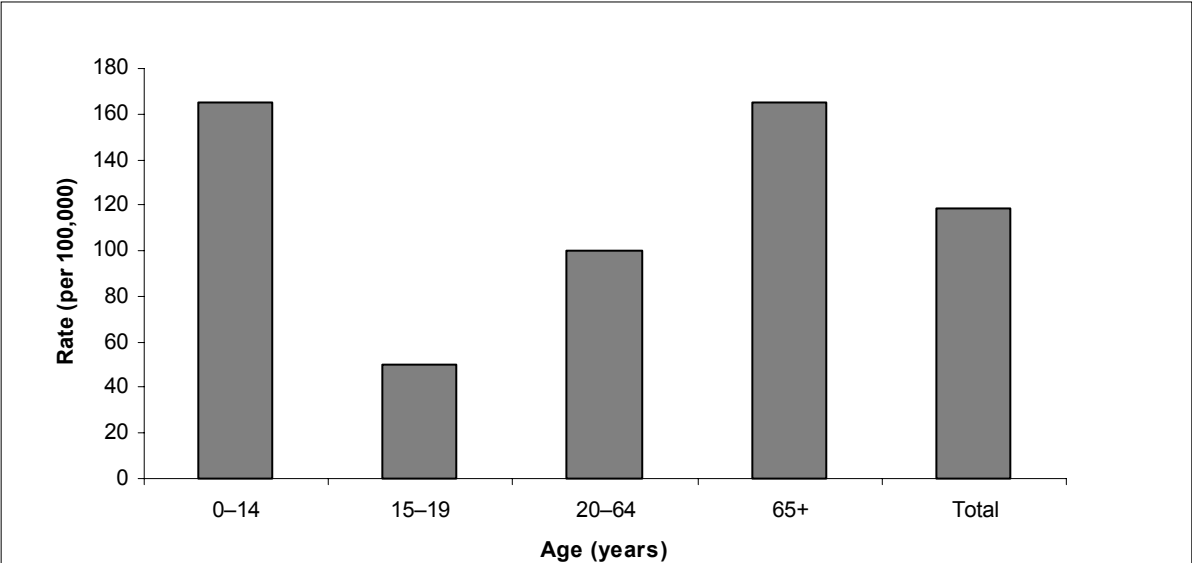
Principal diagnostic category	Client age group					No direct contact	Not stated	Total	% Category
	0–12	13–18	19–64 ^(a)	65+	Mixed				
Clinical speciality									
Developmental disability	354	7	25	3	69	2	147	607	22.0
Acute neurology	—	—	24	22	17	2	20	84	3.1
Acute rheumatology	3	—	7	3	8	—	3	25	0.9
Acute hands	3	—	51	3	35	—	17	110	4.0
Disease based	2	—	32	34	19	—	19	104	3.8
Palliative care/hospice	2	—	7	20	8	—	5	42	1.5
Brain/head injury	12	—	66	—	17	—	17	111	4.0
General diagnostic	2	—	17	78	56	—	12	163	5.9
General rehabilitation	3	2	258	204	118	—	79	664	24.1
<i>Total</i>	381	8	485	367	347	3	319	1,911	69.3
Service area									
Aged care	—	—	3	201	7	—	15	226	8.2
Mental health	10	5	155	13	25	—	12	221	8.0
Community health	2	—	12	25	22	—	13	74	2.7
Health education	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	3	0.1
Occupational health and safety	—	—	120	—	5	2	5	131	4.8
School-based programs	24	2	—	—	2	—	8	35	1.3
Medico-legal	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	7	0.2
<i>Total</i>	35	7	298	239	61	2	56	698	25.3
Other	12	—	24	5	20	—	17	78	2.8
Not stated	3	—	24	7	10	—	29	72	2.6
Total	431	15	831	619	438	5	420	2,759	100.0
% Total client age group	15.6	0.5	30.1	22.4	15.9	0.2	15.2	100.0	

(a) Client age group is represented as per the survey design. Age categories have not been aggregated.

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

By far the most common field for paediatric occupational therapists to work in was developmental disability. Of the 431 occupational therapists who worked mainly with children aged 0–12 years, 82.1% worked in the field of developmental disability (Table 6). General rehabilitation and mental health were the largest categories for clinicians working mainly with adults.

Information from the ABS National Health Survey (1995) gives an estimate of the number of people who consult an occupational therapist. Results from the survey indicated that 21,406 people nationwide consulted an occupational therapist in the two weeks prior to the survey. In total, 53.3% more males consulted a therapist than females (12,955 and 8,450 respectively) (Table A.3). Children aged 0–14 years and adults aged over 65 years were equally as likely to consult an occupational therapist, at a rate of approximately 165 per 100,000 people (Figure 2). The relatively high number of children consulting an occupational therapist is likely to be due to a high incidence of developmental disability in this age group (see Table 6). Adolescents were least likely to consult an occupational therapist in the 2 weeks prior to the survey (49.9 per 100,000 people).



Source: Table A.3.

Figure 2: Persons consulting an occupational therapist in the 2 weeks before the survey: age group, 1995

Languages

Of the 3,115 employed occupational therapists, 245 (7.9%) used one or more languages other than English in their client encounters (Table 7). Italian was the most common additional language used with clients. The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of therapists who used one or more other languages, followed by Victoria (18.3% and 11.5%, respectively). The jurisdiction with the lowest rate was Queensland, where only 3.1% of therapists used a language in addition to English.

Table 7: Employed occupational therapists: language used with clients, selected States and Territories, 1998

Language	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT ^(a)	Total
	(number)					
English only	1,254	742	739	86	49	2,870
English and/or						
Italian	83	5	18	—	3	108
Spanish	22	2	9	—	—	33
Greek	76	1	—	—	5	82
Chinese	41	3	9	—	2	55
Vietnamese	52	3	4	—	5	64
Arabic	33	1	—	—	—	34
Lebanese	15	—	—	—	2	17
Other	70	14	31	—	11	125
Total^(b)	1,646	772	809	86	76	3,389
Employed occupational therapists						
English only	1,254	742	739	86	49	2,870
English and another language	163	24	47	—	11	245
Total employed occupational therapists	1,418	766	786	86	60	3,115
(per cent of employed occupational therapists)						
English only	86.9	94.9	91.3	93.3	81.1	90.0
English and/or						
Italian	5.7	0.6	2.2	—	5.4	3.4
Spanish	1.5	0.3	1.1	—	—	1.0
Greek	5.3	0.1	—	—	8.1	2.6
Chinese	2.9	0.4	1.1	—	2.7	1.7
Vietnamese	3.6	0.4	0.4	—	8.1	2.0
Arabic	2.3	0.1	—	—	—	1.1
Lebanese	1.1	—	—	—	2.7	0.5
Other	4.8	1.8	3.8	4.4	18.9	4.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed occupational therapists						
English only	88.5	96.9	94.1	100.0	81.1	92.1
English and another language	11.5	3.1	5.9	—	18.9	7.9
Total employed occupational therapists	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes workers using interpreters in client encounters.

(b) Sum of languages spoken exceeds total workers because some occupational therapists speak more than one non-English language in their patient encounters.

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Hours worked

The average number of paid and unpaid hours worked varied slightly between the jurisdictions. Occupational therapists from the Northern Territory worked both the most paid hours per week and the most unpaid hours per week (an average of 33.8 and 6.5 hours per week, respectively) (Table 8). This compared with occupational therapists from the Australian Capital Territory who worked the least number of paid hours (an average of 29.6 hours per week) and Queensland with the least number of unpaid hours (an average of 4.7 hours per week).

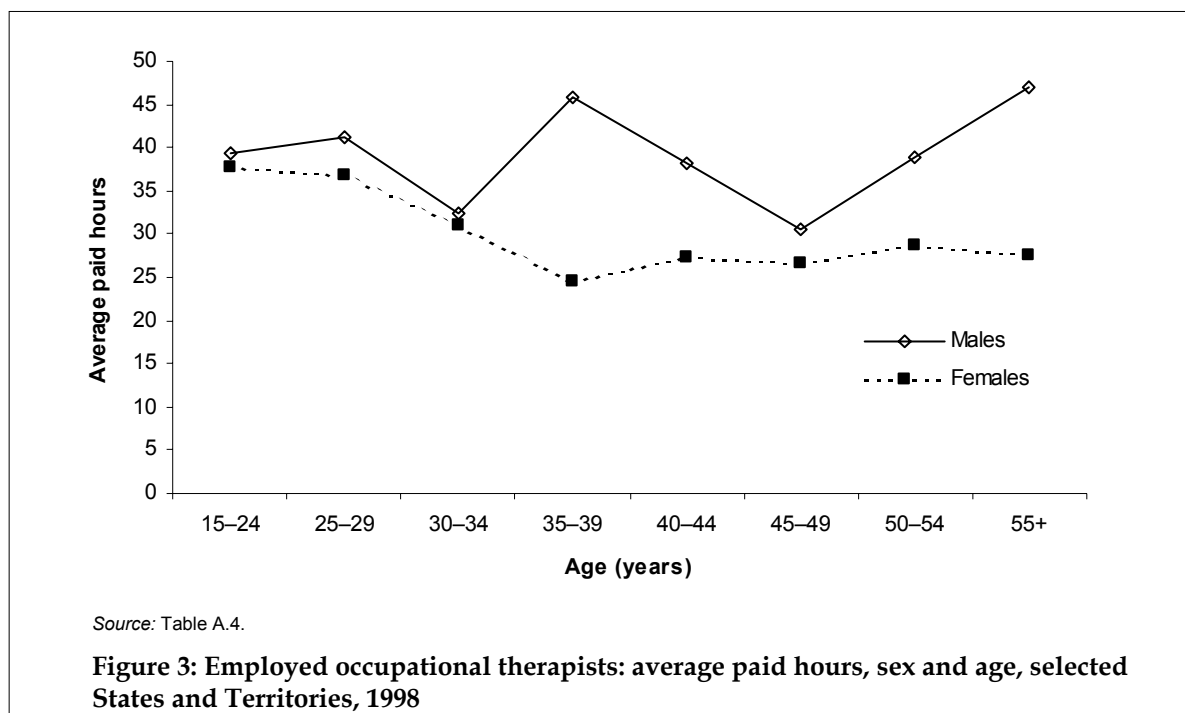
There was also a noticeable difference between the two sexes. In every jurisdiction men consistently worked more paid hours than women. Of all the occupational therapists surveyed, men worked 39.3 paid hours on average, while women worked 31.8 paid hours per week. However, in three out of the five jurisdictions, women worked more unpaid hours per week than men. The difference was most pronounced in the Australian Capital Territory where females worked an average of 5.7 unpaid hours per week, while the males did not work any unpaid hours. Once again, caution must be advised when interpreting these figures because of the small number of male occupational therapists, particularly in the two Territories.

Table 8: Employed occupational therapists: average number of paid and unpaid hours and sex, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Paid hours						
Male	38.8	38.0	41.3	39.0	37.2	39.3
Female	32.4	32.0	30.7	29.2	33.3	31.8
Persons	32.7	32.2	31.4	29.6	33.8	32.2
Unpaid hours						
Male	6.4	3.7	8.1	—	5.8	6.1
Female	4.8	4.7	5.3	5.7	6.7	4.9
Persons	4.8	4.7	5.5	5.7	6.5	5.0
Total hours						
Male	44.4	38.8	46.1	39.0	43.0	43.2
Female	36.0	34.7	34.5	32.1	38.1	35.1
Persons	36.5	34.8	35.2	32.5	38.7	35.5

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

The average number of paid hours worked per week varied with age. In general, younger occupational therapists worked more hours per week than their older colleagues did. Occupational therapists aged less than 25 years worked an average of 37.8 hours per week (Table A.4). This figure dropped to 25.4 hours for 35–39 year olds then rose again to 29.3 hours for 50–54 year olds. Figure 3 shows how average paid hours worked in each age group differs by sex. The least average paid hours worked for females, and the second highest hours worked for males, occurred in the 35–39 years age group.



On average, employed occupational therapists spent over two thirds (68.1%) of their total paid hours in direct patient care (Table 9). Student unit supervisors spent the most amount of their paid hours in direct patient care (73.0%), while regional and district advisors spent the least (53.4%), followed by managers of allied health service divisions (59.9%).

Table 9: Employed clinical occupational therapists: average hours of direct patient care, total paid hours and job classification, selected States and Territories, 1998

Job classification	Average hours in direct patient care	Average total paid hours worked	% direct care of total hours
Self-employed/Solo	14.2	20.4	69.6
Self-employed in group practice, with supervising responsibility for other OT's	27	38.7	69.8
Self-employed in group practice, without supervising responsibility for other OT's	16.7	25	66.8
Salaried:			
1st year qualified (not in a supervisory position)	26.7	37.6	71.0
2nd-7th year qualified (not in a supervisory position)	22	31.5	69.8
Student unit supervisor	24.6	33.7	73.0
Head/deputy of occupational therapy department	23.4	34.4	68.0
Regional/district advisor	17.3	32.4	53.4
Manager, allied health service division	19.6	32.7	59.9
Other	17.9	28.5	62.8
Total	19.6	28.8	68.1

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998

Work experience and mobility

Employed occupational therapists in 1998 had acquired an average of 12.2 years of work experience in the field (Table A.5). The average number of years experience in the field of occupational therapy varied by jurisdiction. Occupational therapists in the Northern Territory had an average of 10.4 years, while occupational therapists in the Australian Capital Territory had 13.3 years.

The distribution of experience was evenly distributed among therapists, with almost a third (32.7%) of employed occupational therapists reporting 15 or more years of experience in occupational therapy, while almost a quarter (23.4%) reported less than 5 years experience (Table 10).

Table 10: Employed occupational therapists: years of experience, selected States and Territories, 1998

Years of experience	Number	Per cent
0–4	729	23.4
5–9	733	23.5
10–14	634	20.4
15–19	489	15.7
20–24	303	9.7
25–29	132	4.2
30–34	79	2.5
35 +	17	0.5
Total	3,115	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

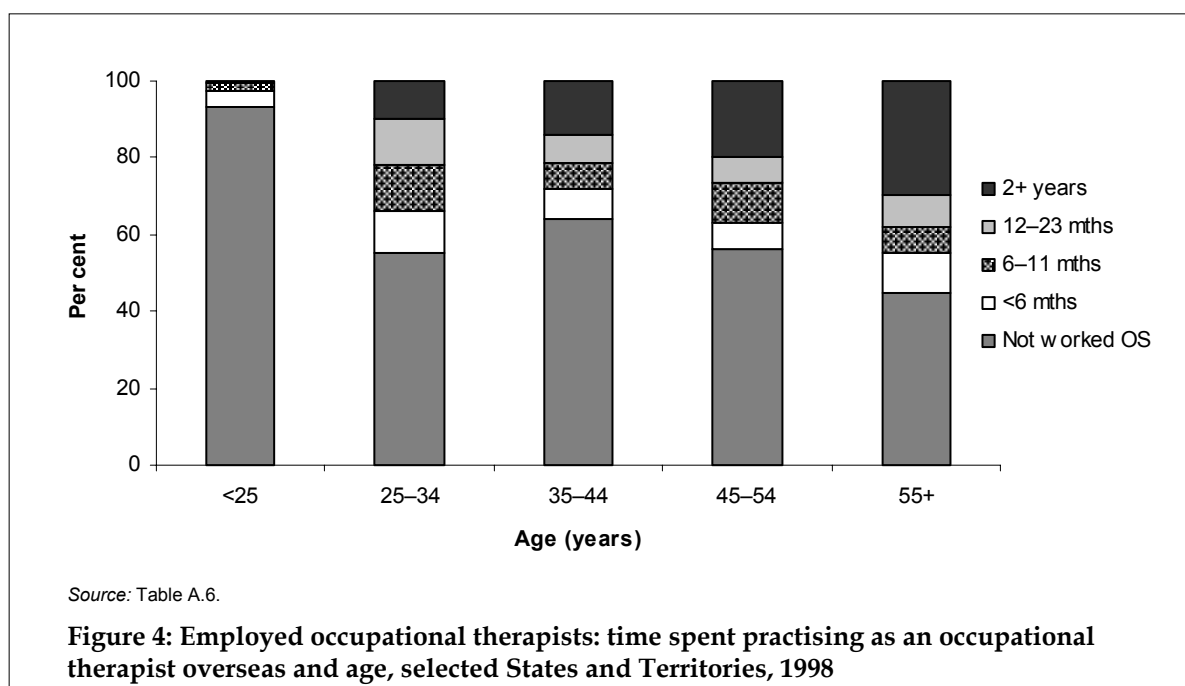
A measure of the mobility of occupational therapists may be obtained from a comparison between the State or country where they attained their initial qualification in the field of occupational therapy, with the State or Territory they worked in at the time of the survey. At present, universities in Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory do not provide courses in occupational therapy. The majority of occupational therapists who studied in Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia continued to work in the same State where they obtained their degree. Victoria retained the highest percentage of occupational therapists with 85.5%, followed by Western Australia with 84.4% and Queensland with 79.0% (Table 11). In Western Australia, 9.1% of occupational therapists had qualified overseas, while the Australian Capital Territory had the lowest proportion of overseas-qualified occupational therapists at 4.4%.

Table 11: Employed occupational therapists: place of initial qualification, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Place of initial qualification	(number)					
NSW	49	71	9	55	13	197
Vic	1,212	32	24	13	18	1,299
Qld	32	605	7	10	6	660
SA	21	9	10	—	6	47
WA	13	14	664	4	11	705
New Zealand	17	9	14	—	2	42
UK/Ireland	38	15	37	4	2	95
USA/Canada	4	7	2	—	—	13
Other	30	6	19	—	2	56
Total	1,418	766	786	86	60	3,115
	(per cent)					
NSW	3.5	9.3	1.1	64.4	21.6	6.3
Vic	85.5	4.1	3.1	15.6	29.7	41.7
Qld	2.3	79.0	0.9	11.1	10.8	21.2
SA	1.5	1.2	1.3	—	10.8	1.5
WA	0.9	1.8	84.4	4.4	18.9	22.6
New Zealand	1.2	1.2	1.8	—	2.7	1.3
UK/Ireland	2.7	1.9	4.7	4.4	2.7	3.1
USA/Canada	0.3	0.9	0.2	—	—	0.4
Other	2.1	0.7	2.4	—	2.7	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Of the 3,115 employed occupational therapists, 38.3% had worked overseas in occupational therapy sometime during their career (Table A.6). Figure 4 shows the proportion of each age group that had spent time working overseas and for how long. Only 6.9% of the under 25 years age group had worked overseas. This contrasts with the 25–34 years age group where almost half (44.7%) had had some overseas work experience. The only age group with more overseas work experience was the 55+ age group where 55.2% of employed occupational therapists had worked overseas as an occupational therapist.



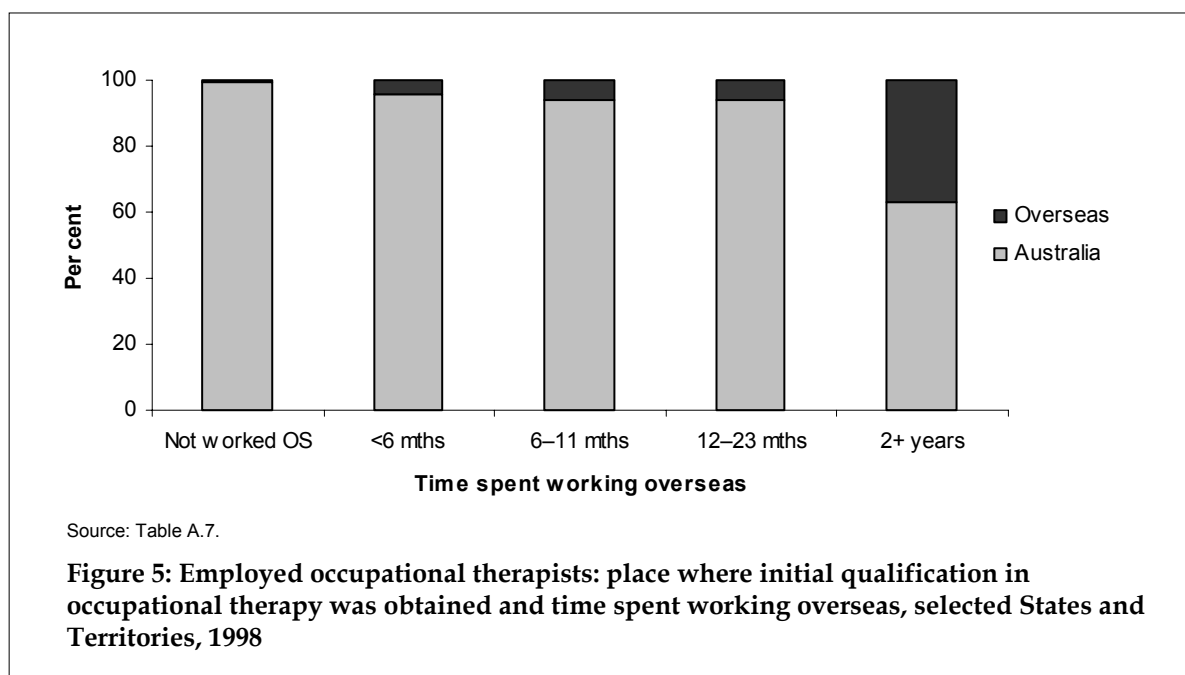
Associated with the effect of increasing overseas work experience with increasing age seen in Figure 4, is the relationship between age and whether occupational therapists obtained their initial degree in occupational therapy overseas or in Australia. No therapist aged less than 25 years had obtained their initial degree overseas. The proportion of occupational therapists who had obtained their initial degree overseas increased with each subsequent age group from 2.1% in the 25–34 age group to 18.2% of those aged 55 years and over (Table 12). This would partly explain why the oldest three age groups showed increasing proportions of occupational therapists with overseas work experience (see Figure 4).

Table 12: Employed occupational therapists: place where initial qualification in occupational therapy was obtained and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

	<25	25–34	35–44	45–54	55+	Total
Place where initial qualification obtained						
	(number)					
Australia	328	1,232	829	419	108	2,916
Overseas	—	27	76	73	24	199
Total	328	1,259	905	491	132	3,115
	(per cent)					
Australia	100.0	97.9	91.6	85.2	81.8	93.6
Overseas	—	2.1	8.4	14.8	18.2	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

More than a third (36.8%) of occupational therapists reporting that they had worked for more than 2 years overseas had obtained their occupational therapy qualification overseas (Figure 5, Table A.7). This compares with only 6.0% of those who had worked overseas for 6–11 months and 12–23 months and only 4.4% for those who had worked overseas for less than 6 months.



Employment sector

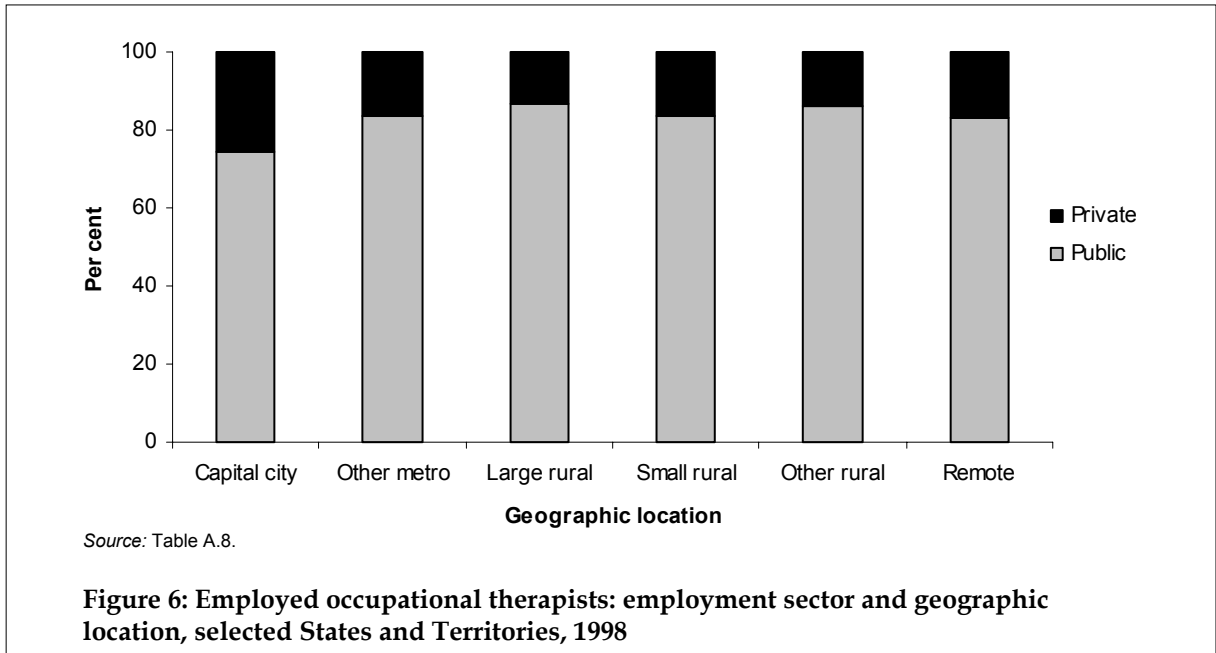
The vast majority (77.2%) of employed occupational therapists worked in the public sector. Public occupational therapists were most commonly aged 25–29 years (22.5%), followed by 30–34 year olds (17.6%) (Table 13). More than a quarter of 50–54 and 40–44 year olds worked in the private sector (28.6% and 26.2% respectively).

Table 13: Employed occupational therapists: employment sector and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

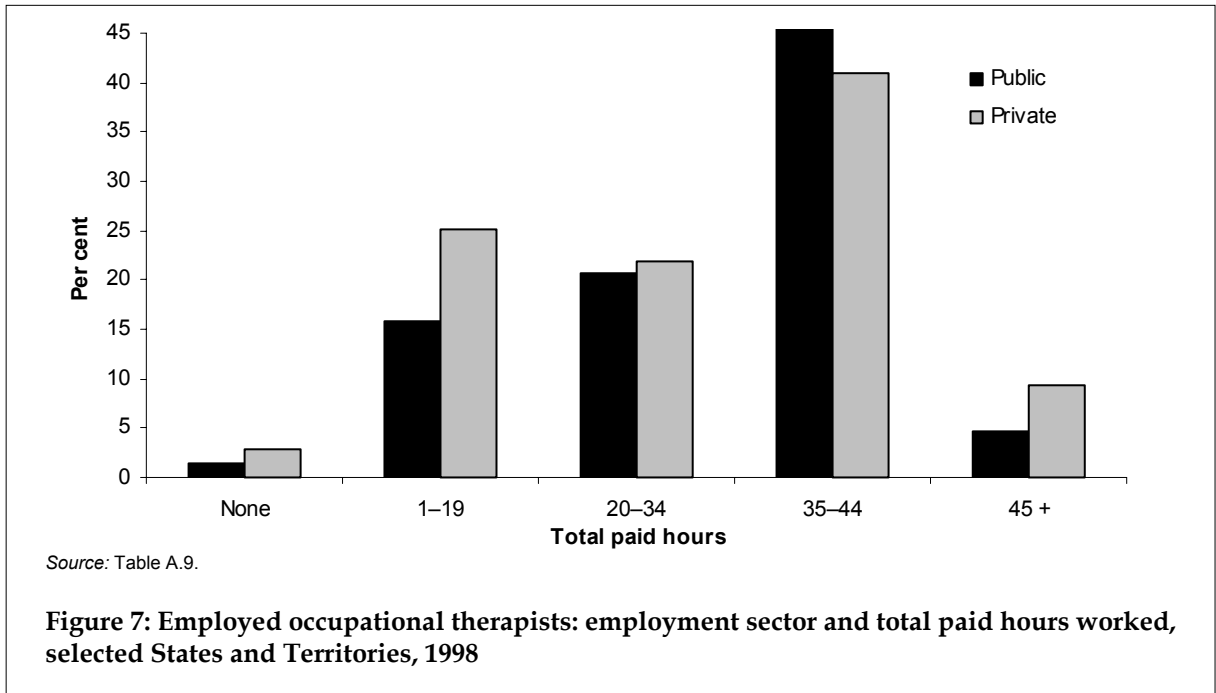
Sector	Age (years)								Total
	<25	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55+	
	(number)								
Public	307	541	423	348	316	239	125	105	2,405
Private	64	170	132	111	112	48	50	23	710
Total	372	711	555	458	429	287	175	129	3,115
	(per cent of age)								
Public	12.8	22.5	17.6	14.5	13.1	9.9	5.2	4.4	100.0
Private	9.0	23.9	18.6	15.6	15.8	6.8	7.0	3.3	100.0
Total	11.9	22.8	17.8	14.7	13.8	9.2	5.6	4.1	100.0
	(per cent of sector)								
Public	82.7	76.1	76.2	75.9	73.8	83.2	71.4	82.0	77.2
Private	17.3	23.9	23.8	24.1	26.2	16.8	28.6	18.0	22.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Capital cities had the highest proportion (25.7%) of occupational therapists who worked in the private sector (Figure 6, Table A.8). Large rural areas around Australia had the lowest (13.3%). All other areas had between 14.1% and 17.1% privately employed occupational therapists.



Public sector and private sector occupational therapists varied in the number of paid hours they usually worked during the week. In general, private sector occupational therapists worked fewer hours than their public sector colleagues (Figure 7, Table A.9). Almost two-thirds (62.1%) of public sector occupational therapists worked full-time hours (35 or more hours per week), compared with half of the private sector occupational therapists (50.1%).



Of the 2,759 clinical occupational therapists, more than three quarters (77.0%) worked in the public sector (Table 14). The majority of clinical occupational therapists were salaried workers (78.7%). However, the proportion of salaried public sector occupational therapists was far greater than salaried private sector occupational therapists (85.4% and 56.3%, respectively). Conversely, more than a quarter (27.6%) of private sector occupational therapists were self-employed, while only 2.6% of public sector occupational therapists were self-employed.

Table 14: Employed clinical occupational therapists: employment sector and type of job, selected States and Territories, 1998.

Work setting	Type of job						Total	
	Self-employed	Sessional appointments	Fee for service	Contract	Salaried	Locum		Other
	(number)							
Public	55	9	18	109	1,814	116	4	2,125
Private	175	20	25	48	357	9	—	634
Total	230	29	43	157	2,172	125	4	2,759
	(per cent of employment sector)							
Public	2.6	0.4	0.8	5.1	85.4	5.5	0.2	100.0
Private	27.6	3.1	3.9	7.6	56.3	1.4	—	100.0
Total	8.3	1.0	1.6	5.7	78.7	4.5	0.1	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Client waiting time

Almost a third (32.5%) of employed clinical occupational therapists had a waiting list (Table 15). Victoria had the highest percentage (37.4%), while the Australian Capital Territory had the lowest percentage (18.1%) of occupational therapists with a waiting list.

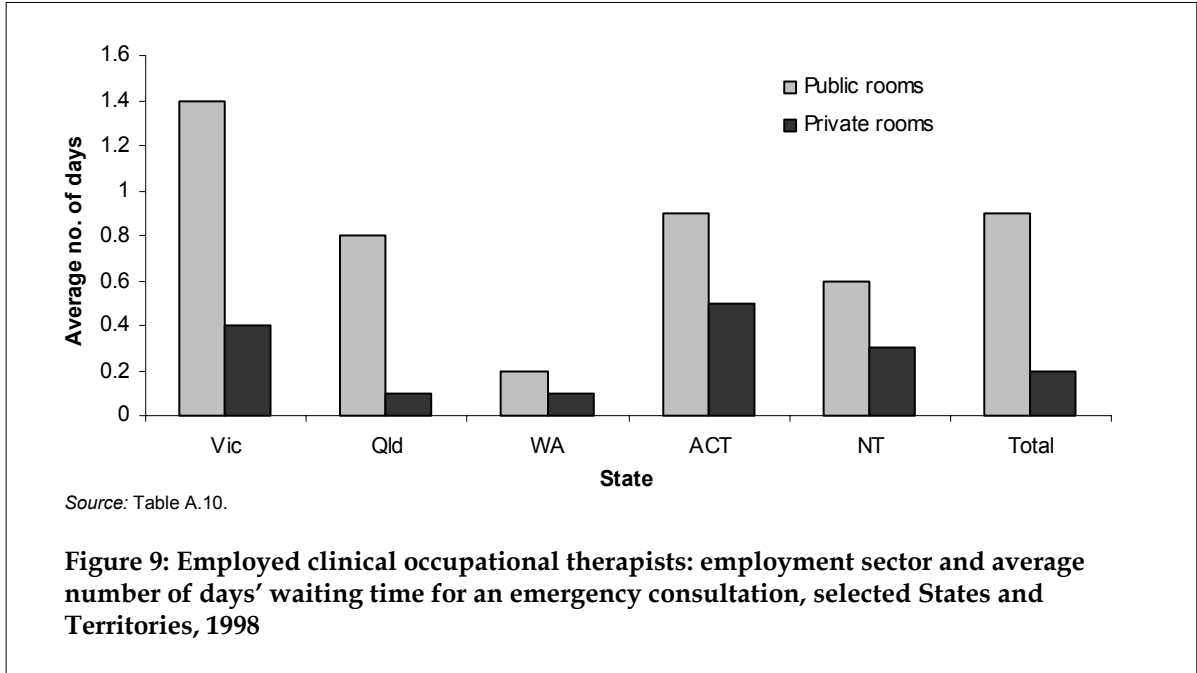
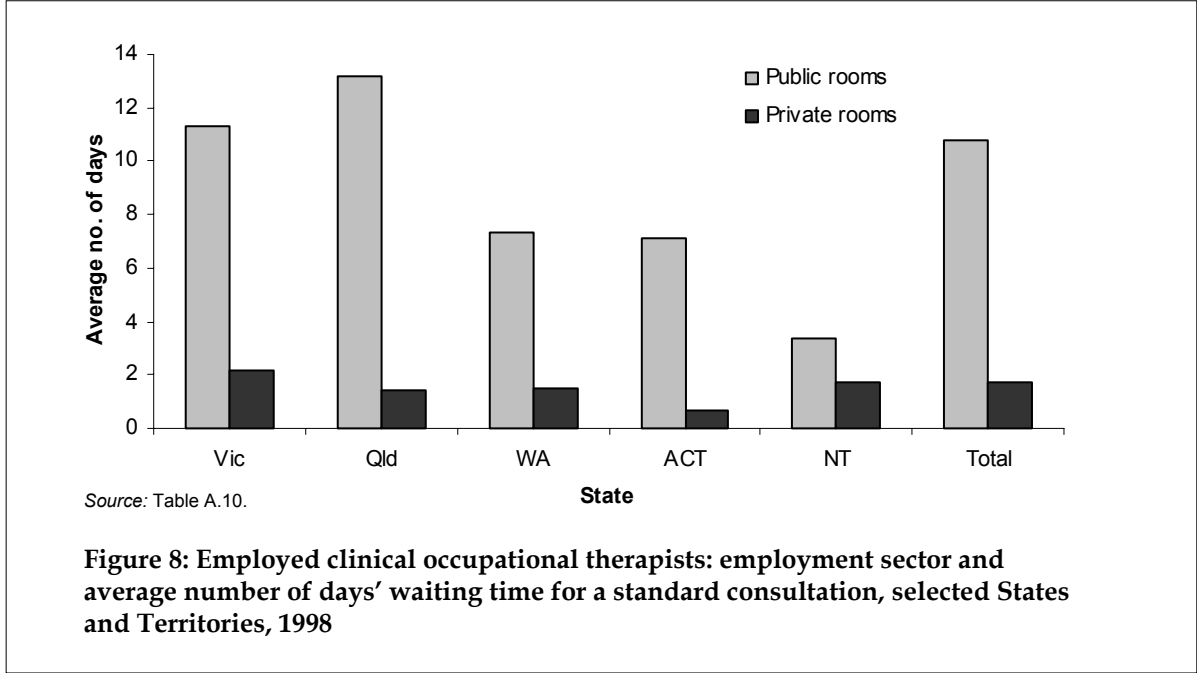
Table 15: Employed clinical occupational therapists: waiting list, selected States and Territories, 1998

Whether had a waiting list	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Yes	479	229	162	13	14	898
No	802	431	533	59	36	1,861
Total	1,281	660	695	72	50	2,759
% with waiting list	37.4	34.7	23.4	18.1	28.0	32.5

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

In the survey, clinical occupational therapists indicated how long a patient referred for a standard first consultation and an emergency consultation would have to wait for an appointment. There was a large difference in the average waiting times between the public and private sectors. Queensland had the longest waiting time for a standard consultation in public rooms (13.2 days), while the Northern Territory had the shortest (3.4 days) (Figure 8, Table A.10). For standard consultations in private rooms, Victoria had the longest waiting time (2.2 days), while the Australian Capital Territory had the shortest (0.7 days). Victoria reported the longest average waiting times for emergency public consultations (1.4 days),

while the Australian Capital Territory reported the longest average waiting times for emergency private consultations (0.5 days). Queensland and Western Australia both had the shortest private average waiting times for emergency consultations (0.1 days), while Western Australia also had the shortest waiting time for public emergency consultations (0.2 days) (Figure 9, Table A.10). It appears that there is an inverse relationship between the relative rates of occupational therapists per 100,000 population for each jurisdiction and the relative average waiting times (see Table A.2). For example, Western Australia had the highest rate of occupational therapists and also reported the shortest average waiting times for both public and private emergency consultations.



2.3 Education and migration

2.3.1 Education

Occupational therapy courses are not available at universities in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. The Northern Territory University has an agreement with James Cook University whereby students complete their first year of a 4-year degree at the Northern Territory University, and complete the subsequent 3 years at James Cook University. Students studying in this program may return to the Northern Territory for fieldwork components of their degrees.

The rate of occupational therapists per 100,000 people presented in Table A.2 indicate that a lack of occupational therapy courses in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory has not resulted in an obvious relative shortfall in the number of occupational therapists employed in these jurisdictions. There are no survey data available from Tasmania to assess if there is a deficit in occupational therapists in that jurisdiction.

Trends in education

There has been an increase in the number of students completing postgraduate degrees, as well as a decrease in the students' ages at completion. It is not clear if this effect is due to an increasing demand for more highly qualified occupational therapists, or that competition for jobs is driving occupational therapists to study for higher qualifications earlier in their lives.

In total, 40.4% of employed occupational therapists responding to the Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey received their initial qualification since 1990 (Table 16). There has been a shift from diplomas to bachelor degrees over the decades. Occupational therapists who obtained bachelor degrees in the 1970s made up 65.5% of the initial qualifications in that decade. This compares with 98.3% of initial qualifications in the 1990s.

Table 16: Employed occupational therapists: level of initial qualification in occupational therapy and year completed, selected States and Territories, 1998

Level of qualification	Year qualification completed					Total
	1950–59	1960–69	1970–79	1980–89	1990–98	
Certificate	0	2	9	8	13	32
Diploma	27	233	180	45	3	488
Bachelor degree	2	0	396	926	1,237	2,561
Post grad. diploma	0	0	3	5	3	12
Masters degree	0	0	2	2	0	3
Other	0	3	15	0	0	19
Total	29	238	605	986	1,258	3,115

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Course commencements

In 1999, 923 Australian permanent residents commenced an occupational therapy course at an Australian university (Table 17). This represents a 58.9% increase from 1990. The proportion of females commencing occupational therapy courses has hovered between 83.6% and 88.3% over the last 10 years.

While students commencing an undergraduate course in 1999 represented a 49.4% increase from 1990, the largest increase was in the number of students commencing postgraduate courses, showing a 182.9% increase in that 10-year period (Table 17).

Table 17: Australian permanent residents commencing occupational therapy courses: level of course and sex, Australia, 1989–99

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Males										
Undergraduate	69	101	82	81	85	77	81	81	89	112
Postgraduate	4	6	7	12	19	18	15	14	21	21
<i>Total males</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>133</i>
Females										
Undergraduate	471	505	512	468	556	541	621	587	660	695
Postgraduate	37	41	61	54	85	72	102	94	74	95
<i>Total females</i>	<i>508</i>	<i>546</i>	<i>573</i>	<i>522</i>	<i>641</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>723</i>	<i>681</i>	<i>734</i>	<i>790</i>
Persons										
Undergraduate										
Bach. Honours	—	7	3	7	13	12	15	18	13	15
Bach. pass	463	500	515	480	568	606	687	650	736	792
Assoc. Diploma	77	99	76	62	60	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Total undergraduate</i>	<i>540</i>	<i>606</i>	<i>594</i>	<i>549</i>	<i>641</i>	<i>618</i>	<i>702</i>	<i>668</i>	<i>749</i>	<i>807</i>
Postgraduate										
PhD	1	1	3	2	2	4	5	6	15	12
MSc—research	1	4	7	16	24	26	24	35	23	16
MSc—coursework	4	5	13	16	26	18	26	16	21	57
Post graduate qualifying	1	6	4	1	6	2	9	4	3	2
PG Diploma (new field)	29	24	28	25	29	23	34	34	19	14
PG Diploma (extends field)	5	7	11	6	6	13	17	11	3	4
Graduate Certificate	—	—	2	—	11	4	2	2	11	11
<i>Total postgraduate</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>116</i>
Total	581	653	662	615	745	708	819	776	844	923
% female										
Undergraduate	87.2	83.3	86.2	85.2	86.7	87.5	88.5	87.9	88.1	86.1
Postgraduate	90.2	87.2	89.7	81.8	81.7	80.0	87.2	87.0	77.9	81.9
Total	87.4	83.6	86.6	84.9	86.0	86.6	88.3	87.8	87.0	85.6
% undergraduate/postgraduate										
Undergraduate	92.9	92.8	89.7	89.3	86.0	87.3	85.7	86.1	88.7	87.4
Postgraduate	7.1	7.2	10.3	10.7	14.0	12.7	14.3	13.9	11.3	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: AIHW analysis of DETYA data.

Overall, occupational therapy appears to have become more popular. In 1999, 29.9 people in every 100,000 people aged under 25 years commenced an undergraduate occupational therapy course, compared with 19.6 per 100,000 in 1990 (Table 18). The effect of accessibility to a university offering occupational therapy courses can be seen when the State of each student's home residence is analysed. The rate of commencements of students coming from Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and particularly the Northern Territory was

consistently lower than the rates in most of the other jurisdictions. The Northern Territory had the lowest number of students commencing undergraduate occupational therapy courses with only 6.4 students per 100,000 population aged under 25 years starting university in 1999.

Table 18: Australian permanent residents commencing undergraduate occupational therapy courses: state of home residence, Australia, 1989–99

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
State of home residence	(number)									
NSW	172	199	222	168	232	216	265	237	278	296
Vic	173	200	164	160	179	152	166	153	134	154
Qld	69	79	82	90	97	98	105	109	159	165
WA	74	64	70	65	68	88	73	94	89	98
SA	39	47	40	47	46	52	70	51	67	65
Tas	6	9	9	9	10	5	6	13	13	14
ACT	5	7	6	10	7	7	11	7	6	12
NT	1	1	—	—	2	—	4	4	2	2
Other	1	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	1
Total	540	606	594	549	641	618	702	668	749	807
	(rate per 100,000 persons aged 15–24)									
NSW	18.8	21.8	24.4	18.6	25.8	24.2	29.9	26.9	31.6	33.3
Vic	23.9	27.8	23.1	22.9	26.2	22.6	25.1	23.2	20.3	23.1
Qld	14.3	16.3	16.6	18.0	19.2	19.3	20.7	21.5	31.2	32.1
WA	28.2	24.4	26.7	24.8	25.8	33.3	27.5	35.1	32.8	35.4
SA	17.4	21.1	18.1	21.7	21.7	25.1	34.4	25.4	33.5	32.4
Tas	8.3	12.6	12.7	12.8	14.5	7.4	9.0	19.8	20.0	21.7
ACT	9.5	12.9	10.9	18.0	12.7	12.8	20.5	13.3	11.5	23.0
NT	3.3	3.3	—	—	6.6	—	13.0	12.8	6.4	6.4
Other	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	19.6	21.9	21.6	20.1	23.6	22.9	26.2	25.1	28.0	29.9

Source: AIHW analysis of DETYA data.

Course completions

The number of students completing occupational therapy courses also increased over the 1990s. Specifically, there was a 59.3% increase in undergraduate occupational therapy course completions since 1989, and a much larger increase in the number of postgraduate completions, which rose 247.4% over the decade to 1999 (Table 19).

When comparing commencements with completions, it can be seen that the percentage of female students relative to male students completing their degrees was consistently higher than the percentage of females commencing their degrees 4 years earlier. For example, in 1995, 87.5% of the students commencing an undergraduate occupational therapy course were female (Table 17), while 4 years later 89.5% of the undergraduates completing their degrees were female (Table 19). This indicates that slightly more males than females may have dropped out or transferred to other courses.

Table 19: Australian permanent residents completing occupational therapy courses: level of course and sex, Australia, 1988–98

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Males										
Undergraduate	28	35	29	38	46	51	61	42	51	56
Postgraduate	2	—	2	1	3	6	6	8	5	13
<i>Total</i>	30	35	31	39	49	57	67	50	56	69
Females										
Undergraduate	306	403	371	401	397	430	440	350	407	476
Postgraduate	17	6	23	22	32	34	32	40	50	53
<i>Total</i>	323	409	394	423	429	464	472	390	457	529
Persons										
Undergraduate										
Bach. Honours	7	8	31	23	18	20	18	28	16	17
Bach. pass	280	373	316	348	352	415	435	361	441	515
Diploma	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Assoc. Diploma	47	57	53	68	73	46	48	—	1	—
<i>Total undergraduate</i>	334	438	400	439	443	481	501	392	458	532
Postgraduate										
PhD	—	1	—	—	1	2	—	2	2	—
MSc—research	—	1	2	—	1	—	3	2	5	7
MSc—coursework	—	—	1	—	1	7	—	11	14	14
PG Diploma (new field)	19	2	22	17	26	15	17	24	19	18
PG Diploma (extends field)	—	2	—	6	6	8	14	5	14	22
Graduate Certificate	—	—	—	—	—	8	4	4	1	5
<i>Total postgraduate</i>	19	6	25	23	35	40	38	48	55	66
Total	353	444	425	462	478	521	539	440	513	598
% female										
Undergraduate	91.6	92.0	92.8	91.3	89.6	89.4	87.8	89.3	88.9	89.5
Postgraduate	89.5	100.0	92.0	95.7	91.4	85.0	84.2	83.3	90.9	80.3
Total	91.5	92.1	92.7	91.6	89.7	89.1	87.6	88.6	89.1	88.5
% undergraduate/postgraduate										
Undergraduate	94.6	98.6	94.1	95.0	92.7	92.3	92.9	89.1	89.3	89.0
Postgraduate	5.4	1.4	5.9	5.0	7.3	7.7	7.1	10.9	10.7	11.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: AIHW analysis of DETYA data.

The average age of students completing undergraduate occupational therapy degrees remained relatively constant over the 10 years to 1998 (Table 20). However, the average age of students completing postgraduate occupational therapy degrees fell sharply from 32.9 years in 1989 to 28.9 years in 1998.

Table 20: Australian permanent residents completing occupational therapy courses: level of course and average age, Australia, 1988–98

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
	(average age)									
Undergraduate	22.9	22.8	22.9	22.8	22.3	22.5	22.0	24.3	22.9	22.1
Postgraduate	32.9	40.7	34.4	34.3	34.1	32.6	32.2	29.6	28.6	28.9
Total	23.5	23.0	23.6	23.4	23.2	23.3	22.7	25.2	24.0	23.6

Source: AIHW analysis of DETYA data.

Other education interests

Respondents to the Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey listed any qualifications they had attained outside the field of occupational therapy. Qualifications were classified according to the ABS Classification of Qualifications (1993). Almost a quarter (24.0%) of employed occupational therapists had one qualification in a field other than occupational therapy, 6.2% had two qualifications and 1.6% had three qualifications (Table 21). Of the 1,418 employed occupational therapists in Victoria, 40.5% had at least one qualification in a field other than occupational therapy. This compared with Queensland, where 23.2% of employed occupational therapists had at least one qualification in another field. Across all surveyed jurisdictions the most popular field for further study was health (384 qualifications, 38.8%), followed by society and culture (329 qualifications, 33.2%), both of which have an association with occupational therapy.

Table 21: Number of qualifications in fields other than occupational therapy attained by employed occupational therapists: area of study, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Field of study	(number of qualifications)					
Business and management	47	17	12	2	—	78
Health	230	59	72	8	15	384
Education	32	29	19	2	—	82
Society and culture	196	54	66	10	3	329
Natural and physical sciences	21	11	3	—	—	35
Engineering	4	—	—	—	—	4
Architecture and building	4	—	—	2	—	6
Agriculture and related fields	13	1	5	2	—	21
Other	26	7	10	8	—	51
Total qualifications	573	178	187	34	18	990
	(per cent of employed occupational therapists)					
1 qualification	29.0	19.1	19.6	28.9	21.6	24.0
2 qualifications	9.1	3.4	3.6	6.7	8.1	6.2
3 qualifications	2.4	0.9	0.9	2.2	—	1.6
Total	40.5	23.3	24.0	37.8	29.7	31.8

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

2.3.2 Migration

Information from DIMA gives an indication of the number of occupational therapists who left Australia between 1996–97 and 1999–00 for employment reasons for long-term stays (12 months or longer) in other countries (Table 22). United Kingdom and Ireland have consistently attracted high proportions of these occupational therapists over this 4-year period (between 42 and 50 occupational therapists each year). North and South America also drew a large proportion of occupational therapists in 1996–97 and 1997–98, more so than the United Kingdom and Ireland. However, this declined to less than a third of the 1997–98 figure in the subsequent 2 years. This has resulted in an overall decline in the number of occupational therapists departing Australia for a long-term stay overseas.

Although the number of occupational therapists migrating to Australia for long-term stays trebled over the 4-year period, it was still six times less than the number of Australian occupational therapists leaving in 1999–00 (Table 22).

Table 22: Long-term and short-term migration of occupational therapists to and from Australia for employment: country of residence, 1996–97 to 1999–00

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00
Australian permanent residents departing long-term				
Destination country				
New Zealand	—	3	—	2
UK/Ireland	47	42	50	47
Other Europe	2	1	1	2
Asia	2	13	4	6
The Middle East and Africa	1	2	2	2
North and South America	53	56	20	14
Other	—	—	1	—
Total	105	117	78	73
Overseas citizens migrating to Australia for long-term stay	4	6	13	12
Overseas citizens migrating to Australia for short-term stay	3	3	5	10

Source: AIHW analysis of DIMA data.

Until January 2000, the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) assessed overseas educational qualifications of people wishing to work in the field of occupational therapy in Australia. Since that time the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (COTRB) has taken over the responsibility for this. In the fiscal year 1998–99, 23 people were examined and passed by NOOSR to have their overseas occupational therapy qualifications recognised in Australia (DETYA 1999).

2.4 Occupational therapists not employed in occupational therapy

2.4.1 Characteristics

Of the 403 registered occupational therapists who indicated that they were either not working or working, but not in occupational therapy, 394 (97.7%) were women (Table A.1). This proportion of females was higher than in the employed occupational therapy labour force. This is likely to be a reflection of females postponing or giving up work for family commitments as child rearing accounts for the most common reason given for leaving occupational therapy (Table 23).

Occupational therapists over the age of 30 years formed 79.4% of those who were not employed in occupational therapy (Table 23). A large proportion (40.6%) of occupational therapists over the age of 30 left the profession either for a career change or to study for a post-graduate degree in a different field. The main reason given for leaving the profession was for child rearing. Similar proportions for both those aged 30 years and younger and those aged greater than 30 years, gave this reason (42.3% and 44.6%, respectively).

Table 23: All registered persons not working in occupational therapy: reason for leaving occupational therapy and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

Reason for leaving occupational therapy	30 years and younger	Older than 30 years	Total
	(number)		
Retired	—	19	19
Child rearing	35	143	178
Post-graduate study in occupational therapy	2	2	3
Post-graduate study in other fields	2	22	24
Career change	22	108	130
Travel	10	6	16
Other	13	21	33
Total	82	320	403
	(per cent of age)		
Retired	—	5.9	4.7
Child rearing	42.3	44.6	44.1
Post-graduate study in occupational therapy	1.9	0.5	0.8
Post-graduate study in other fields	1.9	6.9	5.9
Career change	26.9	33.7	32.3
Travel	11.5	2.0	3.9
Other	15.4	6.4	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Of the 403 registered occupational therapists not employed in occupational therapy, 274 (68.1%) planned to re-enter the occupational therapy workforce (Table 24). The vast majority of those leaving occupational therapy for child-rearing reasons planned to return to the field (88.4%).

Table 24: All registered persons not working on occupational therapy: reason for leaving occupational therapy and intention to return, selected States and Territories, 1998

Reason for leaving occupational therapy	Planning to re-enter occupational therapy workforce			Total
	Yes	No	Not stated	
	(number)			
Retired from the workforce	3	14	2	19
Child rearing	157	10	11	178
Post-graduate study in occupational therapy	3	—	—	3
Post-graduate study in other fields	11	11	2	24
Change in career	59	59	13	130
Travel	14	2	—	16
Other	27	3	3	33
Total	274	98	30	403
	(per cent of reason for leaving)			
Retired from the workforce	16.7	75.0	8.3	100.0
Child rearing	88.4	5.4	6.3	100.0
Post-graduate study in occupational therapy	100.0	—	—	100.0
Post-graduate study in other fields	46.7	46.7	6.7	100.0
Change in career	45.1	45.1	9.8	100.0
Travel	90.0	10.0	—	100.0
Other	81.0	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	68.1	24.4	7.5	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Of the 3,586 registered occupational therapists, only 2.9% (104) were not employed in occupational therapy and seeking work (Table 25). The Australian Capital Territory had the highest proportion of occupational therapists looking for work at 5.0% of all registered occupational therapists in that jurisdiction. This figure should be treated with caution due to the small numbers, which may have resulted in over-estimation. Aside from the Northern Territory, which had no registered occupational therapists seeking work, Western Australia had the least number of occupational therapists seeking work at 2.2% of the total registrations. These figures cannot be seen as an indication of the number of people looking for work in occupational therapy, as it is not necessary to register in the State or Territory in which employment is being sought. No information is available from unregistered occupational therapists.

Table 25: All registered persons not working as an occupational therapist: looking for work in occupational therapy, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
	(number)					
Looking for work						
Full- or part-time	11	11	6	—	—	28
Full-time	27	3	3	—	—	33
Part-time	—	22	9	5	—	36
Not stated	5	—	2	—	—	6
<i>Total</i>	43	36	21	5	—	104
Not looking for work	30	163	88	2	16	299
Total	73	199	109	6	16	403
	(per cent of total registrations)					
Looking for work						
Full- or part-time	0.7	1.2	0.7	—	—	0.8
Full-time	1.8	0.3	0.3	—	—	0.9
Part-time	—	2.3	1.0	5.0	—	1.0
Not stated	0.3	—	0.2	—	—	0.2
<i>Total</i>	2.8	3.8	2.2	5.0	—	2.9
Not looking for work	2.0	17.1	9.5	1.7	20.4	8.3
Total	4.8	20.9	11.7	6.6	20.4	11.2

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Appendix A: Detailed tables

Table A.1: Estimated number of occupational therapists: employment status and sex, selected States and Territories, 1998

Employment status	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Males						
Only in this State	62	29	45	3	6	146
Mainly in this State	9	1	2	—	1	13
Mainly in another State	4	1	—	—	—	5
Only in other States	—	3	—	—	—	3
On extended leave	—	—	—	—	—	—
Practising overseas	—	7	2	—	—	9
Employed, but not in occupational therapy	—	3	2	2	—	7
Not working	2	—	—	—	—	2
<i>Total males</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>185</i>
Females						
Only in this State	1,228	685	683	61	42	2,698
Mainly in this State	75	25	35	17	8	160
Mainly in another State	15	4	9	6	—	34
Only in other States	19	28	10	—	2	59
On extended leave	45	26	21	4	3	99
Practising overseas	4	36	17	2	—	59
Employed, but not in occupational therapy	53	68	40	—	8	170
Not working	51	73	86	6	8	224
<i>Total females</i>	<i>1,490</i>	<i>944</i>	<i>901</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>3,503</i>
Persons						
Only in this State	1,289	714	728	65	47	2,844
Mainly in this State	83	26	37	17	10	173
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,373</i>	<i>740</i>	<i>765</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>3,017</i>
Mainly in another State	19	6	9	6	—	39
Only in other States	19	31	10	—	2	63
<i>Total</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>102</i>
On extended leave	45	26	21	4	3	99
Practising overseas	4	42	19	2	—	68
Employed, but not in occupational therapy	53	72	42	2	8	177
Not working	53	73	86	6	8	226
<i>Total</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>569</i>
Total persons	1,567	989	952	101	79	3,688

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.2: Employed occupational therapists: selected characteristics, selected States and Territories, 1998

Characteristic	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total	%
Age group							
Males							
<25	11	4	2	—	—	16	10.9
25–34	15	17	21	4	4	61	38.5
35–44	29	6	14	—	3	51	32.2
45–54	15	3	9	—	—	27	17.3
55–64	—	—	2	—	—	2	1.1
65+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mean	37.4	32.7	36.8	26.0	35.0	35.5	..
Females							
<25	142	101	81	4	5	332	11.2
25–34	556	295	285	19	23	1,178	39.8
35–44	363	214	206	40	20	842	28.5
45–54	221	95	143	10	5	473	16.0
55–64	62	30	25	10	—	127	4.3
65+	4	1	—	—	—	5	0.2
Mean	36.1	34.9	36.1	39.3	34.1	35.7	..
Persons							
Mean	36.2	34.8	36.1	38.7	34.2	35.7	..
Residency status							
Australian citizen	1,362	750	758	84	58	3,012	96.7
Permanent resident	52	15	28	2	2	98	3.1
Non resident	4	1	—	—	—	5	0.2
Total paid hours worked per week							
Males							
zero	—	4	—	—	—	4	2.8
1–19	4	2	—	—	—	6	4.1
20–34	6	1	5	—	—	12	8.0
35–44	53	18	33	4	7	115	72.7
45+	6	4	9	—	—	19	12.4
Mean	38.8	38.0	41.3	39.0	37.2	39.3	..
Females							
zero	13	36	17	4	—	70	2.4
1–19	228	141	164	11	7	552	18.7
20–34	314	131	169	29	8	651	22.0
35–44	743	379	344	38	36	1,541	52.1
45+	49	49	44	—	2	144	4.9
Mean	32.4	32.0	30.7	29.2	33.3	31.8	..
Persons							
Mean hours	32.7	32.2	31.4	29.6	33.8	32.2	..

(continued)

Table A.2 (continued): Employed occupational therapists: selected characteristics, selected States and Territories, 1998

Characteristic	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total	%
Geographic location of main job							
Number							
Capital city	1,059	494	653	86	37	2,236	74.8
Other metro centre	57	63	..	..	..	115	3.8
Large rural centre	116	125	—	..	..	231	7.7
Small rural centre	100	23	57	..	..	172	5.8
Other rural area	81	39	37	—	2	152	5.1
Remote area	4	23	39	..	21	87	2.8
Rate per 100,000 population							
Capital city	31.5	31.4	48.7	27.9	43.1	34.9	
Other metro centre	36.9	13.6	..	..	..	19.4	
Large rural centre	50.9	26.5	..	..	..	34.4	
Small rural centre	37.2	11.1	43.0	..	..	29.6	
Other rural area	13.0	7.1	20.9	—	10.0	11.6	
Remote area	33.1	11.8	22.0	..	24.2	18.5	
<i>Total</i>	<i>30.5</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>43.0</i>	<i>27.9</i>	<i>31.6</i>	<i>29.9</i>	
Time spent working overseas							
Have not worked overseas	863	498	462	51	39	1,840	61.4
Less than 6 months	155	55	56	4	6	264	8.9
6–11 months	118	71	72	10	5	266	8.9
12–23 months	95	71	69	10	2	237	7.9
2 years or more	187	70	127	11	8	387	13.0
Field of main job							
Clinical occupational therapy	1,281	660	695	72	50	2,759	88.6
Administration	87	52	43	8	5	194	6.2
Training /education	26	29	43	0	3	101	3.3
Research	4	16	2	2	—	24	0.8
Other	19	9	4	4	2	38	1.2
Type of job (main job)							
Self-employed	95	75	89	5	8	271	8.7
Sessional appointments	15	3	18	2	—	38	1.2
Fee for service	17	17	4	7	—	45	1.4
Contract	61	35	72	9	2	180	5.8
Salaried occupational therapist	1,193	582	565	61	46	2,448	78.6
Locum	37	54	35	—	4	129	4.2
Other	—	—	2	2	—	4	0.1

(continued)

Table A.2 (continued): Employed occupational therapists: selected characteristics, selected States and Territories, 1998

Characteristic	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total	%
Work setting of main job							
Public							
Hospital/day procedure centre	477	216	219	27	7	946	30.4
Nursing home/hostel	14	6	26	—	—	46	1.5
Other residential	2	15	6	—	—	23	0.7
Community health service	286	133	103	21	22	564	18.1
Rehabilitation service	203	49	79	4	13	347	11.1
Own/group practice	11	14	9	2	—	37	1.2
Schools	43	78	26	—	7	154	4.9
Tertiary education institution ^(a)	18	26	34	—	—	78	2.5
Government facility	29	50	19	2	—	100	3.2
Other	54	27	24	4	—	110	3.5
<i>Total Public</i>	<i>1,136</i>	<i>615</i>	<i>545</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>2,405</i>	<i>77.2</i>
Private							
Hospital/day procedure centre	88	24	30	2	2	145	4.7
Nursing home/hostel	11	12	39	2	—	65	2.1
Other residential	2	—	2	—	—	4	0.1
Community health service	7	21	9	—	—	37	1.2
Rehabilitation service	72	25	54	6	3	161	5.2
Own/group practice	63	30	73	16	5	185	5.9
Schools	7	6	9	—	—	22	0.7
Mining, industrial or commercial sector	11	15	9	—	2	38	1.2
Other	20	18	15	—	—	53	1.7
<i>Total Private</i>	<i>281</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>241</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>710</i>	<i>22.8</i>
Undertaken continuing education in occupational therapy in last 12 months							
Yes	722	487	322	50	31	1,611	51.7
No	696	279	464	36	29	1,504	48.3
Males	70	30	47	4	7	158	5.1
Females	1,347	736	739	82	53	2,957	94.9
Total	1,418	766	786	86	60	3,115	100.0

(a) Includes 1 occupational therapist working in a private tertiary education institution.

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.3: Persons consulting an occupational therapist in the 2 weeks before the survey: age (years) and sex, 1995

	Client age (years)				Sex		Total
	0-14	15-19	20-64	65+	Males	Females	
Number	6,409	634	10,814	3,549	12,955	8,450	21,406
Rate per 100,000	164.9	49.9	100.5	165.0	144.1	93.1	118.5

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS data.

Table A.4: Employed occupational therapists: average total paid hours, sex and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

Sex	<25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55+	Total
Males	39.4	41.1	32.3	45.9	38.1	30.6	39	47	39.3
Females	37.7	36.8	31	24.6	27.3	26.7	28.8	27.6	31.8
Total	37.8	37	31.1	25.4	28	27	29.3	27.9	32.2

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.5: Employed occupational therapists: average years experience in occupational therapy and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

Age (years)	Vic	Qld	WA	NT	ACT	Total
<25	2.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.5	2.1
25-29	6.3	5.7	4.5	5.0	4.8	5.6
30-34	9.4	10.7	9.7	7.9	9.7	9.9
35-39	13.1	13.8	13.6	12.9	11.9	13.4
40-44	18.5	17.1	16.7	16.7	16.8	17.5
45-49	20.6	21.6	19.0	25.0	18.0	20.5
50-54	25.3	20.6	23.3	20.5	17.0	23.3
55+	29.4	29.3	24.5	—	25.2	28.2
Total	13.0	11.7	11.8	10.4	13.3	12.2

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.6: Employed occupational therapists: time spent practising as an occupational therapist overseas and age, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Not worked OS	<6 months	6–11 months	12–23 months	2 years or more	Total
Age (years)	(number)					
<25	325	14	8	2	—	349
25–34	685	136	147	146	126	1,239
35–44	571	69	64	62	128	893
45–54	282	33	53	33	99	500
55+	60	14	9	11	40	134
Total	1,922	267	281	254	392	3,115
	(per cent of age)					
<25	16.9	5.4	2.9	0.6	0.0	11.2
25–34	35.6	50.8	52.4	57.4	32.1	39.8
35–44	29.7	25.8	22.7	24.5	32.6	28.7
45–54	14.7	12.5	18.8	13.2	25.2	16.1
55+	3.1	5.4	3.2	4.3	10.2	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(per cent of overseas experience)					
<25	93.1	4.1	2.3	0.5	0.0	100.0
25–34	55.3	10.9	11.9	11.8	10.1	100.0
35–44	63.9	7.7	7.1	7.0	14.3	100.0
45–54	56.3	6.7	10.6	6.7	19.7	100.0
55+	44.6	10.8	6.8	8.1	29.7	100.0
Total	61.7	8.6	9.0	8.1	12.6	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.7: Employed occupational therapists: place where initial qualification in occupational therapy was obtained and time spent working overseas, selected States and Territories, 1998.

	Not worked OS	<6 months	6–11 months	12–23 months	2+ years	Total
Place where initial qualification obtained	(number)					
Australia	1,915	254	263	239	246	2,917
Overseas	12	12	17	15	143	199
Total	1,927	266	279	254	389	3,115
	(per cent)					
Australia	99.4	95.6	94.0	94.0	63.2	93.6
Overseas	0.6	4.4	6.0	6.0	36.8	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.8: Employed occupational therapists: employment sector and geographic location, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Capital city	Other metro	Large rural	Small rural	Other rural	Remote	Total
Employment sector	(number)						
Public	1,697	114	239	141	134	80	2,405
Private	586	22	37	27	22	16	710
Total	2,283	136	275	169	156	96	3,115
	(per cent of sector)						
Public	74.3	83.8	86.7	83.7	85.9	82.9	77.2
Private	25.7	16.2	13.3	16.3	14.1	17.1	22.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(per cent of geographic location)						
Public	70.6	4.7	9.9	5.9	5.6	3.3	100.0
Private	82.5	3.1	5.2	3.9	3.1	2.3	100.0
Total	73.3	4.4	8.8	5.4	5.0	3.1	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.9: Employed occupational therapists: employment sector and total paid hours worked, selected States and Territories, 1998

	None	1–19 hours	20–34 hours	35–44 hours	45+ hours	Total
Sector	(number)					
Public	35	381	496	1,382	111	2,405
Private	19	179	156	290	66	710
Total	55	560	652	1,673	176	3,115
	(per cent)					
Public	1.5	15.8	20.6	57.5	4.6	100.0
Private	2.7	25.2	21.9	40.9	9.2	100.0
Total	1.8	18.0	20.9	53.7	5.7	100.0

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A.10: Employed clinical occupational therapists: average number of days waiting for standard and emergency consultations in public and private rooms, selected States and Territories, 1998

	Vic	Qld	WA	ACT	NT	Total
Standard consultation						
Private rooms	2.2	1.4	1.5	0.7	1.7	1.7
Public rooms	11.3	13.2	7.3	7.1	3.4	10.8
Emergency consultation						
Private rooms	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.2
Public rooms	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.9

Source: Occupational Therapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Glossary

Country

The *Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics* (ABS 1990) has been used to classify country of birth, and country of previous and future residence for immigration data.

Geographic classification

The *Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification* (Department of Primary Industries and Energy & Department of Health and Family Services 1994) has been used to classify the geographic location of occupational therapists' jobs and of patients' residences. The geographic boundaries of these categories are based on the 1991 population census. The classes of geographic location are listed below.

Metropolitan areas

1. *Capital cities* consist of the State and Territory capital cities: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin and Canberra.
2. *Other metropolitan centres* consist of one or more statistical subdivisions that have an urban centre of population of 100,000 or more: Newcastle, Wollongong, Queanbeyan (part of Canberra-Queanbeyan), Geelong, Gold Coast-Tweed Heads, Townsville-Thuringowa.

Rural zone

3. *Large rural centres* are statistical local areas where most of the population reside in urban centres of population of 25,000 to 99,999. These centres are: Albury-Wodonga, Dubbo, Lismore, Orange, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga (NSW); Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton-Mooroopna (Vic); Bundaberg, Cairns, Mackay, Maroochydore-Mooloolaba, Rockhampton, Toowoomba (Qld); Whyalla (SA); and Launceston (Tas).
4. *Small rural centres* are statistical local areas in rural zones containing urban centres of population between 10,000 and 24,999. These centres are Armidale, Ballina, Bathurst, Broken Hill, Casino, Coffs Harbour, Echuca-Moama, Forster-Tuncurry, Goulburn, Grafton, Griffith, Lithgow, Moree Plains, Muswellbrook, Nowra-Bombaderry, Singleton, Taree (NSW); Bairnsdale, Colac, Echuca-Moama, Horsham, Mildura, Moe-Yallourn, Morwell, Ocean Grove-Barwon Heads, Portland, Sale, Traralgon, Wangaratta, Warrnambool (Vic); Caloundra, Gladstone, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Tewantin-Noosa, Warwick (Qld); Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie (SA); Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Mandurah (WA); and Burnie-Somerset, Devonport (Tas).
5. *Other rural areas* are the remaining statistical areas within the rural zone. Examples are Cowra Shire, Temora Shire, Guyra Shire (NSW); Ararat Shire, Cobram Shire (Vic); Cardwell Shire, Whitsunday Shire (Qld); Barossa, Pinnaroo (SA); Moora Shire, York Shire (WA); George Town, Ross (Tas); and Coomalie, Litchfield (NT).

Remote zone

These are generally less densely populated than rural statistical local areas and are hundreds of kilometres from a major urban centre. Data in this publication are reported for the zone which comprises the two areas shown below.

6. *Remote centres* are statistical local areas in the remote zone containing urban centres of population of 5,000 or more: Blackwater, Bowen, Emerald, Mareeba, Moranbah, Mount Isa, Roma (Qld); Broome, Carnarvon, East Pilbara, Esperance, Kalgoorlie/Boulder, Port Hedland, Karratha (WA); and Alice Springs, Katherine (NT).
7. *Other remote areas* are the remaining areas within the remote zone. Examples are: Balranald, Bourke, Cobar, Lord Howe Island (NSW); French Island, Orbost, Walpeup (Vic); Aurukun, Longreach, Quilpie (Qld); Coober Pedy, Murat Bay, Roxby Downs (SA); Coolgardie, Exmouth, Laverton, Shark Bay (WA); King Island, Strahan (Tas); Daly, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy (NT).

Hours worked

The total number of hours worked per week, excluding time spent on travel between work locations and unpaid professional and/or voluntary activities.

Paid hours worked – the number of paid hours an occupational therapist usually works per week.

Unpaid hours worked – the number of unpaid hours an occupational therapist usually worked, e.g. time spent on after hours research, administration, etc.

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