Introduction

Skilled Occupations List

The Department of Education and Training is currently updating its advice on the Australian Government’s Skilled Occupations List (SOL) for 2016-17. We are seeking your input on the occupations/industry sectors your organisation represents or that you belong to as an individual. In particular, we are seeking evidence of:

- skill demand and supply imbalance,* both nationally and regionally
- medium to long-term demand and supply trends which may impact upon Australia’s employment outlook
- formal licensing or registration requirements.

Note: The SOL is concerned only with ‘medium to long-term’ skills needs rather than immediate skills shortages. As such, the Department of Education and Training is only seeking to obtain information on longer term trends, rather than immediate shortages and costs. For the purposes of this exercise, ‘medium to long-term’ is defined as a period of around two to ten years.

* Skill demand and supply (im)balance occurs when the quantity of a given skill supplied by the workforce and the quantity demanded by employers diverge at existing market conditions. Labour market supply and demand for occupational skills are continuously fluctuating. At a certain point in time, there will be labour market imbalances and accompanying skill imbalances if there is disequilibrium between the demand for and supply of skills.

Privacy

All information, including name and address details, contained in submissions will be made available to the public on the Department of Education and Training website unless you indicate that you would like all or part of your submission to remain in confidence. Automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails do not suffice for this purpose. Respondents who would like all or part of their submission to remain in confidence should provide this information in an email to SOLSubmissions@education.gov.au. Legal requirements, such as those imposed by the Freedom of Information Act 1982, may affect the confidentiality of your submission.
Details

Applicant Details
Given Name *
Leigh
Surname *
Clarke

Organisation
The Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association

Contact Details
Please provide the name, position and contact details of a person within your organisation who is willing to be contacted if any further information or follow-up is required.

Given Name *
Leigh
Surname *
Clarke

Position
Executive Officer

Contact Number *
03 9816 4620

Email (receipt will be sent to this address) *
leigh.clarke@aopa.org.au
Industry

Type of Industry

What are the industry/industries and ANZSCO occupation/s that you or your organisation represents for the purposes of this submission? *
(select all that apply)

- All Industries
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Construction
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Administrative and Support Services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Education and Training
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts and Recreation Services
- Other Services

Occupation

Occupation

The three dropdowns below accord with the ABS ANZSCO classification of occupations. Selections are required at the 'Occupation Group' 2-digit level and at the 'Occupation Unit (4-digit)' level, but can also be made down to the Occupation (6-digit) level depending on the occupation/s to which your submission relates.

Occupation 1 of 1

Occupation Group *

Health Professionals

Occupation Unit *

2519

Occupation *

251912

For the 2016-17 SOL please indicate advice about your nominated occupation

- Include
- Exclude
- Maintain status quo
Orthotist/prosthetists have been identified as a small but critical profession by a number of state jurisdictions. For example, NSW Health is currently completing work with the profession.

With a National workforce of approximately 450, this profession is particularly susceptible to changing market forces and policies. There is a current imbalance in the demand for and supply of experienced Orthotist/Prosthetists in Australia. Industry changes at the federal level, such as the full roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, will place a substantial increase in demands on supply and require rapid private sector growth to 2020.

Graduate numbers from the sole university program have increased however many face challenges gaining employment as the market often seeks experienced practitioners. Medium to long term projections however can be ascertained by comparing the variations in practitioner to population rates across the country with significant variations (see attachment).

Is there evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium to long-term in non-metropolitan areas?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please indicate in which part of Australia this imbalance exists.
- Substantial imbalance exists in rural areas and also between states. The current sole training facility is located in Melbourne, Victoria and there are significant variations observed in the practitioner to population ratio between states.

For example, Victoria practitioners account for 50% of the profession and have a prevalence of 2.2 practitioners per 100,000 population. In contrast the prevalence in WA (0.54), New South Wales (0.66), Queensland (0.61), ACT (0.80) and Northern Territory (0.85) is of concern and has implications for service levels. These states continue to experience recruitment issues and have a higher proportion of older practitioners compared to Victoria, representing a medium to long term supply issue.

This workforce investigation work has been accepted for publication in the Australian Health Review and represents the only investigation work into practitioner dispersion and demographics in Australia.

Are there any occupations which require formal licensing or registration arrangements in order to practice/perform?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please provide details.

Currently the profession requires no licensing or registration at federal level. Nationally most awards in the public sector require the practitioners to have a minimum tertiary qualification that makes the individual eligible for membership to AOPA.

Further to this, funding bodies are increasingly implementing robust credentialing requirements and defer to self-regulatory professional bodies, such as AOPA as a credentialing body. AOPA membership is used by the public health sector, private health insurance, state disability funding agencies for credentialing by way of example. Therefore the employment opportunities for individuals who are unable to obtain the AOPA credential are substantially restricted.
Is it expected that your employment sector will be impacted by any medium to long-term trends which will impact upon demand and/or supply (excluding costs associated with training, labour hire, and international sponsorship)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Please provide evidence (e.g. data source, policy document) which substantiates these claims. *

For example:

- New benchmarks for childcare centres mandate increased staff-to-child ratios and higher qualification standards for childcare workers.

Demand for services is expected to increase in-line with the trend for increasing chronic diseases. Further to this, there will also be an increase in funding availability for people with disabilities under the NDIS which will increase service need. There will also be a changing role expectation for orthotist/prosthetists within the participant-led model. Practitioners will have a key role in the provision of support and capacity building role for participants, which will place increased clinical demands on the profession.

Additional Information

Please provide any additional information you consider relevant evidence to support your submission. For example, you may know of independent studies about your occupation that supports your advice to us.

* AOPA continues to experience issues with the assessment of this profession by VETASSESS as part of the Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List. VETASSESS has accepted individuals for Skilled Migration (457) who do not have qualifications that meets the requirements (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7). Subsequently these individuals are then unable to obtain AOPA membership and gain employment
* The categorisation of the profession at the 6-digit level impacts on the data collection for the profession. As with all other allied health professions, this profession should be listed at the 4-digit level. This profession is not a "Health Diagnostic" or "Health Promotion" profession.
* Recent research on the trends for the profession from 2007 to 2012 has been accepted for publication in the Australian Health Review - we are awaiting online release.
* AOPA's grey literature outlining the results is attached to support the information provided within this submission

Please add any document that supports your recommendations.

Supporting Document
File: Workforce-Snapshot-National_FINAL.pdf