
Ahpra

Practitioner and community perceptions of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the National Boards: 2019

A Social Research Project

November 2019

Supplementary report prepared for:
The Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

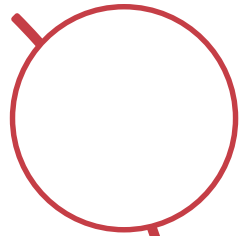
Truly[®]
Deeply



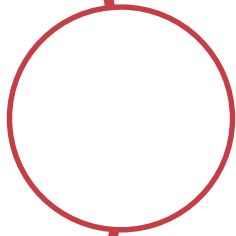
Introduction

- Truly Deeply was first engaged in 2018 by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to assess the perception and sentiment towards Ahpra and the National Boards.
- The review was intended to help National Boards and Ahpra 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 the National Boards.
- The benchmark 2018 study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, specifically extended interviews (face to face and via the telephone), focus groups and online surveys.
- Given the value of the insights delivered through the 2018 benchmark study to Ahpra and National Boards, the decision was taken to update the quantitative measures by conducting the online survey with practitioners and the general public in November 2019.
- 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 Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia.**

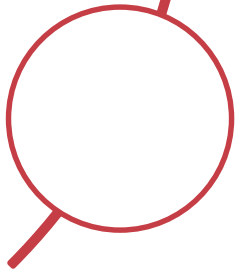
An overview of the methodology



A **two stage** approach using online surveys has been used.



Stage 1 consisted of an online survey with practitioners from all 15 registered professions. This survey was conducted between October 30-November 8, 2019.



Stage 2 consisted of an online survey with a representative sample of the Australian general public. This survey was conducted between November 1– 6, 2019.

Quantitative approach

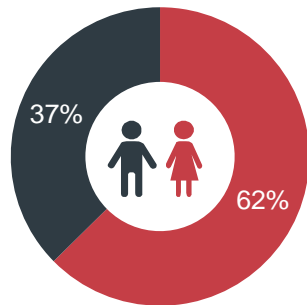
- Online surveys were conducted with practitioners as well as the broader community following the qualitative investigation.
- The 2019 questionnaires were very similar to the 2018 questionnaires, with only a small number of additions.
- Respondents to the Community Survey were sourced using an external panel provider. Quotas were placed on the sample for gender, age and location to ensure a nationally representative sample was achieved.
- 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 professions with larger numbers of practitioners do not outweigh the views of professions with much smaller numbers of practitioners.
- For comparison between the sub-analysis groups, chi square or independent tests were conducted as appropriate, with significant differences at the 95% confidence interval indicated where applicable.

	Community Survey	Practitioner Survey
Fieldwork dates	Nov 1-6	Oct 30 to Nov 8
Responses	2,048	5,944
Email invitations sent	na	109,625
Response rate	na	5.4%

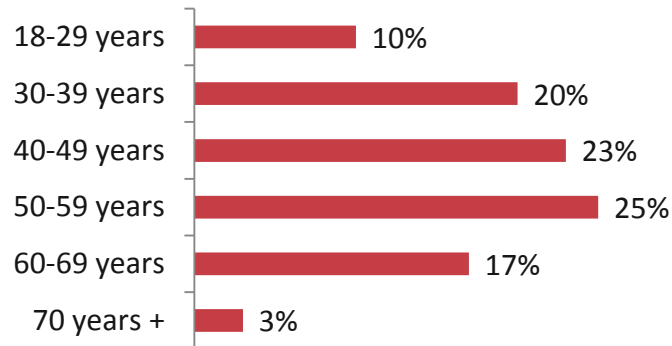


2019 sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,944)

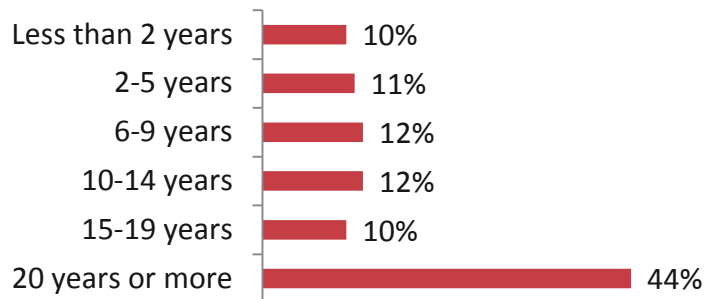
Gender



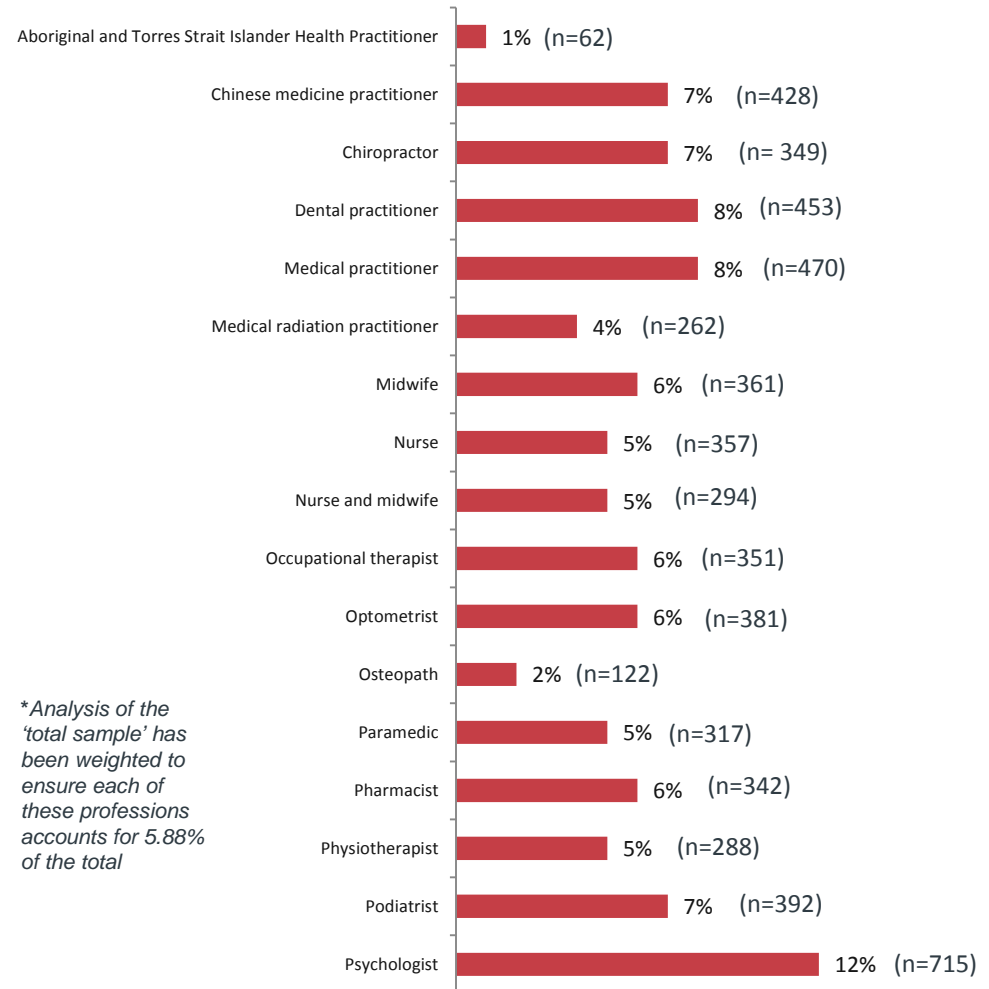
Age



Years in practice



Practitioner type*

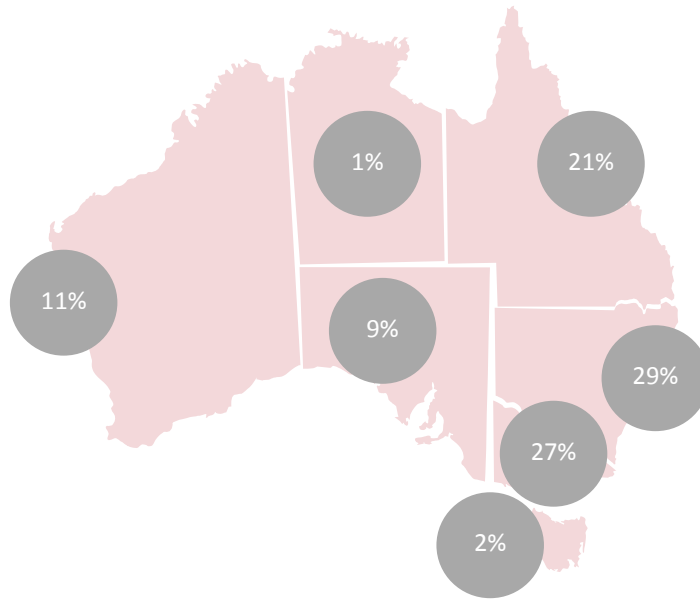


*Analysis of the 'total sample' has been weighted to ensure each of these professions accounts for 5.88% of the total

* Figures may not add to 100%. Missing figures accounted for by 'prefer not to say'

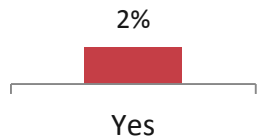
2019 sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,944)

Location

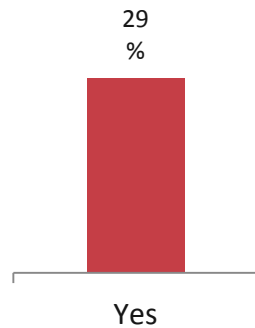


Metro: **64%**
Regional: **36%**

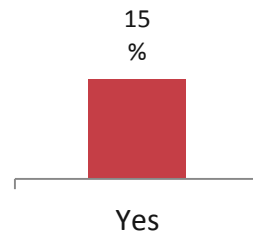
% who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



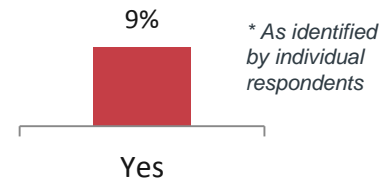
% who were born a country other than Australia



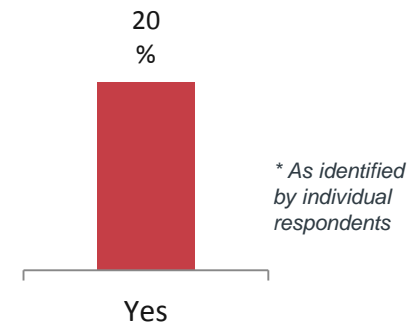
% who speak a language other than English at home



% who have had a complaint about them made to Ahpra or their National Board*



% who have been audited to check their compliance with the mandatory registration standards*

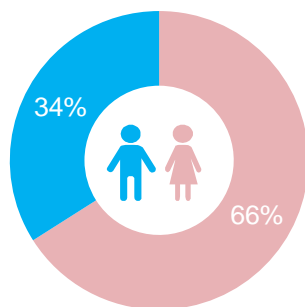


Summary of results of the online survey with registered health practitioners.

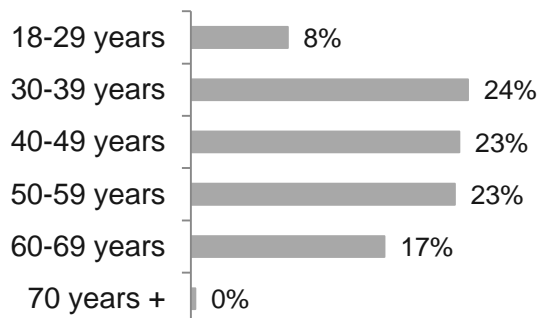
Specific insights into the responses from:
Medical radiation practitioners

Sample of medical radiation practitioners (n=262)

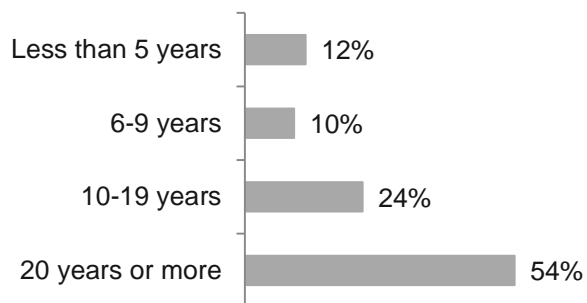
Gender:



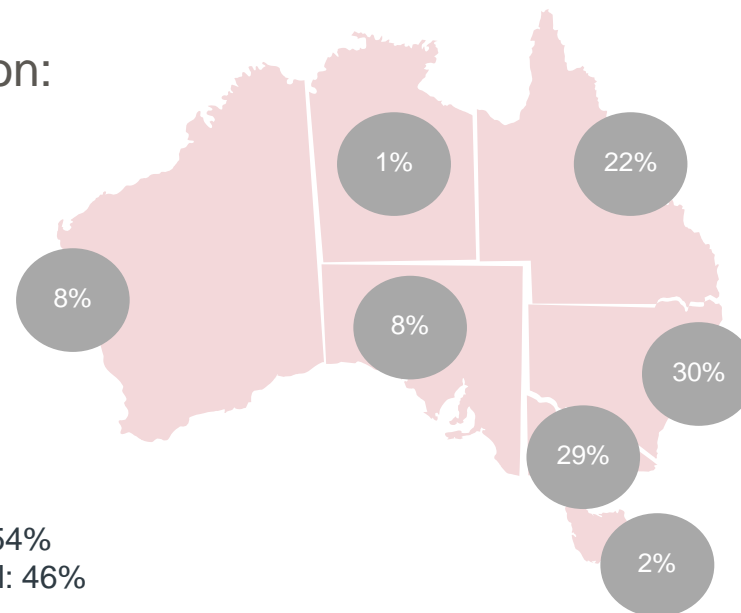
Age:



Years in practice:

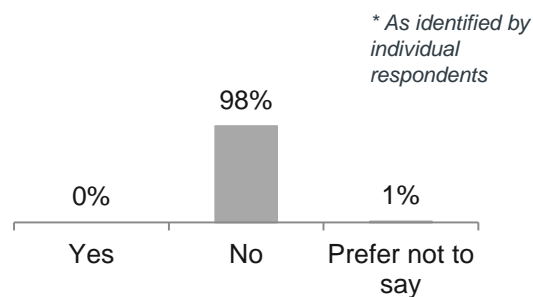


Location:

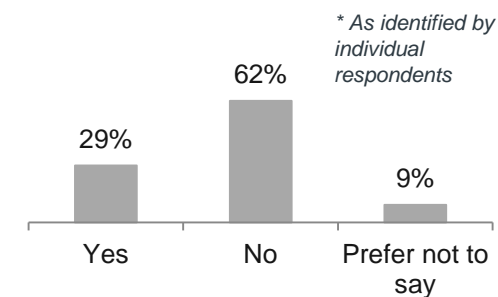


Metro: 54%
Regional: 46%

% who have had a complaint about them made to Ahpra or their National Board*



% who have been audited to check their compliance with the mandatory registration standards*



2019: Perceptions of the medical radiation profession among practitioners*

(Top 20 Associations)

Q. Which of the following words do you strongly associate with **your profession**?

Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board (n=262)

Perceptions in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Professional	54%	(+7%)
Hard working	43%	(+13%)
Competent	30%	(+7%)
Team orientated	30%	(+22%)
Caring	29%	(+2%)
Knowledgeable	29%	(-2%)
Dedicated	24%	(+4%)
Responsible	24%	(+4%)
Efficient	21%	(+16%)
Compassionate	20%	(-4%)

Perceptions in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Empathetic	17%	(-5%)
Innovative	15%	(+9%)
Committed	13%	(-4%)
Respected	10%	(-10%)
Trusted	9%	(-13%)
Reputable	7%	(-3%)
Approachable	6%	(-5%)
Friendly	6%	(-)
Passionate	5%	(-9%)
Honest	5%	(-5%)

Green indicates a result *significantly higher in 2019* than the average across all professions.

Orange indicates a result *significantly lower in 2019* than the average across all professions.

* *New question for 2019*

2019: Perceptions of the Medical Radiation Practice 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=262)

Perception in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	46%	(+6%)
Administrators	38%	(+4%)
Bureaucratic	31%	(+4%)
For practitioners	26%	(-5%)
Necessary	26%	(-7%)
Decision makers	20%	(-4%)
For the public	13%	(-10%)
Out of touch	12%	(-)
Poor communicators	12%	(+1%)
Competent	10%	(-4%)

Perception in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Rigid	9%	(-)
Controlling	9%	(-)
Aloof	8%	(+2%)
Advocates	7%	(-10%)
Intimidating	7%	(-2%)
Secretive	6%	(-1%)
Supportive	6%	(-7%)
Shows leadership	5%	(-7%)
Accessible	5%	(-5%)
Fair	5%	(-6%)

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

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

Summary of changes 2018-19:

Perceptions of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

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

% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	2018 N=326	2019 N=262
Regulators	47%	46%
Administrators	38%	38%
Bureaucratic	29%	31%
For practitioners	34%	26%
Necessary	29%	26%
Decision makers	18%	20%
For the public	17%	13%
Out of touch	12%	12%
Poor communicators	10%	12%
Competent	11%	10%

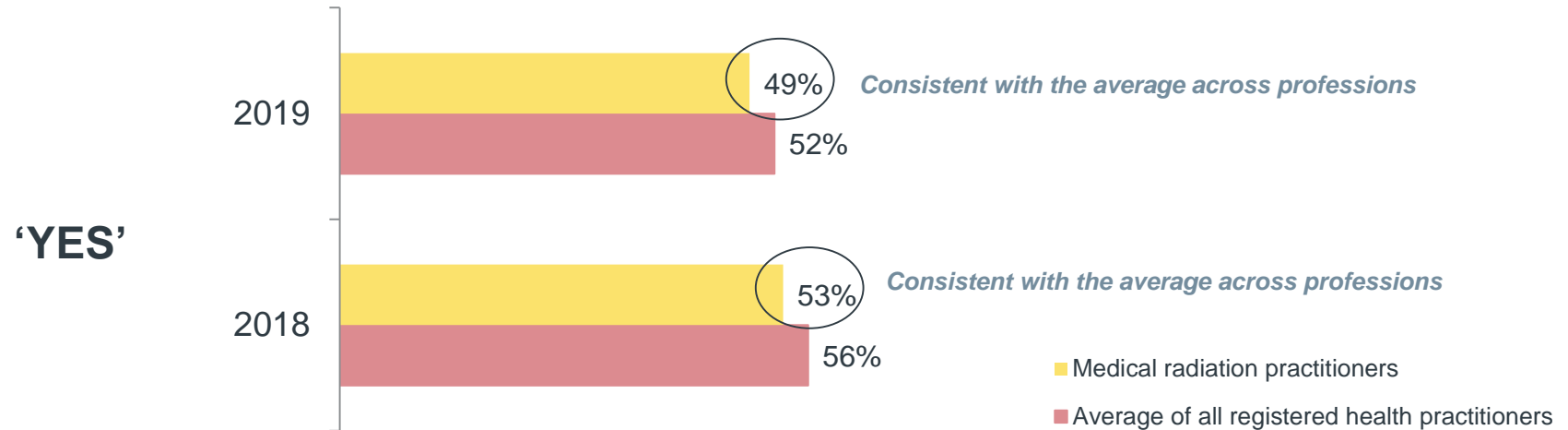
% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	2018 N=326	2019 N=262
Rigid	9%	9%
Controlling	9%	9%
Aloof	4%	8%
Advocates	10%	7%
Intimidating	7%	7%
Secretive	6%	6%
Supportive	6%	6%
Shows leadership	4%	5%
Accessible	8%	5%
Fair	8%	5%

Green indicates a result *significantly higher in 2019* compared with the 2018 result.

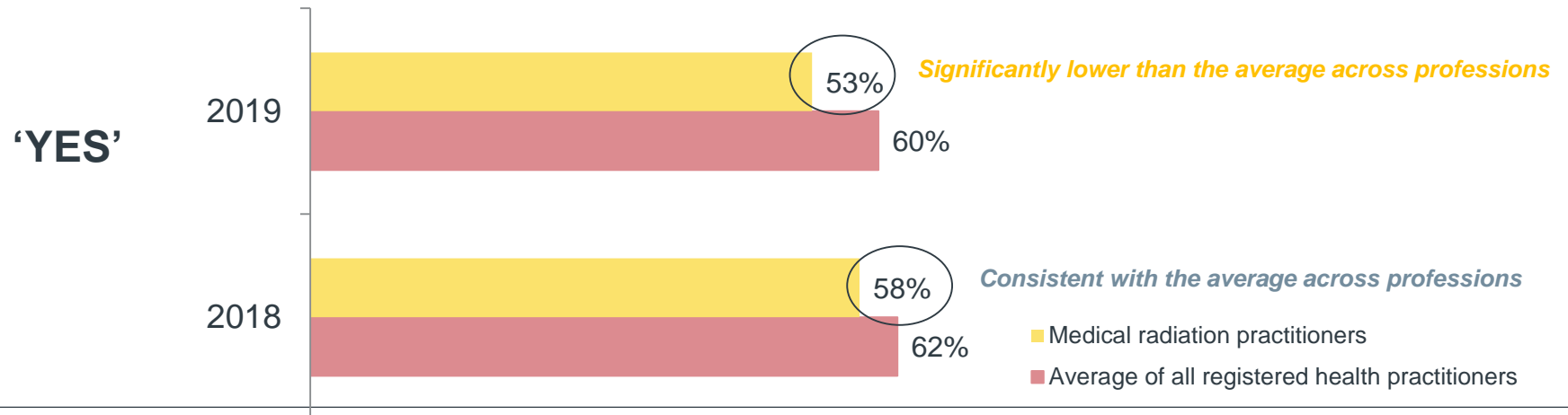
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower in 2019*. compared with the 2018 result

Levels of confidence and trust in the Medical Radiation Practice 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 Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

Indicators of trust: **53% trust the Board**

I have been registered with them for over 28 years and have had no issues.

It sets guidelines for our future radiographers.

Assessing qualifications and experience to ensure practitioners are competent.

I have to believe and trust that this professional organisation is looking after the best interests of Medical Radiation Practitioners and the public, otherwise who is else is?

I believe that they have the safe use of radiation at heart, even if I don't agree with some of the practice requirements.

Regular communications that explain what they are doing for the profession.

I feel they exist solely for the benefit of the public we are trying to serve and therefore share our core values as healthcare professionals.

Barriers to trust: **13% do NOT trust the Board**

While the MRPBA acts in the best interests of the public, they do not always act in the best interests of the profession. There have been historical power struggles between the MRPBA and the professional body to the detriment of the profession.

There are some very poor standards of practice. In fact there are practices which are quite frankly unprofessional, unethical and dangerous. If we all know about these, then surely the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia is aware of this or should be aware. Therefore why is nothing being done?

It is difficult to comprehend how some Medical Imaging degrees can be accredited by the MRPBA.

Not representing the members interests well. They are divisive and too strongly influenced by RANZCR.

I don't really receive much by way of communication or information from this entity so it's hard to trust an organization you can't relate to.

Full list of responses provided separately

2019: Perceptions of Ahpra among medical radiation practitioners

(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=262)

Perception in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	54%	(-)
Administrators	49%	(+3%)
Bureaucratic	43%	(+3%)
Necessary	33%	(-3%)
For the public	30%	(-5%)
For the practitioners	30%	(+4%)
Decision makers	19%	(-2%)
Poor communicators	12%	(-3%)
Out of touch	12%	(-2%)
Intimidating	11%	(-4%)

Perception in 2019	% of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Rigid	11%	(-5%)
Controlling	10%	(-4%)
Competent	9%	(-3%)
Advocates	8%	(-1%)
Trustworthy	8%	(-2%)
Supportive	6%	(-2%)
Aloof	6%	(-2%)
Accessible	6%	(-5%)
Secretive	6%	(-2%)
Approachable	5%	(-2%)

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

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

Summary of changes 2018-19:

Perceptions of Ahpra among medical radiation practitioners

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

% of practitioners with that perception of the Ahpra	2018 N=326	2019 N=262
Regulators	52%	54%
Administrators	50%	49%
Bureaucratic	39%	43%
Necessary	34%	33%
For the public	33%	30%
For the practitioners	32%	30%
Decision makers	21%	19%
Poor communicators	11%	12%
Out of touch	11%	12%
Intimidating	10%	11%

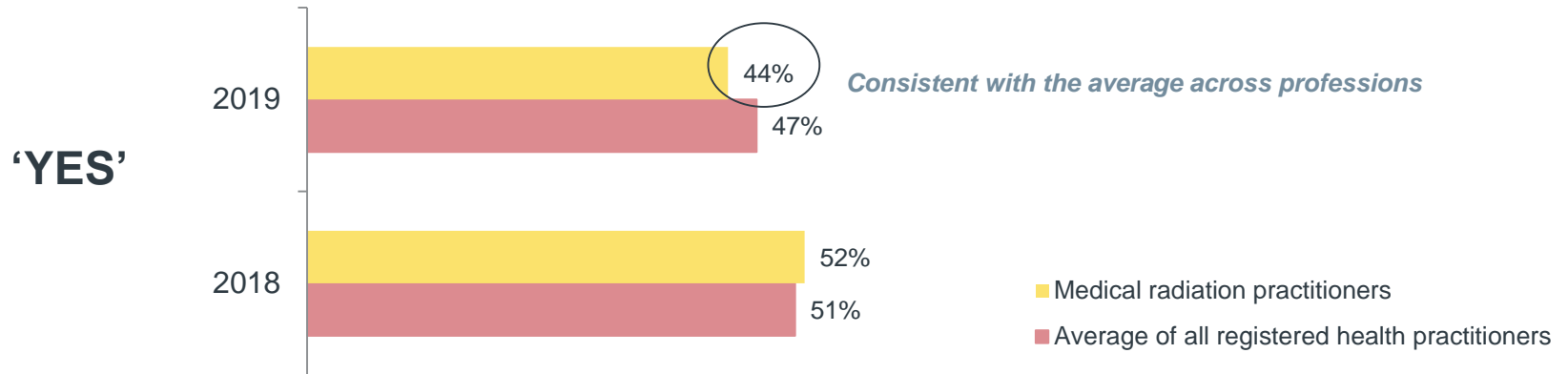
% of practitioners with that perception of the Ahpra	2018 N=326	2019 N=262
Rigid	13%	11%
Controlling	14%	10%
Competent	14%	9%
Advocates	8%	8%
Trustworthy	7%	8%
Supportive	8%	6%
Aloof	4%	6%
Accessible	12%	6%
Secretive	4%	6%
Approachable	10%	5%

Green indicates a result *significantly higher in 2019* compared with the 2018 result.

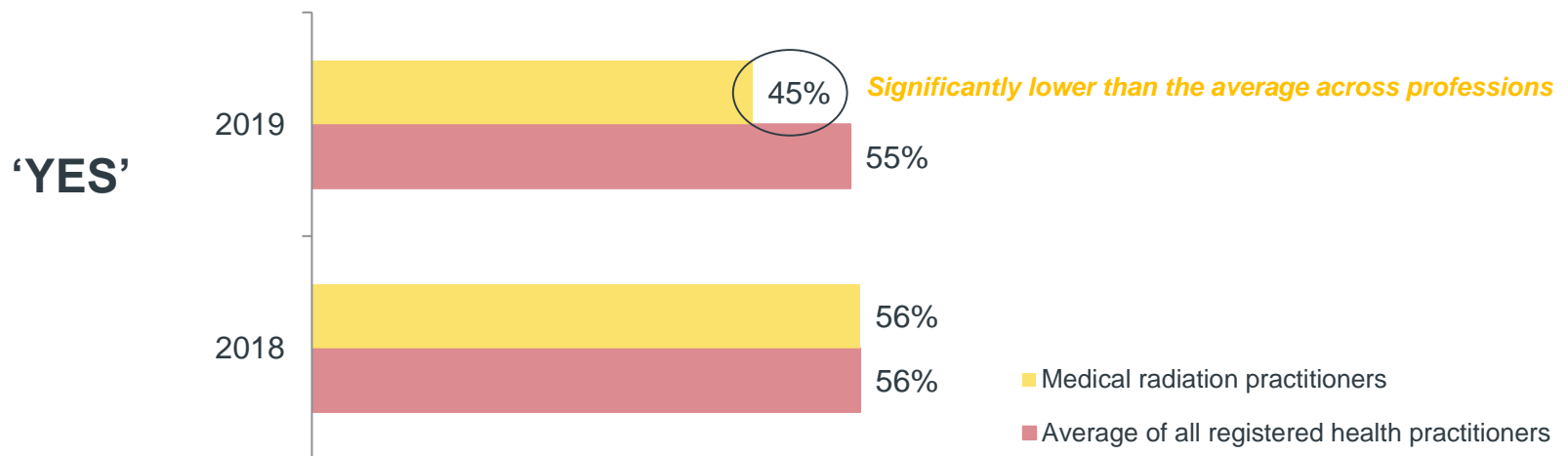
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower in 2019*. compared with the 2018 result

Levels of confidence and trust in Ahpra among medical radiation practitioners

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 among medical radiation practitioners

Indicators of trust: **45% trust Ahpra**

They have changed and adapted over the years with the changing times.

As an organisation they keep the public as safe as possible to the best of their ability.

They determine if a professional is deemed fit to practice. I have no reason not to trust them.

Never had any issues or heard any negative things about Ahpra.

They are managed by a good cross spectrum of professional and community minded board members.

They have a thorough review of people before giving them registration, I often receive emails with updates and information that is helpful to me and my profession.

I believe they perform due diligence in ensuring practitioner qualification and moral standing.

They may be slow, but they work towards good decisions.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: **16% DO NOT trust Ahpra**

For a single organization to be a watch dog for so many disciplines creates a bureaucracy. Too many self-serving employees and regulations that aren't thoughtfully constructed exact an unnecessary burden of complicated compliance on members.

There are some practices which are not acting the public's best interests, as their practices are unethical, unsound and are dangerous. We all know who they are and it seems incredulous that Ahpra has does nothing to address this.

Ineffective at following up complaints.

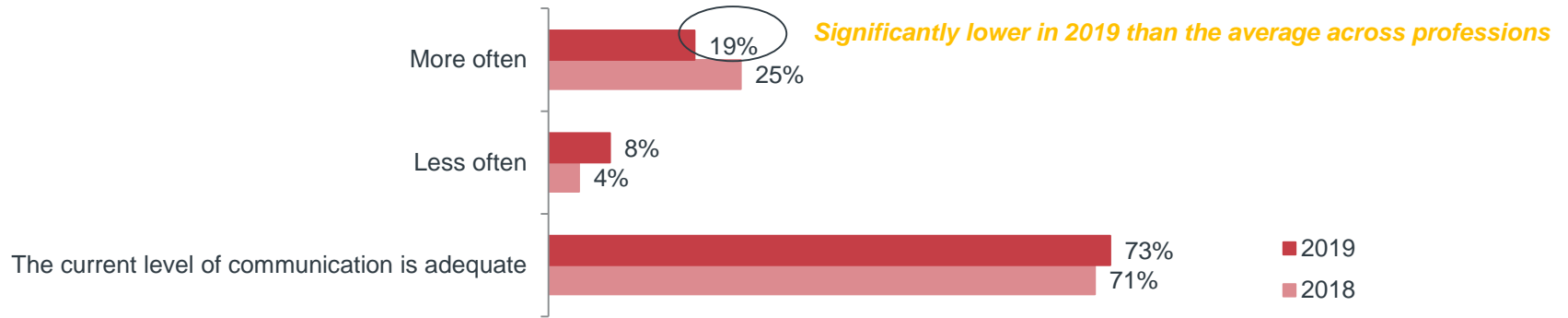
Ahpra has different answers and solutions on the same subject/question depending on who you are communicating to. No Response via email seems to be a norm; if lucky you will get a response.

I do not know who Ahpra actually are, so how can I trust someone or something or an entity that I don't know?

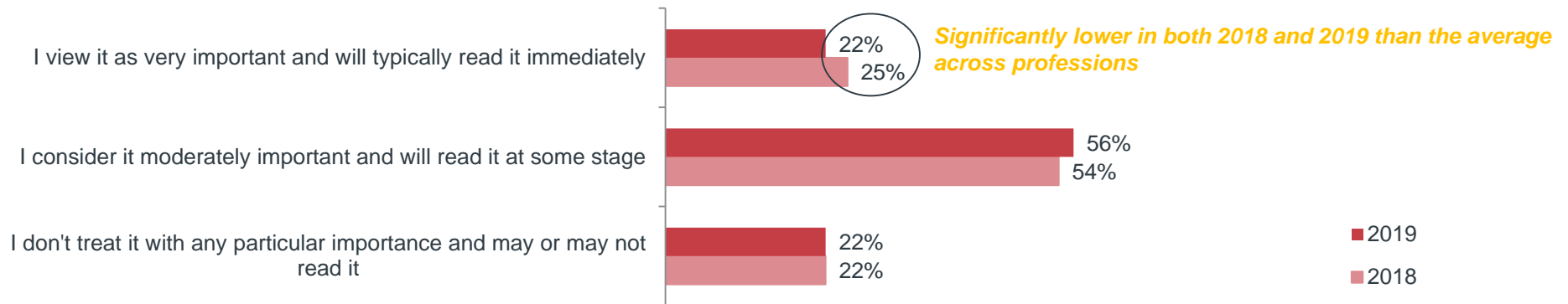
There appears to be too much bureaucracy involved and not enough resources or knowledge to deal effectively and in a timely fashion with issues that can adversely affect the public well being.

Response to communication by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

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



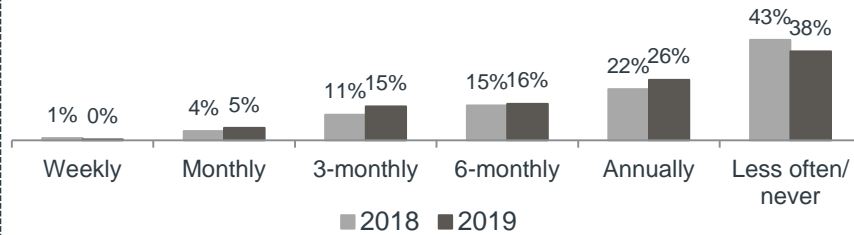
Q. How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board

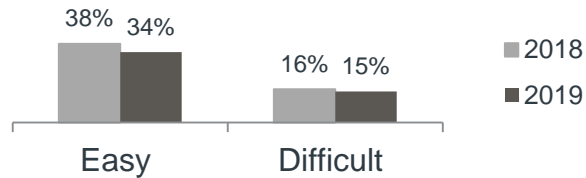
Use of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia website

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



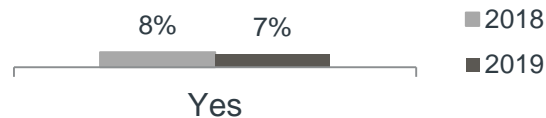
Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this board

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



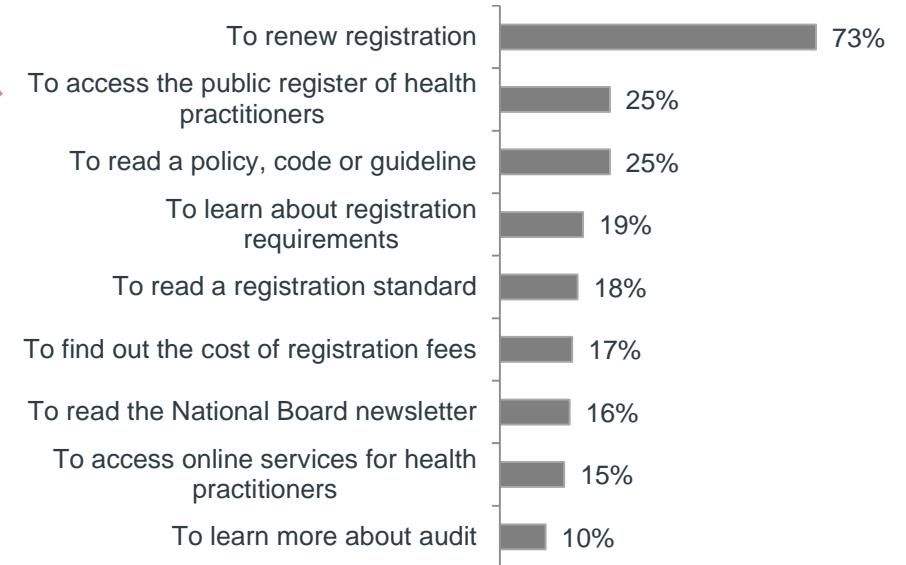
Base: Practitioners who have visited that board's website

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

2019: Reasons for visiting the National Board website



Additional information sought by practitioners included (but was not limited to)...

- *Who are the members of the MRPBA*
- *Scope of practice information*
- *Who are the people that make up the MRPBA? What are their qualifications and experience?*
- *What are you doing at a Federal level to uplift the profession*

Additional feedback from medical radiation practitioners

Sample of open-ended responses when invited to comment about overall perception of Ahpra and/or the National Board *(full list of responses provided separately)*

Radiographers working in Public Teaching Hospitals should be exempt from audits. There are many conferences, seminars, LOL's are mandatory, many inhouse presentations and meetings for professional development.

Registering Chinese medicine, osteopathy, chiropractic etc, disciplines that aren't evidence based, is embarrassing to the other professions.

Compulsory red tape. Pay to keep your job. Hard to get license if your out of industry for a while. Worked fine before Ahpra was formed. Just get your state license and get on with the job.

It takes too long for new practitioners to be registered when they qualify. There is typically a 2-month gap before they can commence work as a qualified practitioner. It should be quicker to process.

Completely out of touch with practitioners. Obviously run by people who have never worked in the industry.

I struggle to understand why I am paying close to \$200 a year in renewal fees for registration. Not sure what I am getting for my money.

We are over regulated & over registered & over licensed. We were told when national registration was mandated that we could work anywhere in Australia. We still have to pay & produce registration & qualifications for every state license. When will we have just one national license & just one registration. It is lunacy as it currently is especially for locums who work & require licenses for each state. What ever happened to federation?

You are very slow to process new graduates which causes problems when hiring newly qualified practitioners.

More rigid audits for CPD and professional indemnity insurance. I know plenty of radiographers that do not understand the implications of not having both of these and still apply for renewal. They are falsely signing a legal document.

I have had to make submissions to MRPBA three times, and on all three occasions they were incredibly slow (5+months) to respond, and when they did the answers were partial, or occasioned further questions. It became clear that they do not have any idea of the current scope of practice for radiographers in Australia. I showed their correspondence to more than 20 colleagues from Radiography, Nursing and Medicine and they all agreed with this assessment.

