



**Optometry
Council**
of NSW

Optometry Council of NSW

Annual Report 2018-19

JOINT ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE 15 NEW SOUTH WALES HEALTH PROFESSIONAL COUNCILS
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH PRACTICE COUNCIL CHINESE MEDICINE COUNCIL
CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL DENTAL COUNCIL MEDICAL COUNCIL MEDICAL RADIATION PRACTICE COUNCIL NURSING
AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COUNCIL OPTOMETRY COUNCIL OSTEOPATHY COUNCIL
PARAMEDICINE COUNCIL PHARMACY COUNCIL PHYSIOTHERAPY COUNCIL PODIATRY COUNCIL PSYCHOLOGY COUNCIL

President's Message



**Optometry
Council**
of NSW

As the 2018/19 financial year comes to a close, I am pleased to present the Optometry Council annual report for 2019.

Our Council consists of Pauline O'Connor (legal member), John Davis and Derek Fails (practitioner members). We have the support of Asha Mears and Christine Gursen from the HPCA. We have a strong team with many years of experience and significant expertise. The Council's role is to manage complaints against practitioners in consultation with the HCCC in our duty to protect the public. The Council has been engaging with the Optometry Board of Australia (OBA) to ensure that practitioner regulation is being managed with consistency.

The national registration data shows that NSW has over one third of optometry practitioners in Australia of which over 50% have endorsement for schedule medicines. There is a higher number of female practitioners compared to male practitioners and the largest registrant age group is 25 to 29 years.

This year HPCA has changed the organisational structure with a combined Councils team now providing administrative support for managing complaints about optometrists. The Assessment Intake Inspection and Monitoring Team (AIIM) now receives the complaints and triages these to assist in providing a consistent approach to risk assessment across the professions. This streamlines the processes as the registrant numbers increase and complaints handling volume becomes more onerous. Systems are continuously being fine-tuned and improved. The HPCA has also been transitioning their systems and working with eHealth to improve access to information and reporting.

In managing complaints some clear prevention messages come through. Our advice to practitioners is better communications with patients to ensure they understand findings and are aware of the treatment being recommended. Also, in clinical practice when faced with vision loss or visual disturbances, practitioners need to be aware of differential diagnoses to ensure all aspects are investigated thoroughly. In addition, it is important to be professional in dealing with the public at all times.

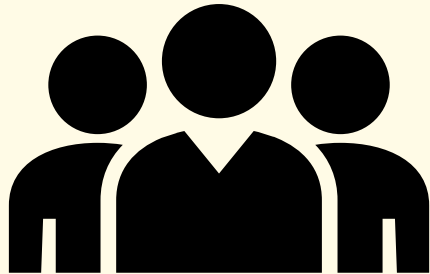
In closing, I am grateful for the skills and support of the great team that is our secretariat. I owe a debt of gratitude to our hard working Council members. These amazing people do a lot of selfless work outside Council meetings. It has been a pleasure working with all of you, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert Lee".

Mr Albert Lee
President
Optometry Council of New South Wales

2018-19 Summary

OPTOMETRISTS



1,933

Registered optometrists in NSW

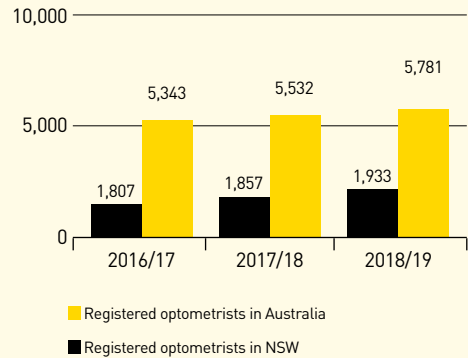
33%

of Australian optometrists practise in NSW

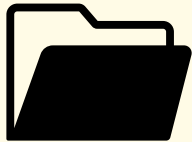
2%

of NSW optometrists had complaints made about them

3 year trend in number of registered optometrists

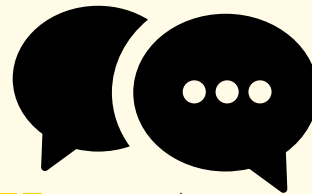


COMPLAINTS ABOUT OPTOMETRISTS



7

cases were open at the beginning of the year



31

complaints were received about 30 optometrists in 2018/19

1

of the complaints received was a mandatory notification about 1 practitioner



27

cases were closed during the year

Complaints were mainly from:

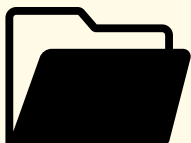
Patients - **13**

AHPRA - **9**

Complaints were mainly about:

Clinical care - **10**

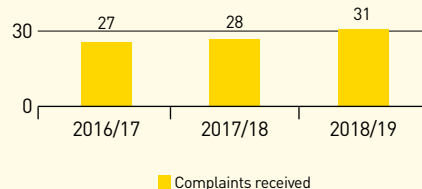
National Law breach - **9**



11

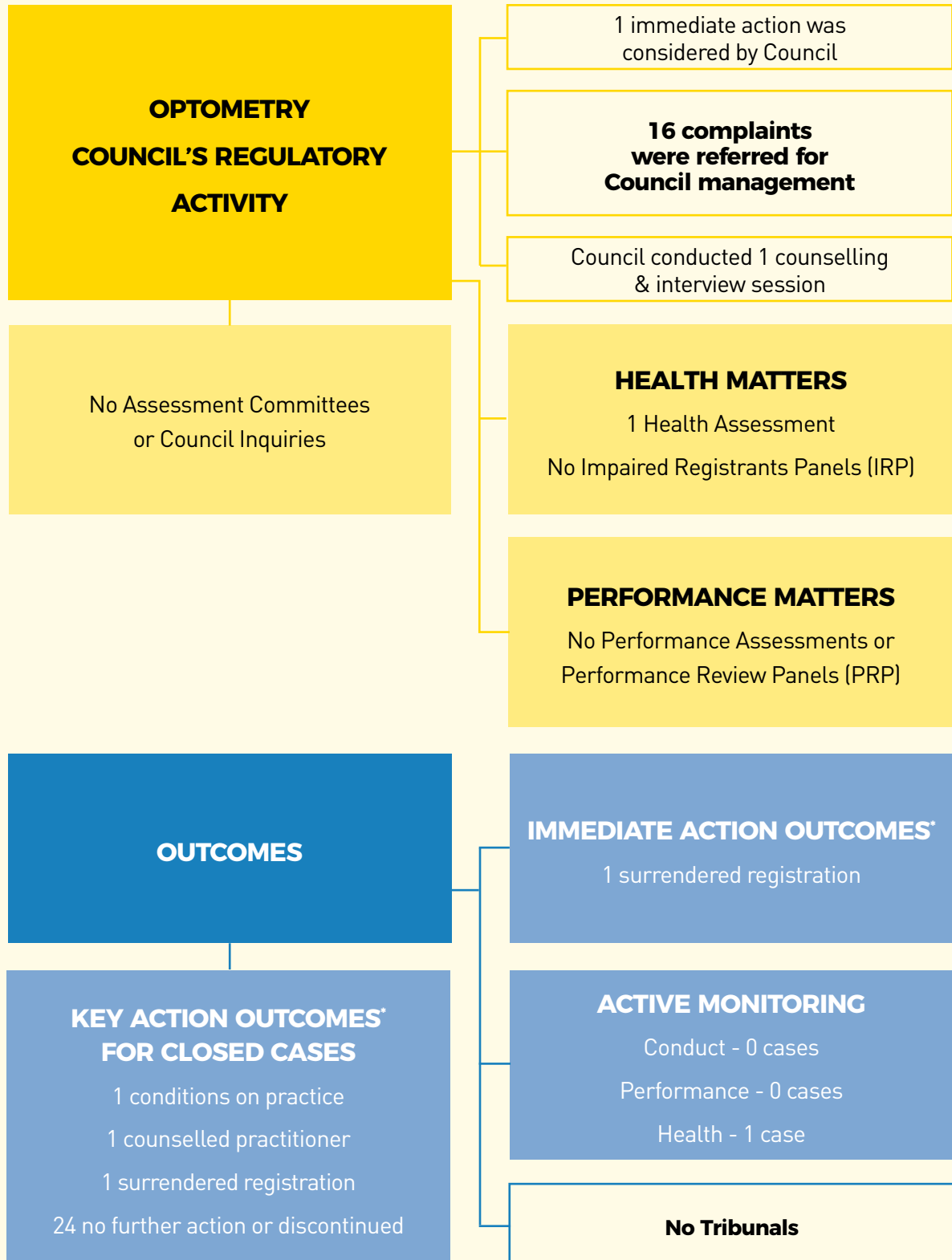
cases were open at the end of the year

3 year trend in number of complaints about optometrists



2018-19 Summary

OPTOMETRY COUNCIL'S REGULATORY ACTIVITY - MATTERS CONCLUDED



*Not all outcomes are included and a complaint may have more than one outcome

Council Members

Four members sit on the Optometry Council as set out in the National Law.

Council members are nominated by the Minister for Health and appointed by the Governor.

Registered optometry practitioner members:

- Mr Albert Lee MOptom, GradCertOcTher, BOptom
- Mr John Davis BOptom (Hons)
- Mr Derek Fails BSc (Hons), MCOptom (UK), CertOcTher (SUNY), GDipBus (Tas), FAICD

Legal member:

- Ms Pauline O'Connor LLM, GAICD, AGIA, ACIS

The Governor appointed Mr Albert Lee as President of the Optometry Council.

The Governor appointed Ms Pauline O'Connor as Deputy President of the Optometry Council.

Executive Officer

Ms Asha Mears is the Executive Officer for the Optometry Council.

The Executive Officer is part of a team of 11 led by Ms Farina Bains. This team works with 11 of the health professional Councils.

All staff working both directly and indirectly with the Council are employed by the HPCA as an executive agency of the Ministry of Health. Councils cannot employ staff under the National Law.

Council Meeting Attendance

The Optometry Council met 11 times during the year.

Table i: Member attendance at Council meetings, eligibility to attend and term of office

Member	Meetings Attended	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Date first appointed	Current Term of Office*
President Albert Lee	10	11	1 July 2012	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Deputy President Pauline O'Connor	6	11	1 July 2012	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
John Davis	11	11	1 July 2015	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Derek Fails	10	11	1 July 2015	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021

* Council members are appointed for a term up to three years and may be reappointed up to a maximum of nine years.

Regulatory Committees and Panels

The National Law sets out the committees and panels that assist the Council to undertake its regulatory activities.

Regulatory committees and panels include:

- Impaired Registrants Panels (IRP)
- Performance Review Panels (PRP)
- Assessment Committees

The Optometry Council did not appoint any regulatory committee or panels during the year.

Council Committees

Councils may establish committees to assist with Council functions. Committee members are not necessarily Council members.

The Optometry Council did not appoint any committees this year.

Meetings and Events

The Optometry Council was represented at the following meetings and events during the year.

Table ii: Optometry Council representation at meetings and events

Name of Meeting / Event	Attended By
Optometry Board of Australia's Registration and Notifications Committee – Professional Development Meeting	Albert Lee – President John Davis – Council Member Derek Fails – Council Member
Optometry Board of Australia – Optometry Regulatory Reference Group Annual Meeting	Albert Lee – President
Pharmaceutical Regulatory Unit, NSW Ministry of Health – Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 review stakeholder meeting	John Davis – Council Member
AHPRA – Activity Based Costing Meeting	John Davis – Council Member
NRAS Combined Meeting and Research Summit	John Davis – Council Member

Council Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

The Optometry Council website provides easy access to information about the Council and its work, publications, the complaints process and an online complaint form.

The Optometry Council also distributes electronic newsletters to optometry practitioners working in NSW. One newsletter was distributed this year, including topics such as record keeping and planning for professional development.

As part of the engagement plan for the Optometry Council and the National Board, representatives from each met at the Registration and Notifications Committee's Professional Development Meeting, the NRAS Combined Meeting and Research Summit, and the Chair of the Board attended a meeting of the Council.

Overseas Travel

The Optometry Council did not incur any overseas travel costs during the year.

Remuneration

Remuneration for Council members aligns with the Public Service Commission Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees. Council members receive additional payment for interviews, counselling sessions, immediate action inquiries, Council Inquiries and panels. No additional payments are made for other regulatory work such as official visits, committee meetings, training, conferences or preparation for meetings.

Council members are reimbursed for expenses when travelling on official business at Council direction.

Optometry Council member remuneration rates are as follows.

President	\$4,465 per annum
Deputy President	\$4,214 per annum
Council Members	\$3,665 per annum

Education and Research Account

The Optometry Council maintains an Education and Research account. This can be used to fund activities that promote better understanding of professional standards and compliance, issues that lead to complaints and how complaints are managed. The account may also be used to fund research activity including Council specific initiatives and collaborative projects.

There was no expenditure from the Education and Research account this year.

Financial Management

The Optometry Council's accounts performance was reported in the Financial Statement as follows.

Accounts Performance 2018/19	\$
Revenue	244,255
Operating expenditure	165,361
Gain / (loss) on disposal	(4)
Net result	78,890
Net cash reserves* (cash and cash equivalents minus current liabilities)	505,758

* Included in the cash reserves is an Education and Research bank account balance of \$47,737.

The Optometry Council's budget for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 is as follows.

Budget 2019/20	\$
Revenue	251,968
Operating expenditure	187,169
Net result	64,799

Full financial statements are presented in Part 3 of this report 'Financial Statements for NSW Health Professional Councils'.