Occupational therapy
Workforce modelling factsheet

Occupational therapists are qualified health professionals registered with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation.

The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists enhance peoples or communities' ability to engage in the occupations by modifying the task, occupation, or the environment to better support occupational engagement.

Workforce characteristics for NSW Health occupational therapy workforce in 2040

2272	**93.3%**	**28.7**	**38.7**	**7%**	**3.4%**
Headcount	Female	Work hours per week	Years average age	Future 60+	Aboriginal workforce target

Demand is expected to grow **1.5%** (low demand scenario) to **1.7%** (high demand scenario).

Workforce modelling indicates the need to grow the NSW occupational therapy workforce by around **12** to **20** new professionals per annum to meet community need in 2040 across both demand scenarios.

SIGNIFICANT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES *

Notes

- Data source: NSW Health. Vacancy data is excluded from the workforce model. Excludes affiliated health organisations.
- Note: 2040 workforce characteristics reflect the high demand scenario.
- Data included is limited to the workforce employed under the relevant health professional award.
- Specialty health networks are not displayed geographically in the workforce distribution maps.
- LHD/SHN may engage in sessional arrangements in selected circumstances.
- Workforce that cannot be aligned to a physical location have been attributed to a pre-determined facility within each LHD/N. This may impact on Headcount shown at these facilities within the distribution map.
- NSW Health does not make any representations or warranties whether expressed or implied with respect to the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in the fact sheet.

* Note: The inclusion of added qualitative inputs within career opportunities varies from standard modelling methodology calculations and hence differs to standard modelling outcomes.

Projected FTE growth for NSW Health occupational therapy workforce to 2040
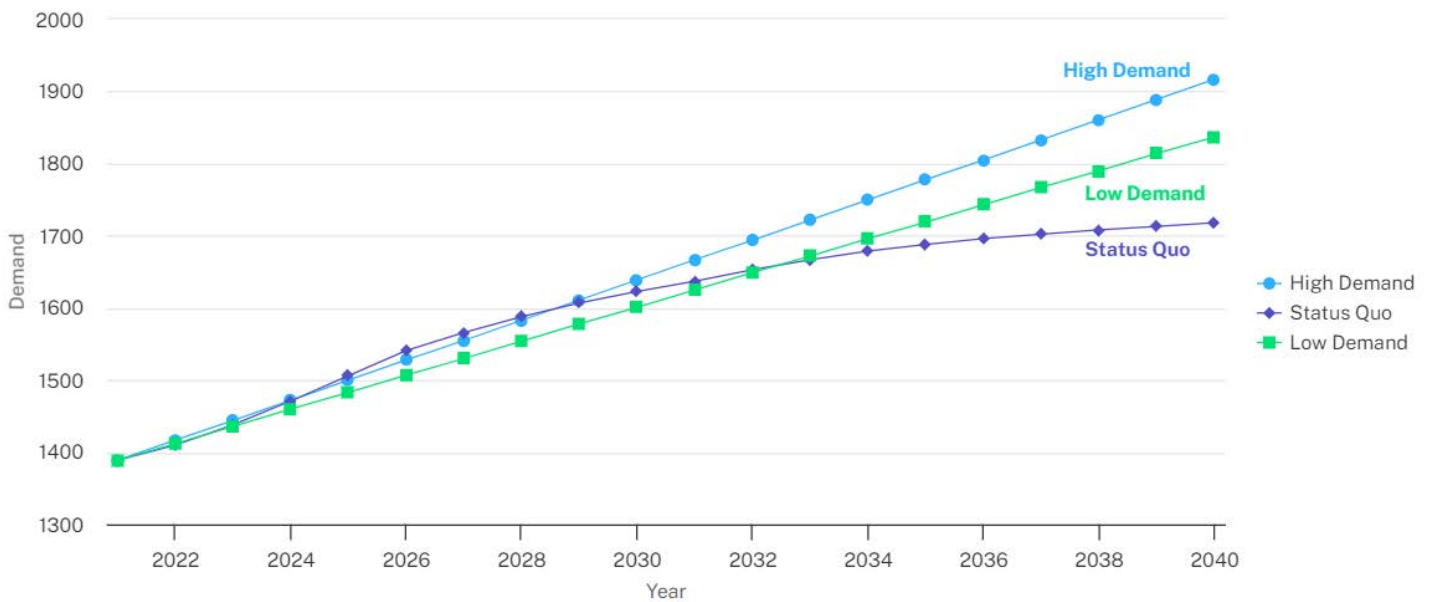
Workforce characteristics for NSW Health occupational therapy workforce in 2021

1833	**30.1**	**39.4**	**92.5%**	**4.3%**	**0.6%**
Headcount	Work hours per week	Years average age	Female	Aged 60+	Aboriginal

Metropolitan Sydney

1005	**30.8**	**40.5**	**5.3%**
Headcount	Work hours per week	Years average age	Aged 60+

Non-Metropolitan Sydney

836	**28.4**	**38.4**	**3.7%**
Headcount	Work hours per week	Years average age	Aged 60+

Occupational therapy junior entrant positions into NSW Health

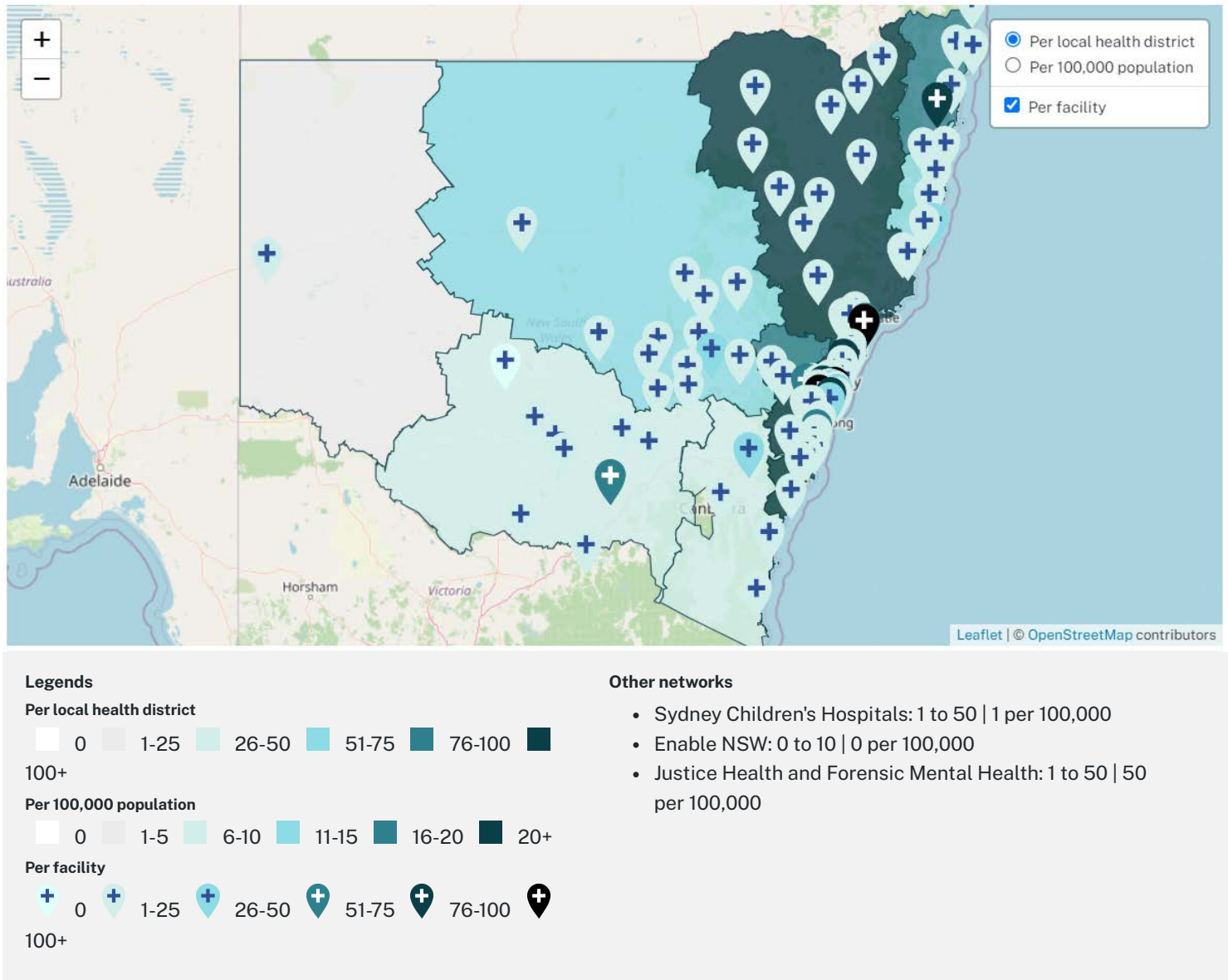|	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	137	99	89	75	76

Workforce distribution for NSW Health occupational therapy workforce in 2021

The geographic distribution of the public workforce by local health district/network, by facility and per 100,000 population.

Legends

Per local health district

| 0 | 1-25 | 26-50 | 51-75 | 76-100 |
100+

Per 100,000 population

| 0 | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 20+ |

Per facility

0 | 1-25 | 26-50 | 51-75 | 76-100 | 100+

Other networks

- Sydney Children's Hospitals: 1 to 50 | 1 per 100,000
- Enable NSW: 0 to 10 | 0 per 100,000
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health: 1 to 50 | 50 per 100,000

Workforce considerations

- Population demographics and increasing incidence of complex and chronic disease may increase demand for occupational therapy services.
- New government funding initiatives and policy will influence occupational therapy workforce movement (gains / attrition) in NSW Health (i.e. Medicare Benefits Scheme, National Disability Insurance Scheme).
- COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to a redistribution of the occupational therapy workforce based on prioritised areas of need.
- Ensuring the training pipelines, graduates, and workforce reflect the future workforce requirements of the community, by both location, speciality, and skills.
- Improvements in data capture and demand (met and unmet) is a prioritised need for the workforce.
- Developing flexible work practices has been suggested by the workforce as an important factor to support retention.
- Expansion of allied health educator roles would help support an increase in new graduate occupational therapy roles.