

Occupational therapists

Profile using data from Census 2006

1.1 Introduction

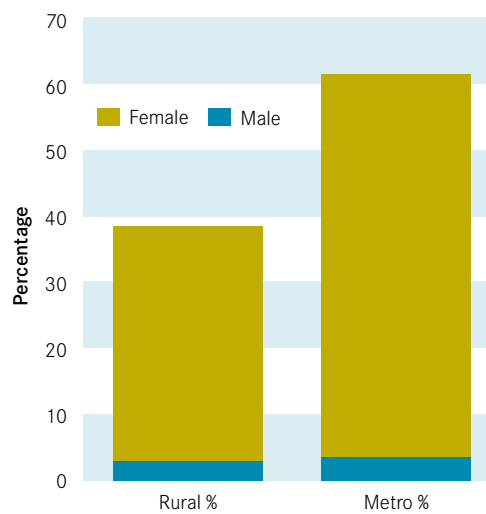
This profile of occupational therapists was developed using data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. According to the Australian and New Zealand Classification of Occupations (ANZCO), occupational therapists assess functional limitations of people resulting from illnesses and disabilities, and provide therapy to enable people to perform their daily activities and occupations.

The Census includes a range of questions regarding a person's level of education and occupation. The data provides information about the numbers of persons who reported that they were working in particular human services occupations and/or industries during the week prior to the Census night of 8 August 2006. It should be noted that Census data is self-reported, and based on the responses given by persons completing the Census form.

1.2 Gender and metro/rural location

Occupational therapy is a female dominated profession. Of the 1713 persons who described themselves on their 2006 Census form as an occupational therapist, 1601 (93.5%) were female and 112 (6.5%) were male. Of the total occupational therapists, 61.8% worked in metropolitan locations and 38.2% worked in rural locations. A slightly higher proportion of males (44.6%) than females (37.7%) worked in rural locations. However, as previously mentioned the number of males is very small.

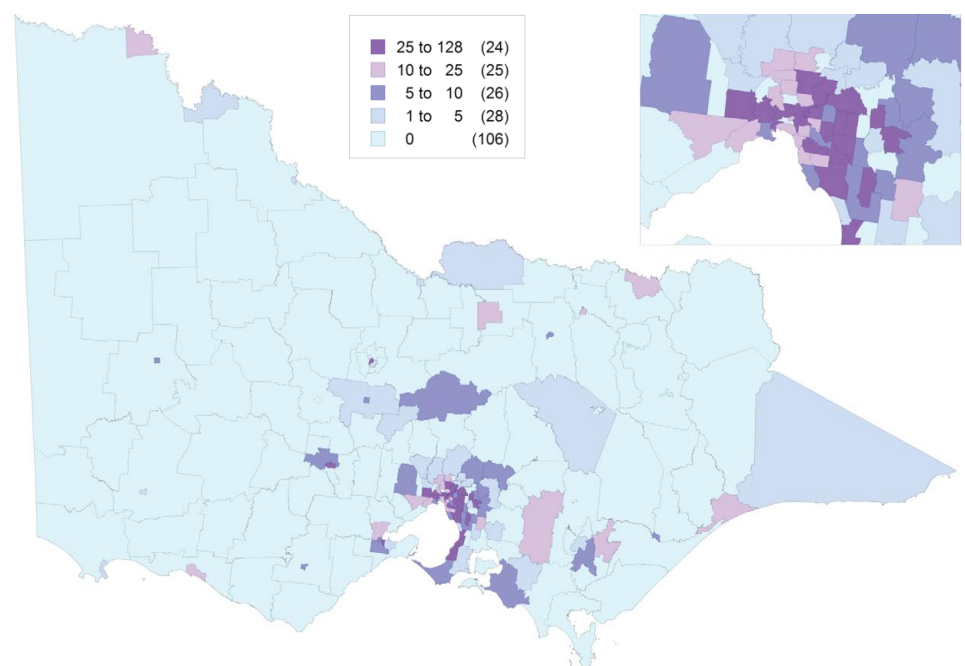
Figure 1: Gender and location of occupational therapists



1.3 Location by Statistical Local Area

The Census collects data on the main work location only for the week prior to the Census. Note that this data relates to head count rather than full time equivalent. Analysis of data at Statistical Local Area level indicates that occupational therapists were concentrated in inner Melbourne, inner and middle Melbourne suburbs and regional centres (Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat). There were 97 SLAs which no occupational therapist had nominated as their main work location in the week prior to the Census.

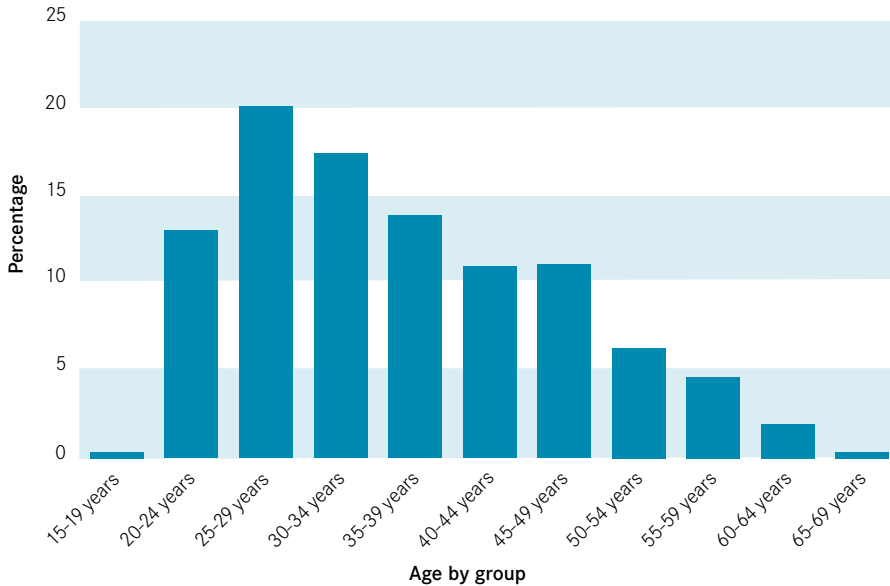
Figure 2: Number of occupational therapists by statistical local area



1.4 Age breakdown

Occupational therapy has a relatively young age structure with 64.7% indicating that they were aged less than 40 years of age. Just over one third (33.4%) were aged less than 30 years of age.

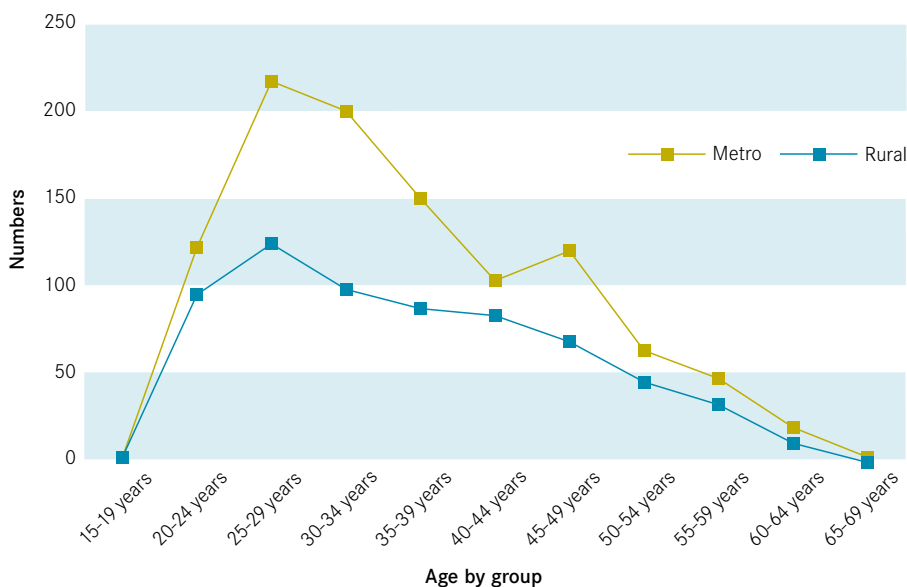
Figure 3: Age profile of occupational therapists



1.5 Age and location

In all age groups there are higher numbers of occupational therapists in metropolitan than rural locations.

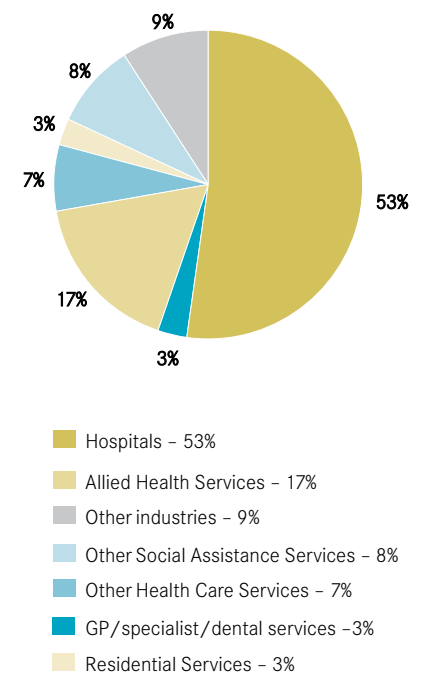
Figure 4: Age and location of occupational therapists



1.6 Industry of employment

The definitions for industry of employment are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC). This Classification does not include a separate category for occupational therapist service; this is grouped under allied health services, and 17% were employed in this category. The majority of occupational therapists (52%) were employed in hospitals, with small numbers employed in other human services industries, and 9% in non-human services industries.

Figure 5: Industry profile of occupational therapists



1.7 Sector of employment

Overall slightly more occupational therapists were employed in the government sector (52.2%), compared with the non-government sector (47.8%). Of those employed in hospitals, 81.1% were employed in the Government sector while in all other human services industries the majority were employed in the non-government sector.

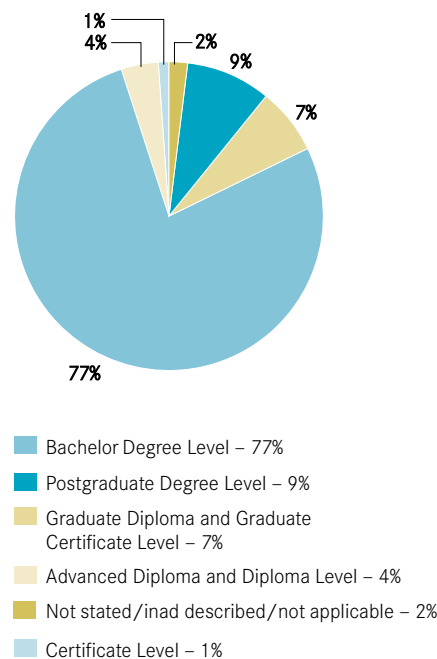
1.8 Field and level of qualification

Of the total respondents, 80.9% indicated that they had qualifications in occupational therapy, while 16.6% had qualifications in other fields, and 2.5% did not state or inadequately described their qualifications.

With respect to the highest level of education attained, the majority (77.8%) had a bachelor level degree, and a further 9.2% had a postgraduate degree.

Of the 2601 persons who indicated that they had qualifications as an occupational therapist, 19.3% were not in the workforce. Of the 2068 who were in the workforce, 67.6% were working as occupational therapists, 12.2% were working in other human services professions, and 20.2% were working, but not in a human services occupation. Those not working in human services were employed in very small numbers in a broad range of occupations.

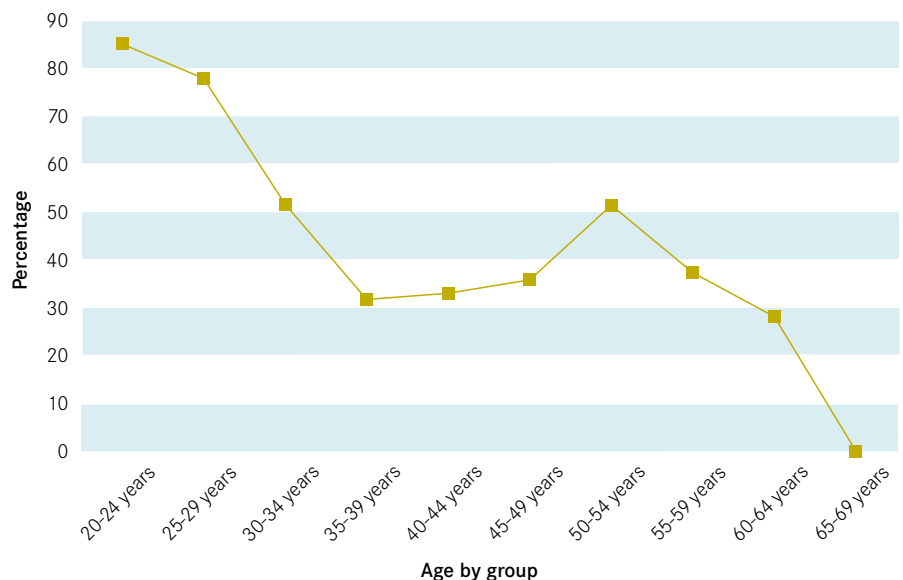
Figure 6: Level of qualifications of occupational therapists



1.9 Age and hours worked

The mean hours worked by persons describing themselves as occupational therapists in the week prior to the Census was 31 hours, and 53.5% indicated that they worked 35 or more hours per week. However, the number of hours worked varied considerably with age, with 81% of those under 30 years working 35 or more hours per week, which rapidly decreased to 51.61% of 30 to 34 year olds, and 31.7% of 35-39 year olds. This gradually increased to 51.4% of 50-54 year olds but then decreases again in the 55-59 year age range. As occupational therapy is a female dominated occupation, this pattern is likely to be related to child rearing.

Figure 7: Age and percentage of occupational therapists working 35 hours or more



1.10 Gross weekly income

The Census question regarding income asks respondents to nominate one of 12 categories which indicates their weekly income before taxation or other deductions. The largest proportion of occupational therapists (30.9%) received \$1,000 to \$1,299 per week (which is equivalent to \$52,000 to \$67,599 per year). Less than 1% indicated that their income was in the highest income category, or \$104,000 or more per year.

1.11 Change over time

In 2006, 1713 persons described themselves as a occupational therapist compared with 1152 in 1996. This is an increase of 49%. The proportion of occupational therapists that are male has increased slightly, from 5.9% in 1996 to 6.5% in 2006.

The number of occupational therapist has increased between 1996 and 2006 for all age groups.

Figure 8: Gross weekly income of occupational therapists

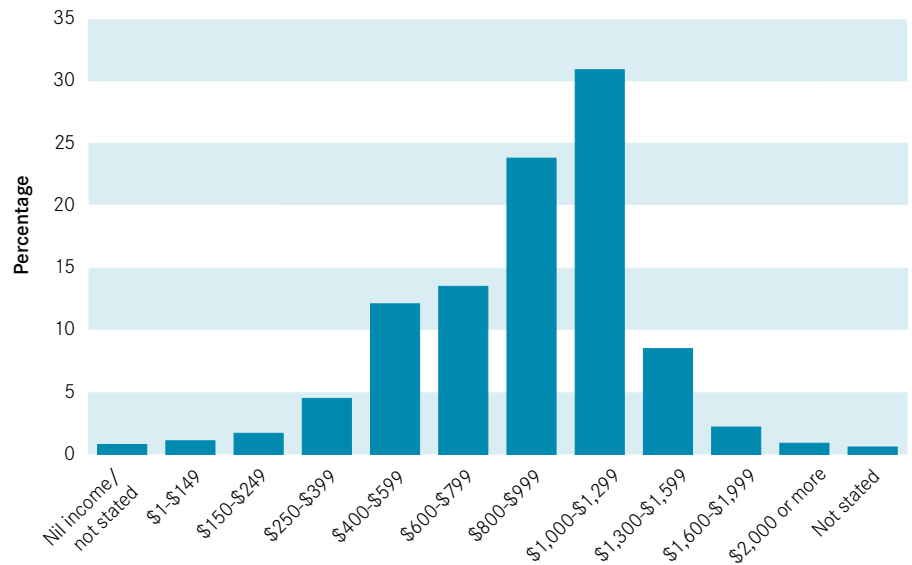
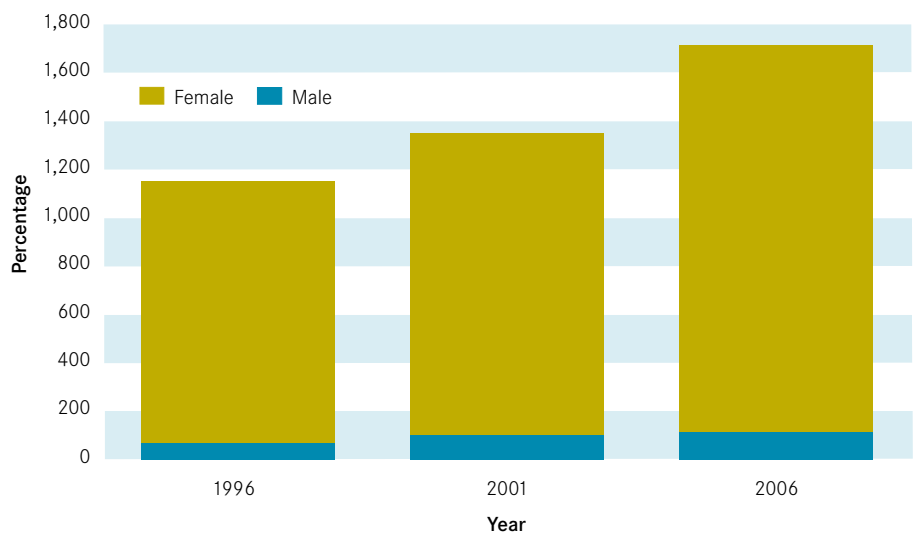
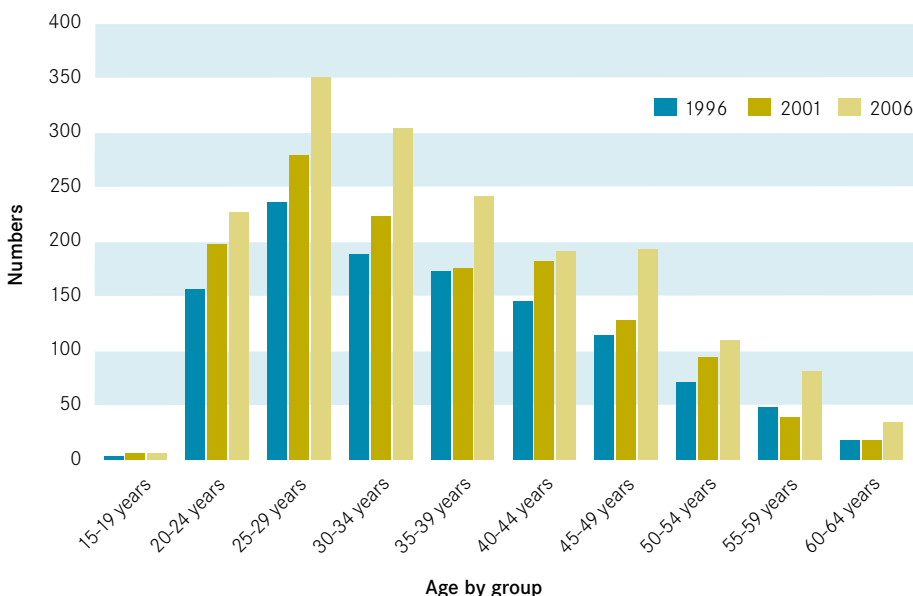


Figure 9: Number and gender of occupational therapists 1996 to 2006



Future 10: Age profile of occupational therapists 1996 to 2006



Summary

The Census data indicates that occupational therapy is an occupation which has strongly grown in numbers since 1996. The occupation has a relatively young age structure, and therefore has a high number of new recruits to replace those who are likely to retire from the occupation. Occupational therapy is a female dominated profession, with the proportion working 35 hours plus decreasing significantly during the late 30s and 40s, before increasing again during the 50s.

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