
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 Paramedicine Board of Australia

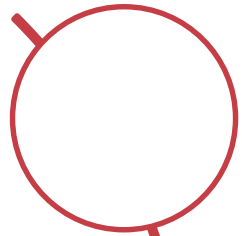
Truly[®]
Deeply



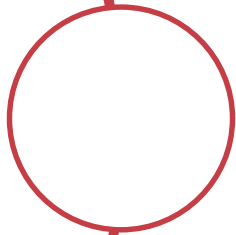
Introduction

- 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 Paramedicine Board of Australia.**

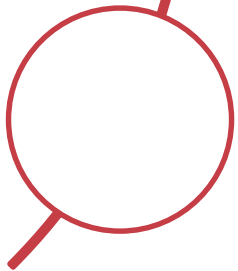
An overview of the methodology



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

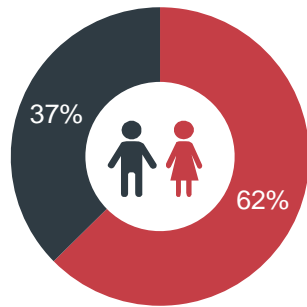
- Online surveys were conducted with practitioners as well as the broader community following the qualitative investigation.
- The 2019 questionnaires were very similar to the 2018 questionnaires, with only a small number of additions.
- Respondents to the Community Survey were sourced using an external 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% |

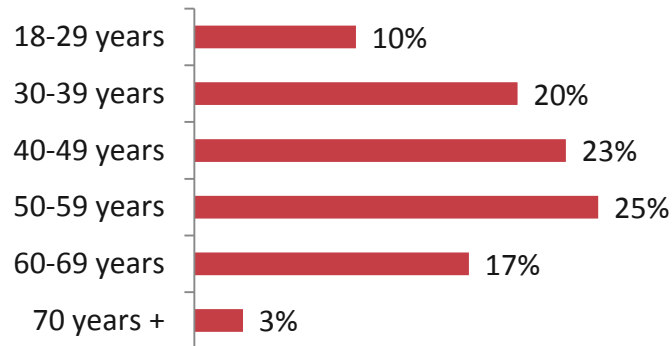


2019 sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,944)

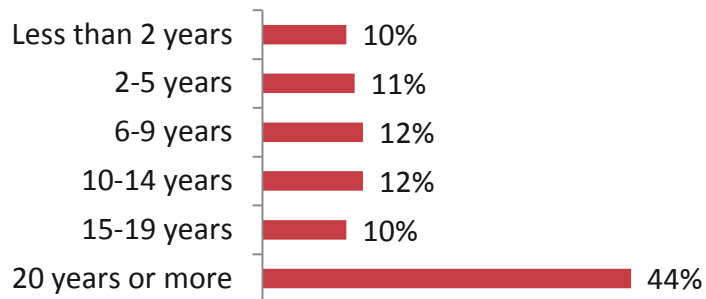
Gender



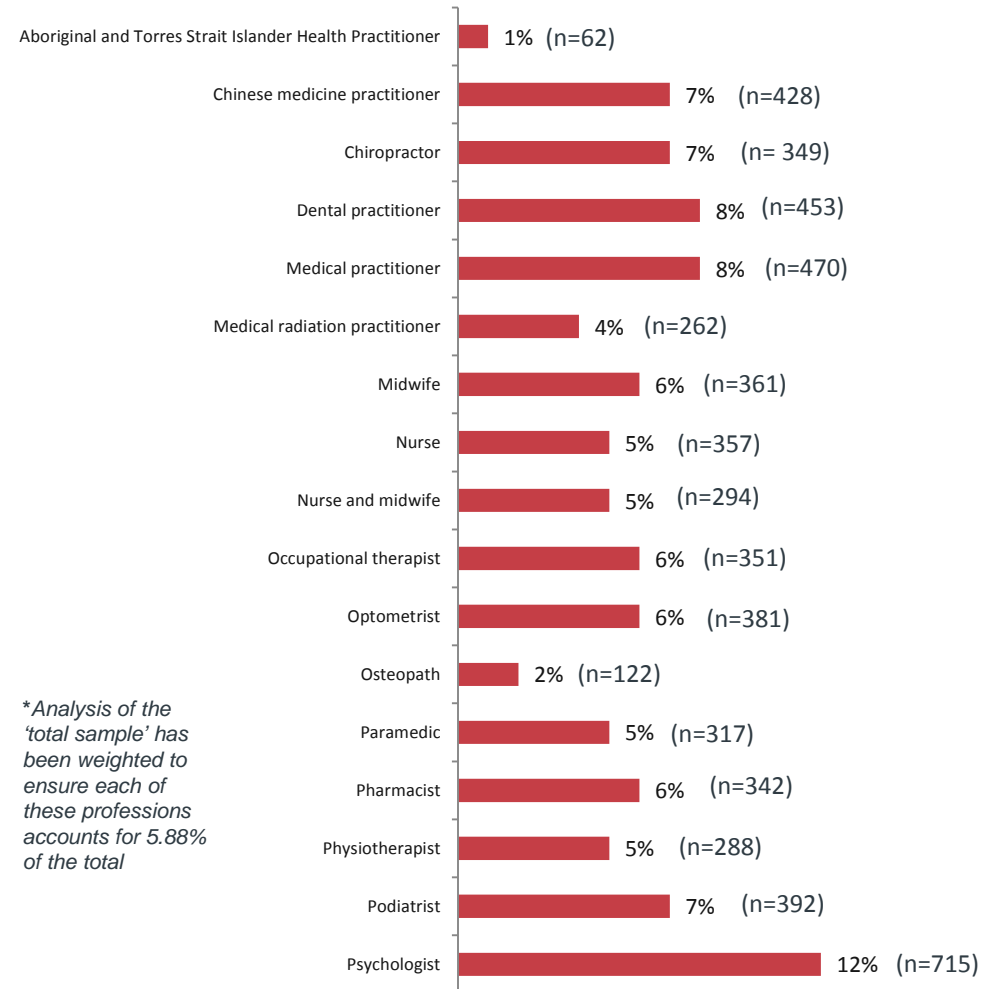
Age



Years in practice



Practitioner type*

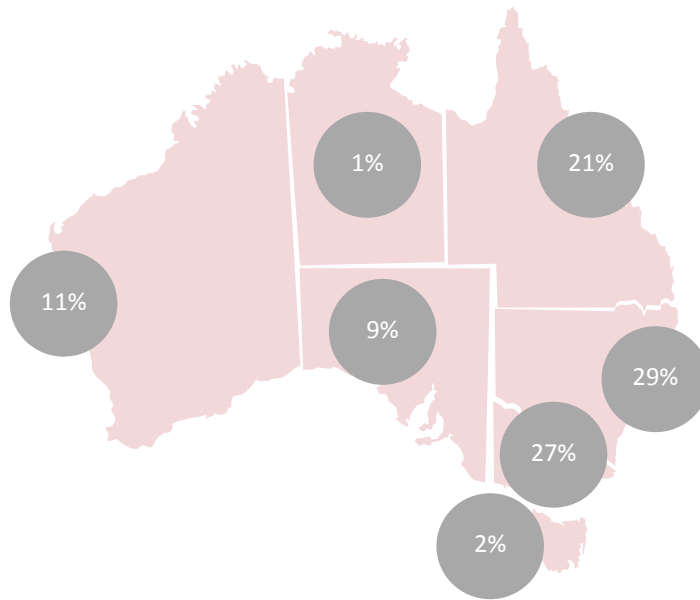


*Analysis of the 'total sample' has been weighted to ensure each of these professions accounts for 5.88% of the total

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

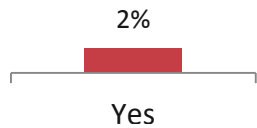
2019 sample of registered practitioners (n = 5,944)

Location

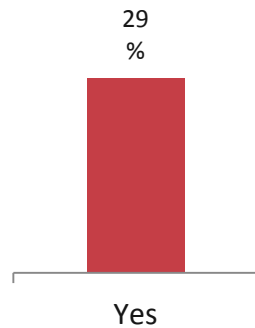


Metro: **64%**
Regional: **36%**

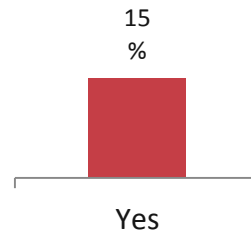
% who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



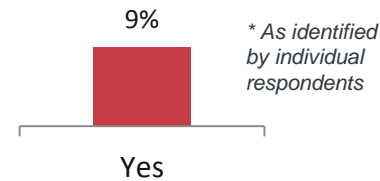
% who were born a country other than Australia



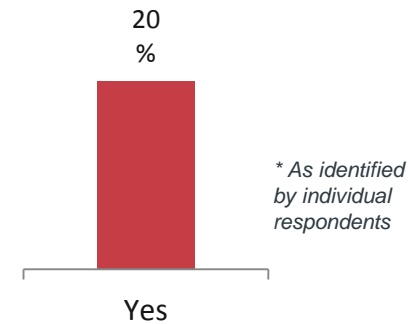
% who speak a language other than English at home



% 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*

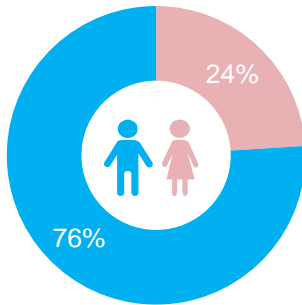


Summary of results of the online survey with registered health practitioners.

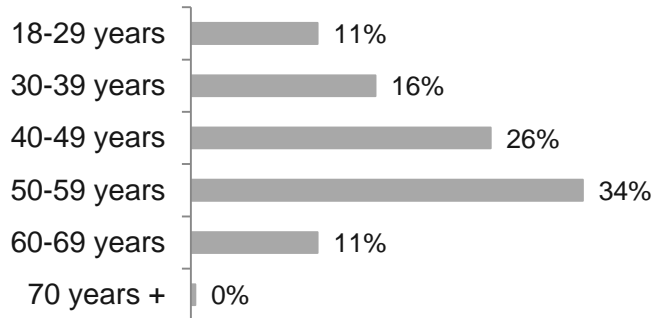
Specific insights into the responses from:
Paramedics

Sample of paramedics (n=292)

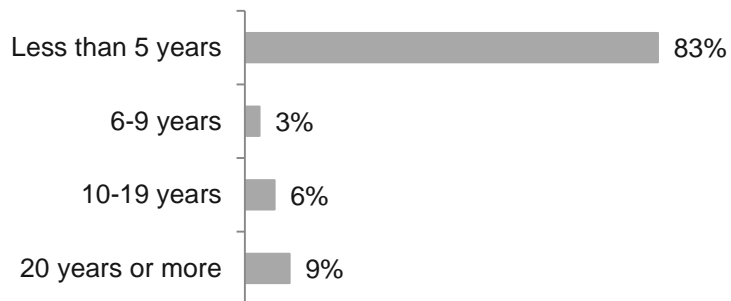
Gender:



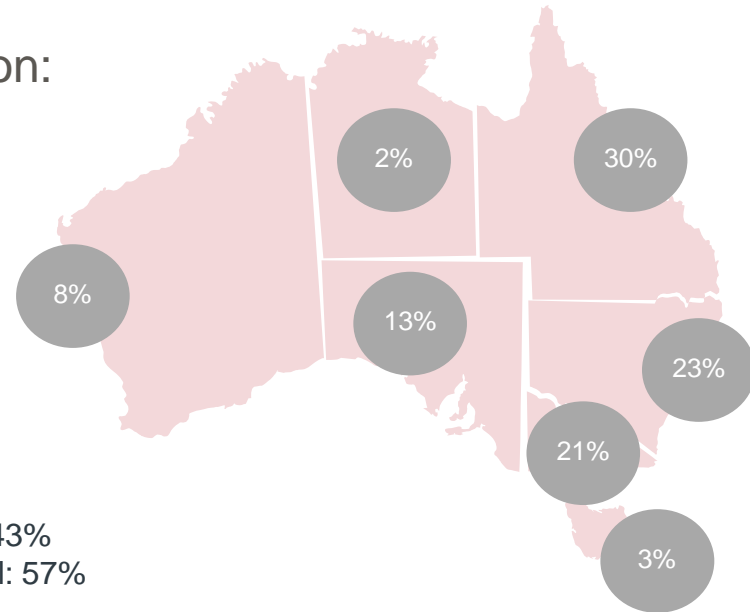
Age:



Years in practice:

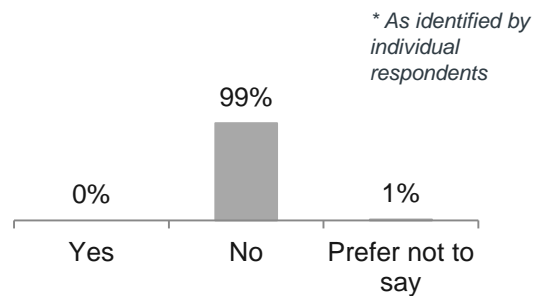


Location:

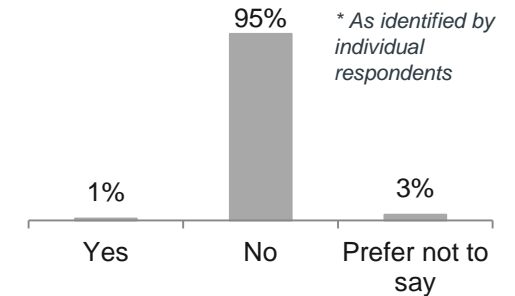


Metro: 43%
Regional: 57%

% 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 paramedicine 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=292)

| Perceptions in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Trusted | 54% | (+32%) |
| Respected | 45% | (+26%) |
| Professional | 41% | (-6%) |
| Compassionate | 24% | (-) |
| Caring | 22% | (-5%) |
| Dedicated | 22% | (+1%) |
| Hard working | 21% | (-9%) |
| Empathetic | 20% | (-2%) |
| Competent | 18% | (-4%) |
| Responsible | 17% | (-3%) |

| Perceptions in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Community-minded | 16% | (+4%) |
| Knowledgeable | 15% | (-15%) |
| Honest | 13% | (+4%) |
| Committed | 13% | (-3%) |
| Passionate | 13% | (-1%) |
| Reputable | 10% | (-) |
| Independent | 10% | (+3%) |
| Approachable | 9% | (-2%) |
| Team oriented | 9% | (+1%) |
| Courageous | 6% | (+4%) |

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 Paramedicine 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=292)

| Perception in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception of the Board | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Regulators | 41% | (-) |
| Administrators | 31% | (-4%) |
| Bureaucratic | 30% | (-) |
| Necessary | 23% | (-10%) |
| For practitioners | 22% | (-8%) |
| For the public | 20% | (-3%) |
| Decision-makers | 16% | (-8%) |
| Poor communicators | 15% | (+3%) |
| Advocates | 15% | (-) |
| Out of touch | 13% | (-1%) |

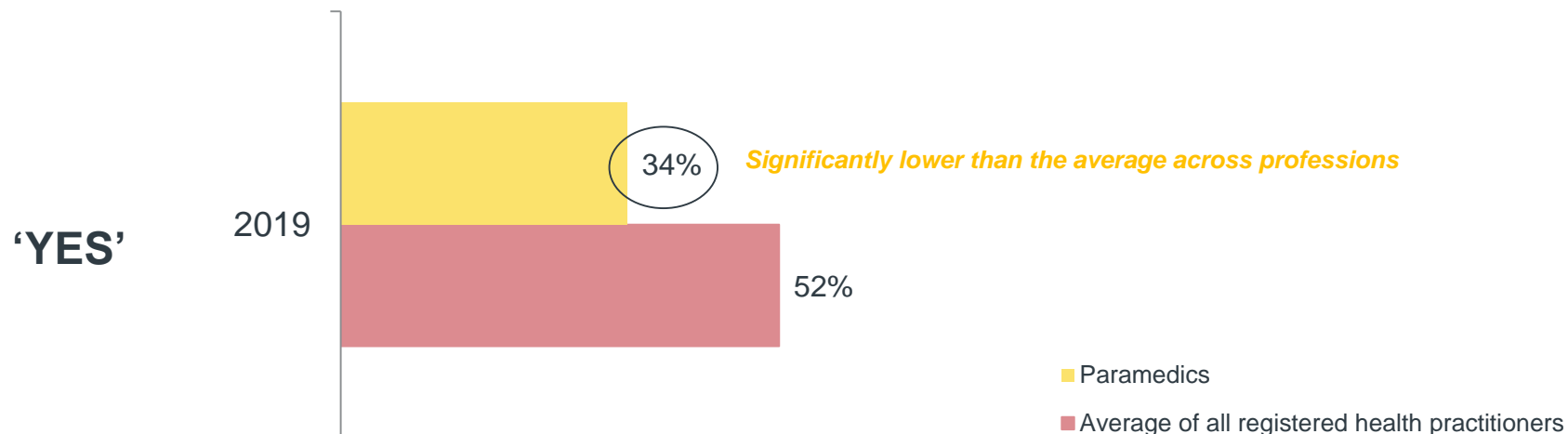
| Perception in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception of the Board | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Controlling | 12% | (+2%) |
| Intimidating | 10% | (-) |
| Rigid | 9% | (-2%) |
| Supportive | 9% | (-2%) |
| Fair | 9% | (-1%) |
| Secretive | 9% | (+2%) |
| Transparent | 8% | (+2%) |
| Aloof | 8% | (-) |
| Competent | 7% | (-7%) |
| Shows leadership | 7% | (-5%) |

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

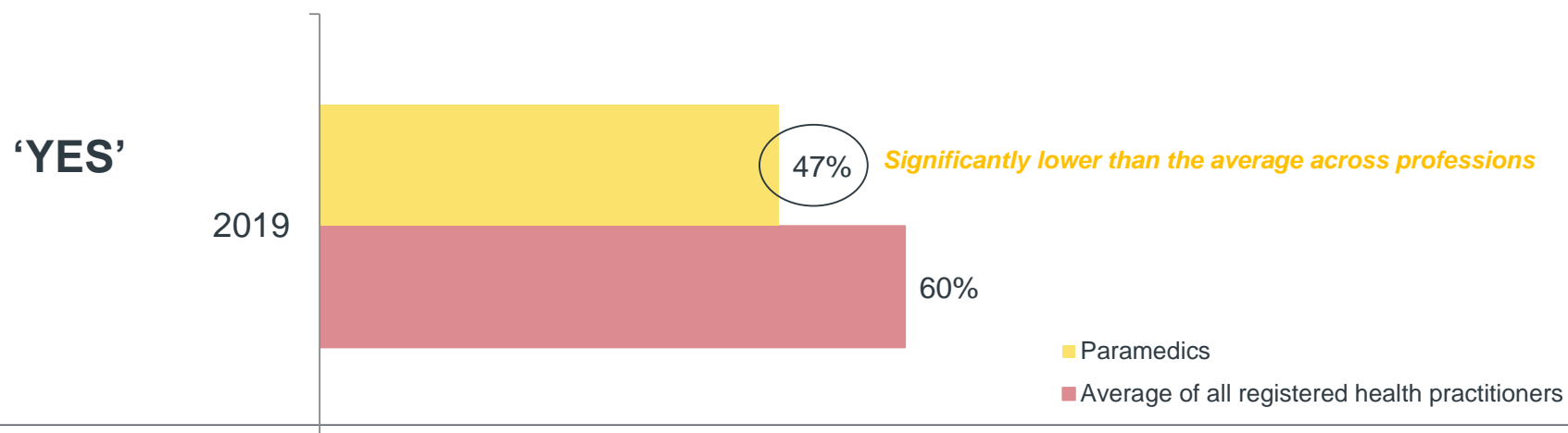
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in the Paramedicine 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 Paramedicine Board of Australia

Indicators of trust: 47% trust the Board

The single report I have made to this point regarding poor practice was handled quickly and promptly.

It has shown itself to be looking out for the welfare of paramedic staff.

Setting the national benchmark for patient safety and have confidence in them doing this.

The Board is there to ensure all paramedics are suitable to do the role and maintaining a professional theme. Only the right staff can attend the public.

I believe the people involved are focused on ensuring patient safety, which is crucial. I believe the purpose of the board is to protect patient's, improve competence and standards. These values are important to me.

It contains representatives from within my own workforce.

There is now a professional standard that is set. This standard is national and there is now a body to ensure that there will be continual improvement.

Barriers to trust: 25% DO NOT trust the Board

They are an unknown quantity. Time might tell but there are concerns about fairness and bias.

Fails to follow through on promises of deadlines and communication. Cannot be trusted to even answer the phone to answer questions or clarify requirements let alone keep records of documents presented to them.

The Board has been extremely inefficient and not communicative with its members. Has pensive registration fees and shows no worth as a registered board.

Emphasis on public safety and protection of the paramedic title but very little advantage for paramedics. No recognition of skill level or transferability of qualifications between states & territories under national registration.

They are too obsessed with political correctness.

The Board does not reflect me or my colleges view. They do little or nothing to help me preform my role as a paramedic. In fact they only make my role harder and work as a distraction to patient care.

Full list of responses provided separately

2019: Perceptions of Ahpra among paramedics (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=292)

| Perception in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Regulators | 48% | (-6%) |
| Administrators | 46% | (-1%) |
| Bureaucratic | 40% | (-2%) |
| For the public | 27% | (-8%) |
| Necessary | 23% | (-13%) |
| For practitioners | 21% | (-4%) |
| Poor communicators | 15% | (-2%) |
| Intimidating | 15% | (-2%) |
| Out of touch | 15% | (-) |
| Decision-makers | 14% | (-7%) |

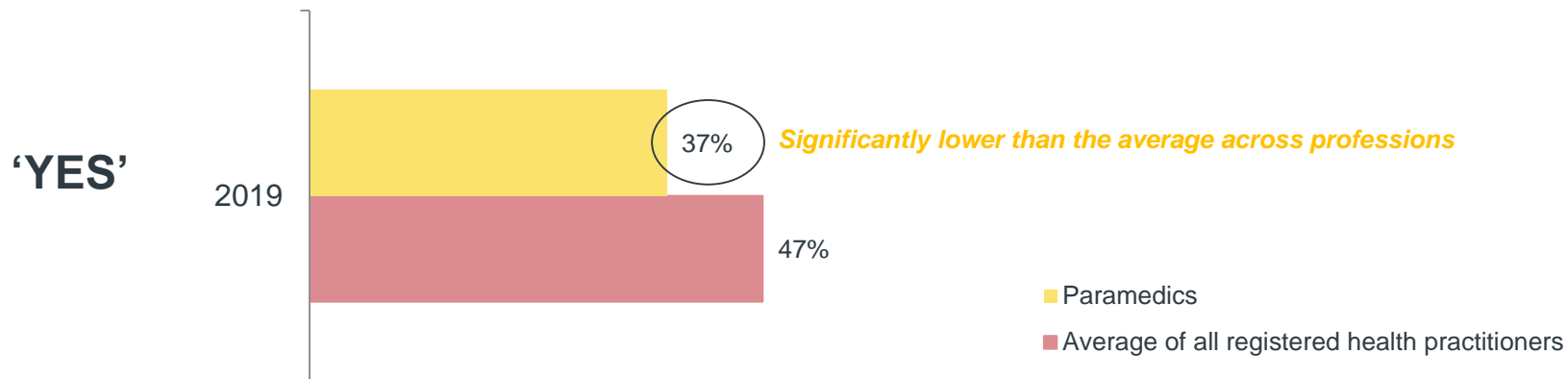
| Perception in 2019 | % of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra | Difference compared to the average across all professions |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Controlling | 14% | (-2%) |
| Rigid | 14% | (-4%) |
| Advocates | 12% | (+4%) |
| Aloof | 9% | (-) |
| Transparent | 8% | (+3%) |
| Responsive | 8% | (+2%) |
| Fair | 7% | (-1%) |
| Competent | 7% | (-4%) |
| Secretive | 7% | (-2%) |
| Modern | 6% | (+2%) |

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

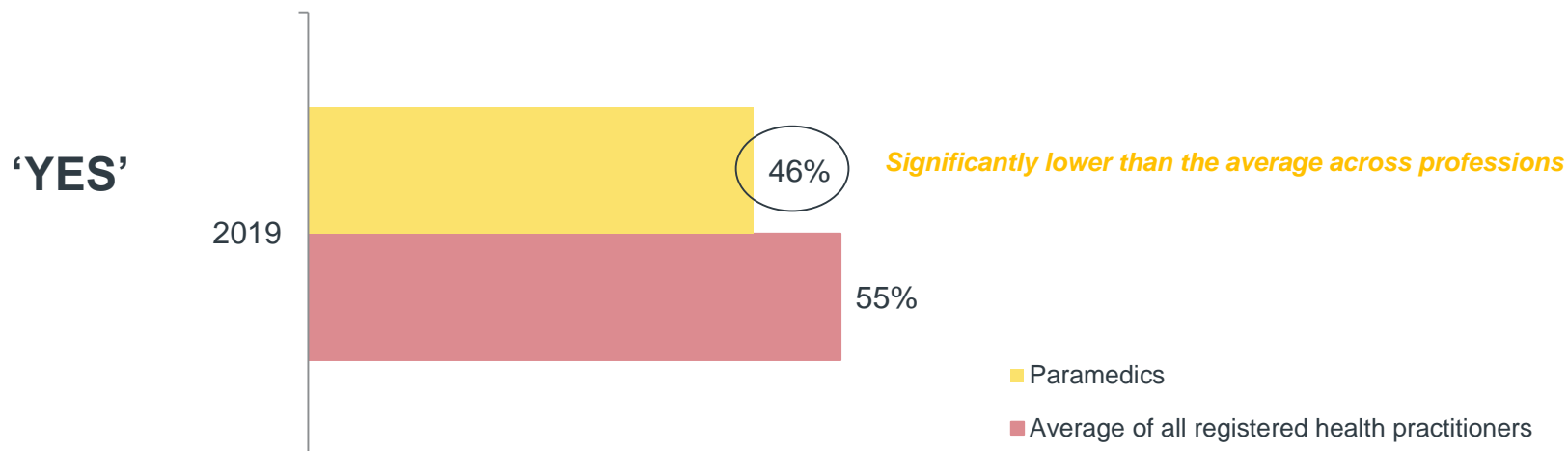
Orange indicates a result *significantly lower* than the average across all professions.

Levels of confidence and trust in Ahpra among paramedics

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 paramedics

Indicators of trust: 46% trust Ahpra

It has shown itself to be a professional body looking after the concerns of paramedic staff.

I haven't had any direct experience that would make me not trust Ahpra. I have also heard of situations where they have stepped in and provided appropriate oversight and direction to registered professionals who have acted poorly.

Other professions that are regulated with Ahpra seem to have benefitted from it, which indicates that paramedicine will too benefit.

It is a body held accountable by various government institutions.

Paramedicine is a new profession within the Ahpra realm, and I have not been given reason not to trust Ahpra. Previous experience with Ahpra as a previously registered nurse supports this.

They've existed for a long time with the purpose of regulating health professionals for the safety of the public. Their purpose is noble and hence they should be trusted provided they are performing with the public's best interests in mind.

Full list of responses provided separately

Barriers to trust: 25% DO NOT trust Ahpra

Paramedics have not even had registration for a year, yet the fees have been raised already. Just another money grab

Concerned about how we will be treated moving forward. Trust is earned and there is nothing to base trust upon. Time will tell.

They have a great deal of power to effect my livelihood while I am unclear of my rights & obligations in this relationship. I have a strong feeling that Ahpra will be a self-serving organisation with questionable benefits to the public.

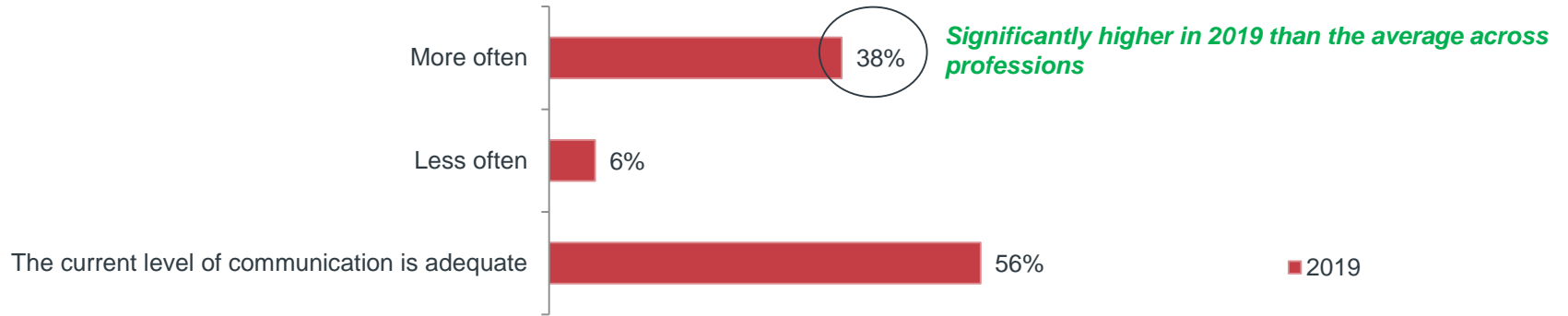
I can't see how paying money to Ahpra to have a security check, which has already been done by our employer, provides any safety to the community.

Nearly ended up unemployed because of them not processing an application. Poor communicators do as I say wouldn't reply.

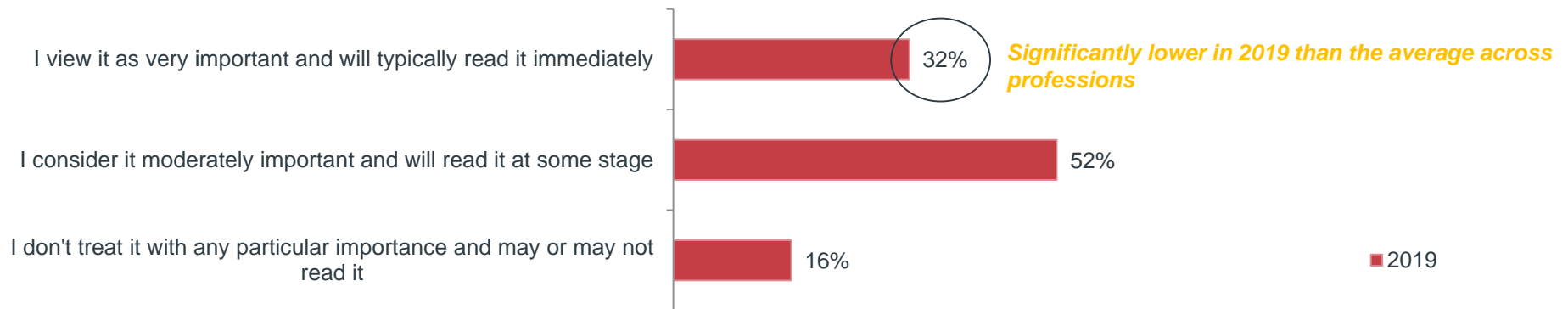
I do not feel I am a valued member of Ahpra, Paramedics do not get registration cards like everyone else and pay the second highest fees, just a money-making machine.

Response to communication by the Paramedicine Board of Australia

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



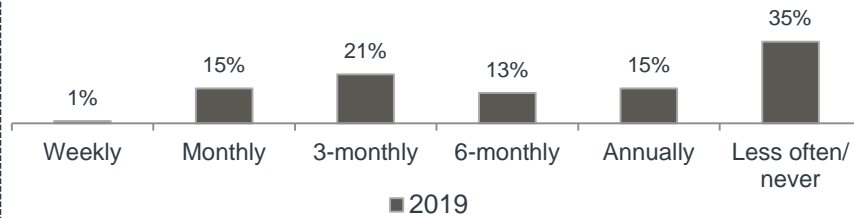
Q. How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board

Use of the Paramedicine Board of Australia website

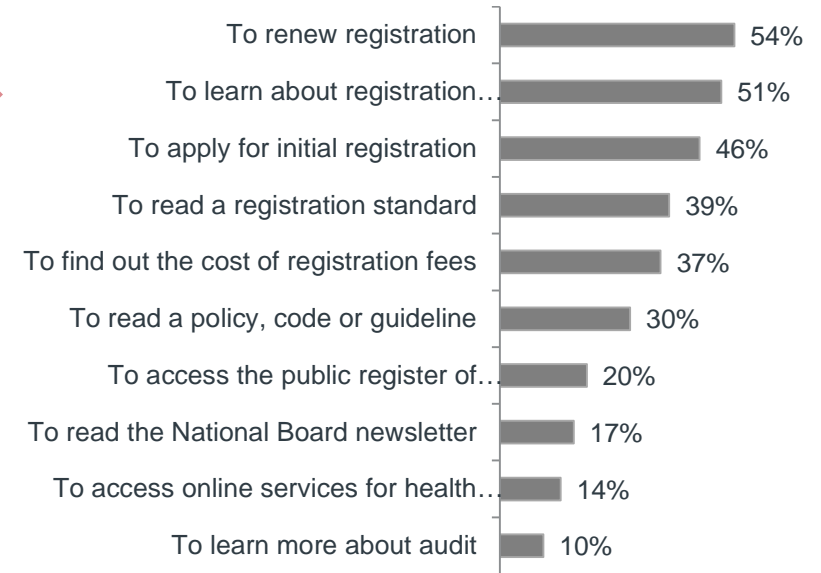
Q. How often do you visit the website of (your National Board)?)



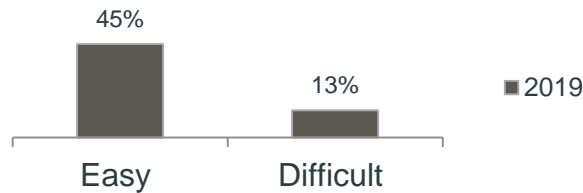
Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this board



2019: Reasons for visiting the National Board website

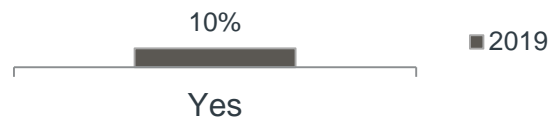


Q. How easy or difficult is it to find the information you were looking for on the (National Board) website?



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



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

- Why the increase in registration fees after only one year of inclusion into the national registration scheme.
- Graduate information.
- CPD providers/credentialing is not very streamlined.
- Hours equivalent for student training.

Additional feedback from paramedics

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)*

Not impressed with the amount we are being charged to register. Compared with Nurse registration Paramedics are paying significantly more with no benefit.

The changes that were forced upon us were rushed, aggressive and I was totally ill informed of the process, I don't like it and haven't had any help or guidance in understanding and undertaking what is expected of me now to stay registered. I am very, very concerned about this whole point system that I need to complete each year and the threats of auditing me is intimidating and has stressed me greatly.

I found the application for registration assessment process extremely stressful almost bordering on a situation of bullying and harassment, the assessor created a considerable amount of stress for me.

I will be interested to see how it managed moving forward. I think that it will be interesting as we need to re-register for the first time.

I am concerned that paramedics are reluctant to admit to mental health issues and therefore not access treatment due to the risk of losing their registration.

Disgustingly poor standards of communication with professionals trying to do their job. Even when complaints are made, they go unanswered and unactioned. Ahpra's complete disregard for the impact their failure to action critical requests has on not just people's professional lives, but their personal lives and their mental health is abhorrent and Ahpra should be absolutely ashamed. This cannot and should not be acceptable practice.

Not impressed my fees went up more than my pay rise this year. Thanks. No guidance or support from my workplace with CPD, so this has been stressful for a lot of people. And they will tell you that CPD was conducted, but often it is cancelled due to ramping and surge in calls.

Registration was and is a total waste of my time money and effort - and remains so. I have gained NO benefits from registration 😞

It's a new process for me in time a better relationship will be formed.

Students should not have to pay full registration before they are even given an authority to practice or an internship.

Greater transparency on registration fees as there is little to no information on how they are determined by the board or Ahpra. More information on how CPD needs to be documented.

