

# Ahpra

Practitioner and community perceptions of the Australian Health  
Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the National Boards: 2020

A Social Research Project

November 2020

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 them 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.

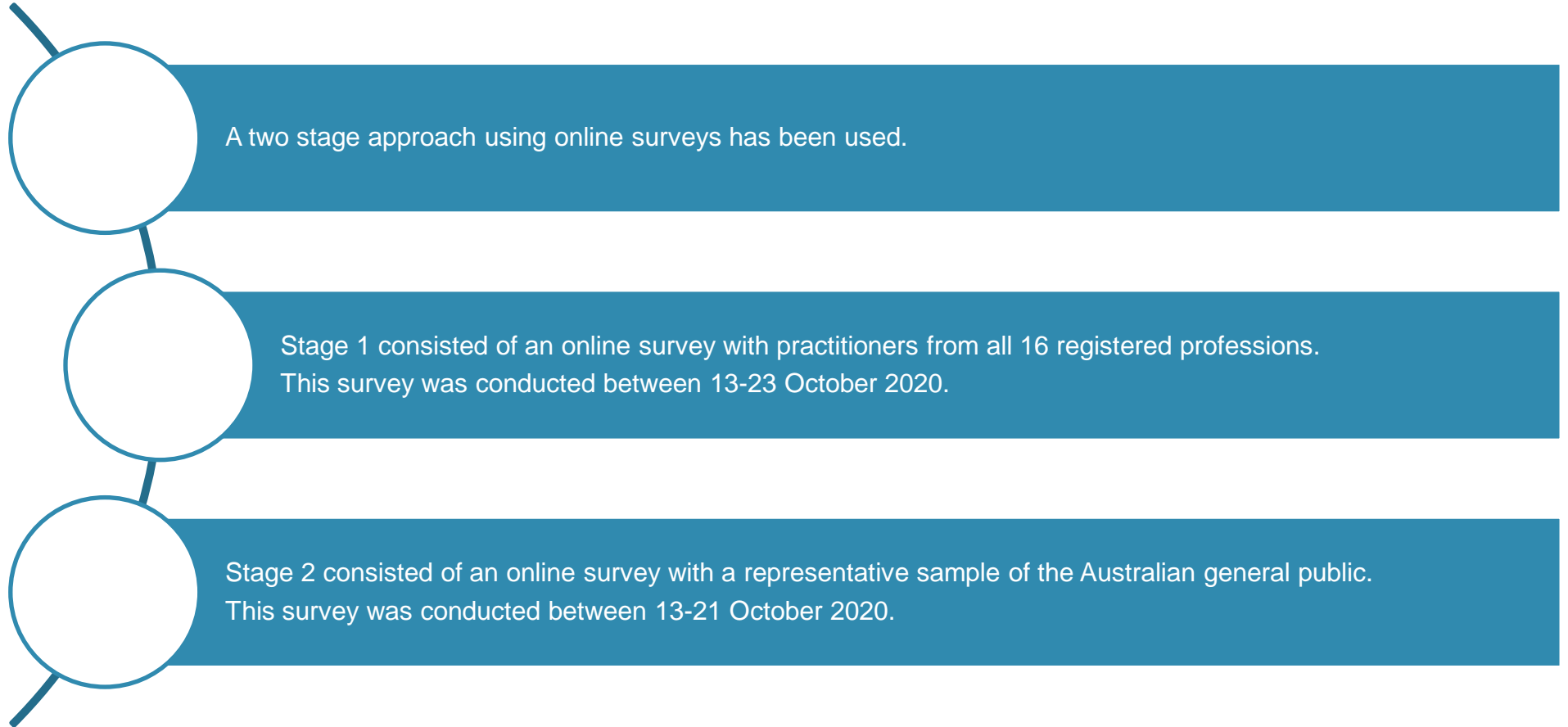
Given the value of the insights delivered through the 2018 benchmark study to Ahpra and National Boards, the decision was taken to update the quantitative measures by conducting the online survey with practitioners and the general public in November 2019 and most recently in October 2020.

The purpose of this report is to present, discuss and consolidate the findings and insights from the 2020 surveys and to make comparisons, where appropriate, with the 2018 and 2019 results.

- 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

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# Quantitative approach

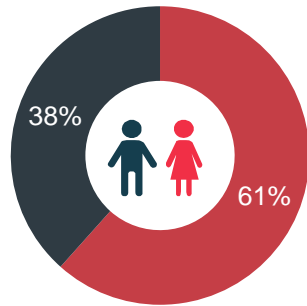
- Online surveys were conducted with practitioners as well as the broader community.
- The 2020 questionnaires were very similar to the 2018 and 2019 questionnaires, with two additional questions.
- Respondents to the Community Survey were sourced using an external panel provider. Quotas were placed 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	13-21 October	13-23 October
Responses	2,020	10,228
Email invitations sent	na	138,453
Response rate	na	7.4%

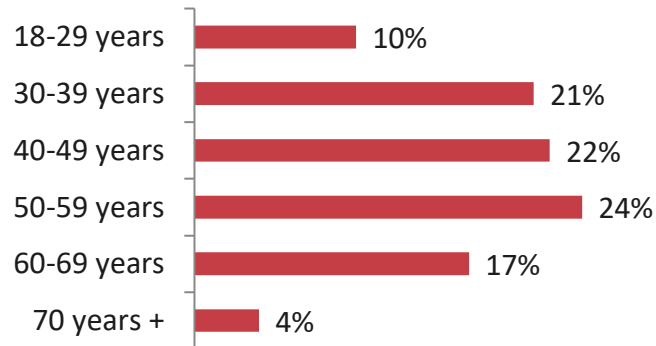


# 2020 sample of registered practitioners (n = 10,228)

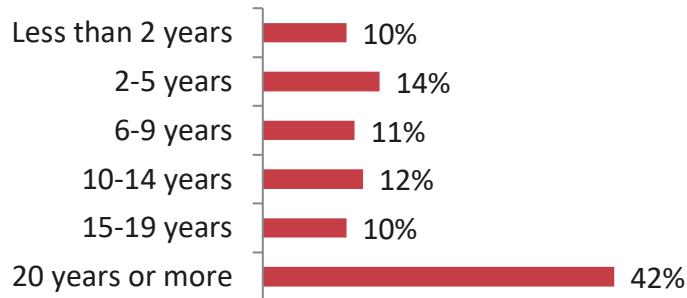
## Gender



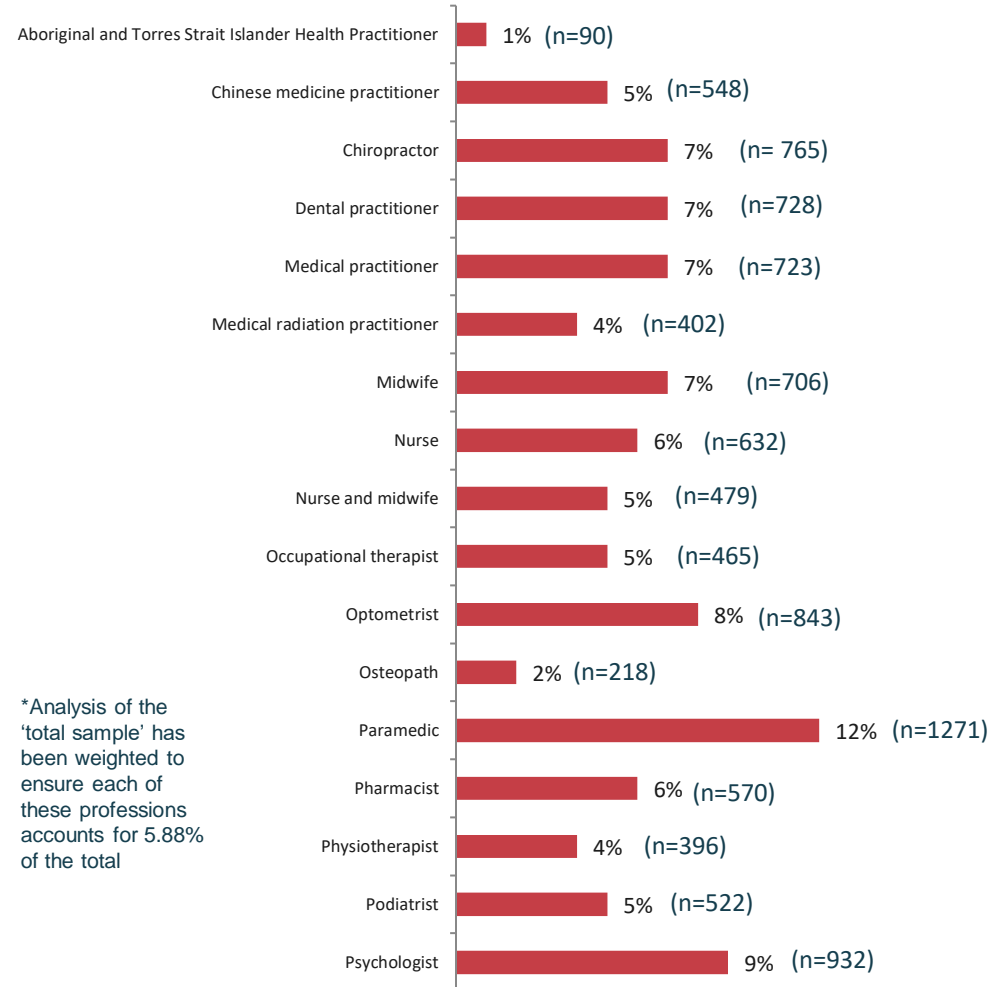
## Age



## Years in practice



## Practitioner type\*

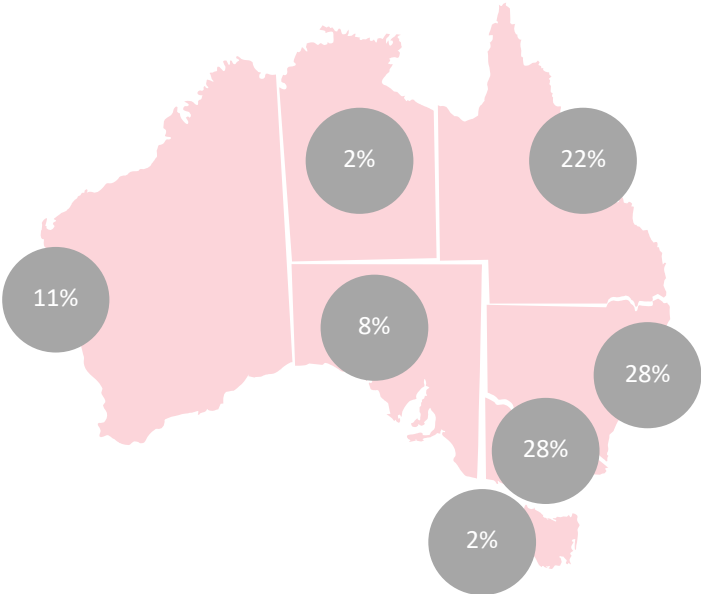


\*Analysis of the 'total sample' has been weighted to ensure each of these professions accounts for 5.88% of the total

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

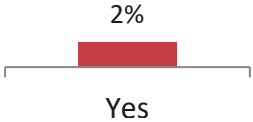
# 2020 sample of registered practitioners (n = 10,228)

## Location

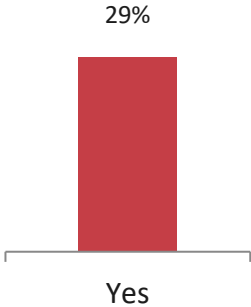


Metro: **63%**  
Regional: **30%**  
Rural: **7%**

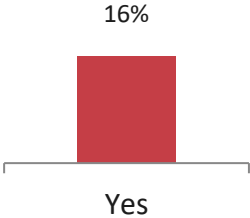
% who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



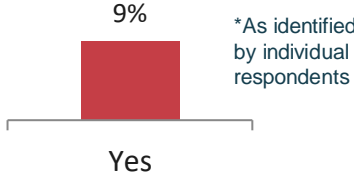
% who were born in a country other than Australia



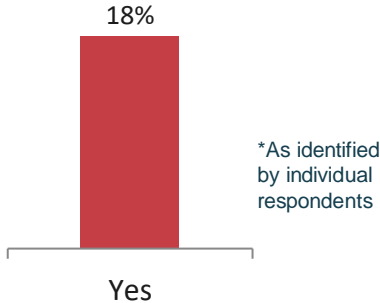
% who speak a language other than English at home



% 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\*

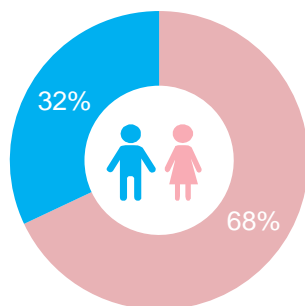


# Summary of results of the online survey with registered health practitioners

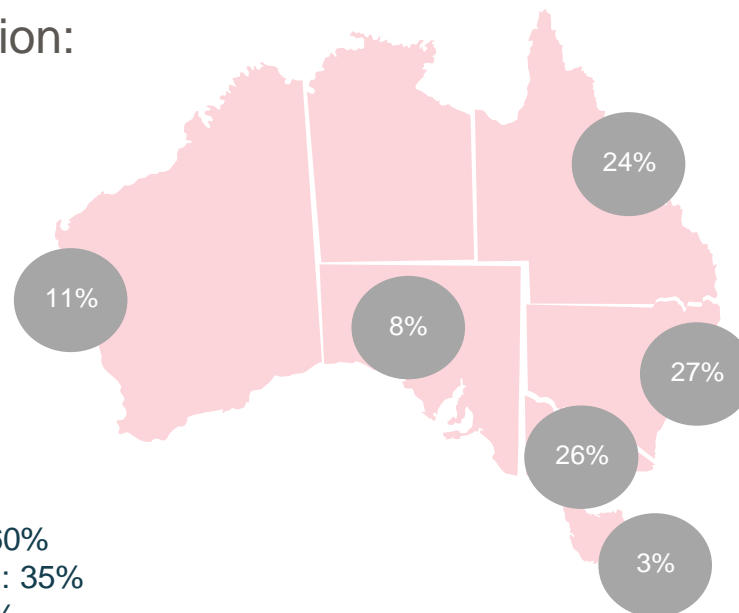
Specific insights into the responses from:  
**Medical radiation practitioners**

# Sample of medical radiation practitioners (n=402)

## Gender:

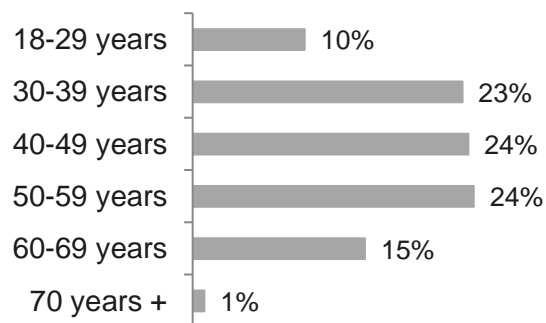


## Location:



Metro: 60%  
Regional: 35%  
Rural: 5%

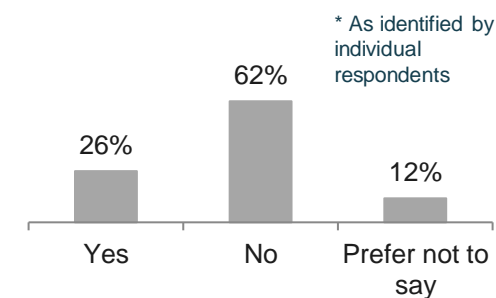
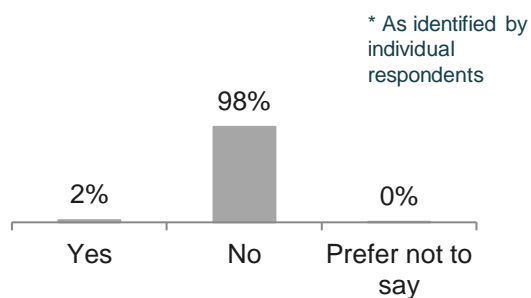
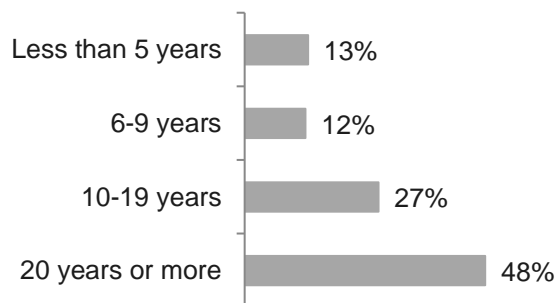
## Age:



% 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\*

## Years in practice:





# 2020: 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=402)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Professional	55%	(+10%)
Hard working	39%	(+10%)
Knowledgeable	32%	(+2%)
Competent	30%	(+10%)
Team oriented	26%	(+17%)
Responsible	25%	(+6%)
Caring	23%	(-5%)
Compassionate	21%	(-2%)
Dedicated	20%	(-1%)
Empathetic	20%	(-1%)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Committed	17%	(+1%)
Efficient	16%	(+10%)
Trusted	14%	(-9%)
Friendly	12%	(+5%)
Innovative	11%	(+5%)
Reputable	7%	(-2%)
Respected	7%	(-13%)
Passionate	7%	(-7%)
Approachable	6%	(-6%)
Honest	3%	(-6%)

Green indicates a result significantly higher in 2020 than the average across all professions.

Orange indicates a result significantly lower in 2020 than the average across all professions.

# Summary of changes 2019-20:

## Perceptions of the medical radiation profession among practitioners

Q. Which of the following words or statements, if any, do you strongly associate with your profession?

Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board

% of practitioners with that perception of the profession	2019 N=262	2020 N=402
Professional	54%	55%
Hard working	43%	39%
Knowledgeable	29%	32%
Competent	30%	30%
Team oriented	30%	26%
Responsible	24%	25%
Caring	29%	23%
Compassionate	20%	21%
Dedicated	24%	20%
Empathetic	17%	20%

% of practitioners with that perception of the profession	2019 N=262	2020 N=402
Committed	13%	17%
Efficient	21%	16%
Trusted	9%	14%
Friendly	6%	12%
Innovative	15%	11%
Reputable	7%	7%
Respected	10%	7%
Passionate	5%	7%
Approachable	6%	6%
Honest	5%	3%

**Green** indicates a result significantly higher result in 2020 compared with the 2019 result.

**Orange** indicates a result significantly lower result in 2020 compared with the 2019 result

## 2020: 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=402)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	46%	(+8%)
Administrators	38%	(+5%)
For practitioners	31%	(-)
Necessary	29%	(-1%)
Bureaucratic	29%	(+4%)
Decision-makers	18%	(-4%)
For the public	18%	(-3%)
Competent	13%	(-2%)
Advocates	10%	(-7%)
Poor communicators	9%	(-)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Rigid	8%	(-)
Trustworthy	8%	(-4%)
Out of touch	7%	(-3%)
Fair	7%	(-3%)
Good communicators	7%	(-3%)
Approachable	6%	(-5%)
Accessible	6%	(-4%)
Supportive	6%	(-8%)
Controlling	6%	(-2%)
Shows leadership	6%	(-7%)

Green indicates a result significantly higher in 2020 than the average across all professions.

Orange indicates a result significantly lower in 2020 than the average across all professions.

# Summary of changes 2018-20: 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

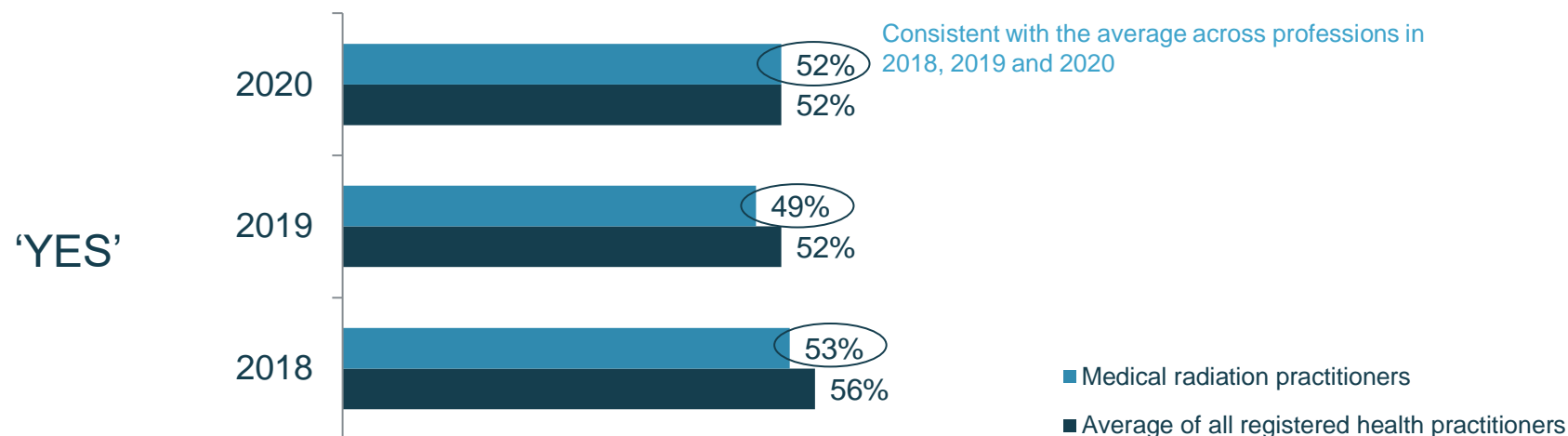
% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	2018 N=326	2019 N=262	2020 N=402	% of practitioners with that perception of the Board	2018 N=326	2019 N=262	2020 N=402
Regulators	47%	46%	46%	Rigid	9%	9%	8%
Administrators	38%	38%	38%	Trustworthy	7%	4%	8%
For practitioners	34%	26%	31%	Out of touch	12%	12%	7%
Necessary	29%	26%	29%	Fair	8%	5%	7%
Bureaucratic	29%	31%	29%	Good communicators	5%	4%	7%
Decision-makers	18%	20%	18%	Approachable	6%	3%	6%
For the public	17%	13%	18%	Accessible	8%	5%	6%
Competent	11%	10%	13%	Supportive	6%	6%	6%
Advocates	10%	7%	10%	Controlling	9%	9%	6%
Poor communicators	10%	12%	9%	Shows leadership	4%	5%	6%

Green indicates a result significantly higher compared with the previous year.

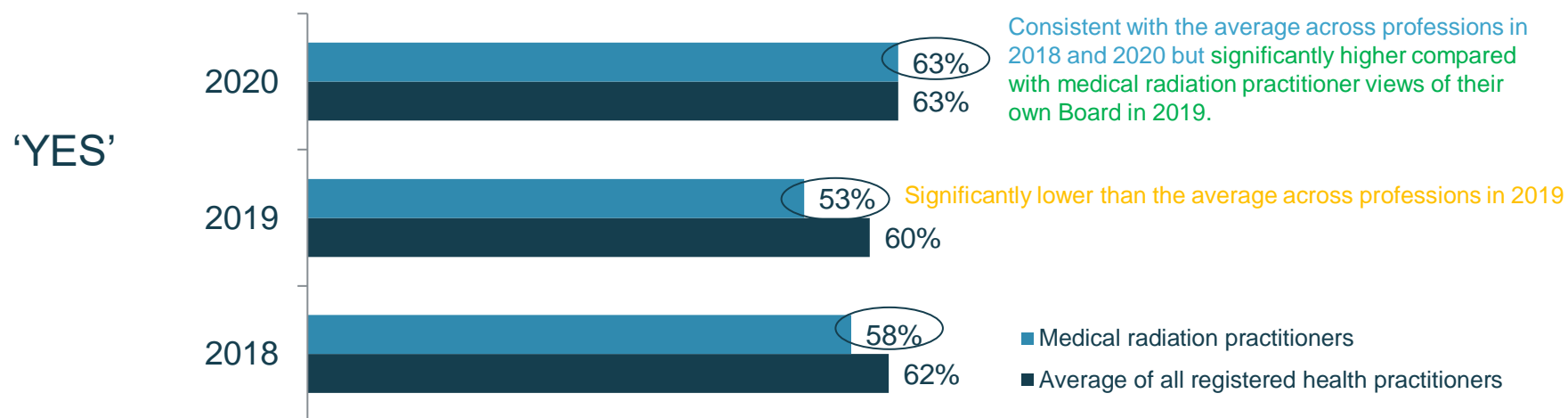
Orange indicates a result significantly lower compared with the previous year.

# 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

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## Indicators of trust: **63% trust the Board**

*I believe they are committed to keeping the community safe, especially in regard to regulating safe radiation practices.*

*I haven't had much dealings with them. Just the regular email newsletters which seems professional and informative. I have no reason to think badly of them.*

*I have not seen any evidence or information that leads me not to.*

*We need a body to look after us and help us to be responsible practitioners. Everyone needs accountability.*

*The capability statement is up to date and reflective of modern practice. The members of the board seem competent and accessible.*

*Historical regulation of profession and made up of individuals who understand our small and unique profession.*

*I trust they are responsible for ensuring professional standards are met and recognizing the need to maintain professional development and education in practitioners.*

*Because I feel we need consistent regulation in how medical radiation services are used and maintained to ensure safety for staff and patients.*

## Barriers to trust: **7% do NOT trust the Board**

*Board members stay way too long, and it becomes a 'role for life', akin to the old AIR. They're a closed and elite club that seems determined to keep our profession in the 20th century.*

*Sometimes receive different answers to the same question, or the answers do not answer the actual question. Feel like I am communicating with a politician- never a straight, clear answer. Some regulations seem to differ in different states.*

*I can not see transparency for the use of all the money generated by subscriptions.*

*I have found you to be very unhelpful on any communication I have needed.*

*Every day I see workers in my field that are incompetent and a danger to the public and there are no checks and balances to ensure these people receive the training they require or to ensure that the companies that hire these people are held accountable for overlooking their gross inadequacies.*

# Full list of responses provided separately

## 2020: 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=402)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Regulators	51%	(-1%)
Administrators	49%	(+4%)
Necessary	35%	(-1%)
Bureaucratic	34%	(-2%)
For practitioners	32%	(+4%)
For the public	29%	(-4%)
Decision-makers	19%	(-4%)
Competent	12%	(-1%)
Rigid	11%	(-4%)
Controlling	9%	(-5%)

Perceptions in 2020	% of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra	Difference compared to the average across all professions
Transparent	9%	(+3%)
Trustworthy	9%	(-1%)
Fair	8%	(-1%)
Accessible	8%	(-1%)
Out of touch	8%	(-4%)
Supportive	8%	(-)
Advocates	8%	(-2%)
Poor communicators	8%	(-5%)
Responsive	7%	(-1%)
Approachable	6%	(-1%)

Green indicates a result significantly higher in 2020 than the average across all professions.

Orange indicates a result significantly lower in 2020 than the average across all professions.

# Summary of changes 2018-20:

## 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 Ahpra	2018 N=326	2019 N=262	2020 N=402
Regulators	52%	54%	51%
Administrators	50%	49%	49%
Necessary	34%	33%	35%
Bureaucratic	39%	43%	34%
For practitioners	32%	30%	32%
For the public	33%	30%	29%
Decision-makers	21%	19%	19%
Competent	14%	9%	12%
Rigid	13%	11%	11%
Controlling	14%	10%	9%

% of practitioners with that perception of Ahpra	2018 N=326	2019 N=262	2020 N=402
Transparent	6%	3%	9%
Trustworthy	7%	8%	9%
Fair	9%	4%	8%
Accessible	12%	6%	8%
Out of touch	11%	12%	8%
Supportive	8%	6%	8%
Advocates	8%	8%	8%
Poor communicators	11%	12%	8%
Responsive	8%	3%	7%
Approachable	10%	5%	6%

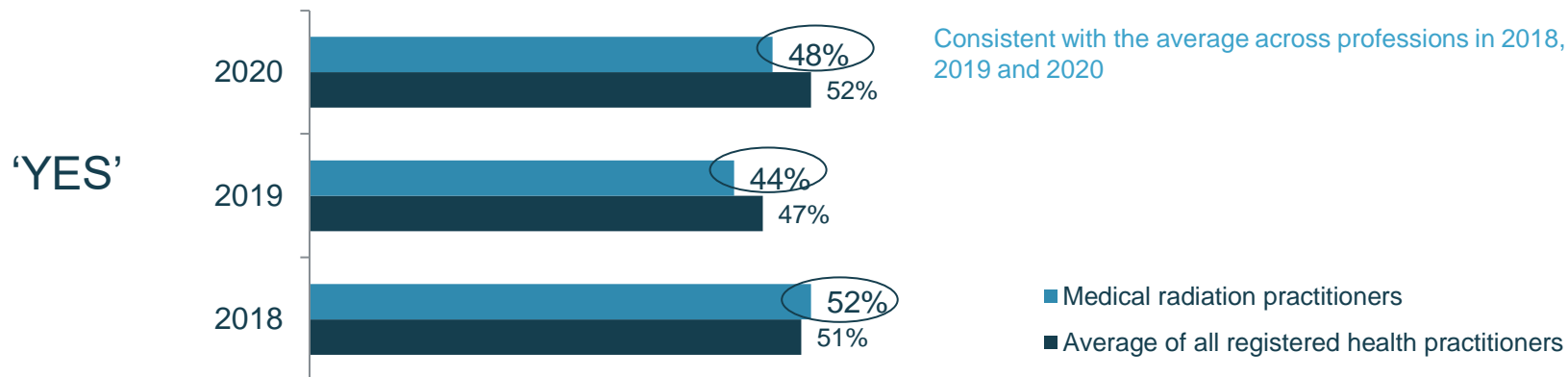
Green indicates a result significantly higher compared with the previous year.

Orange indicates a result significantly lower compared with the previous year

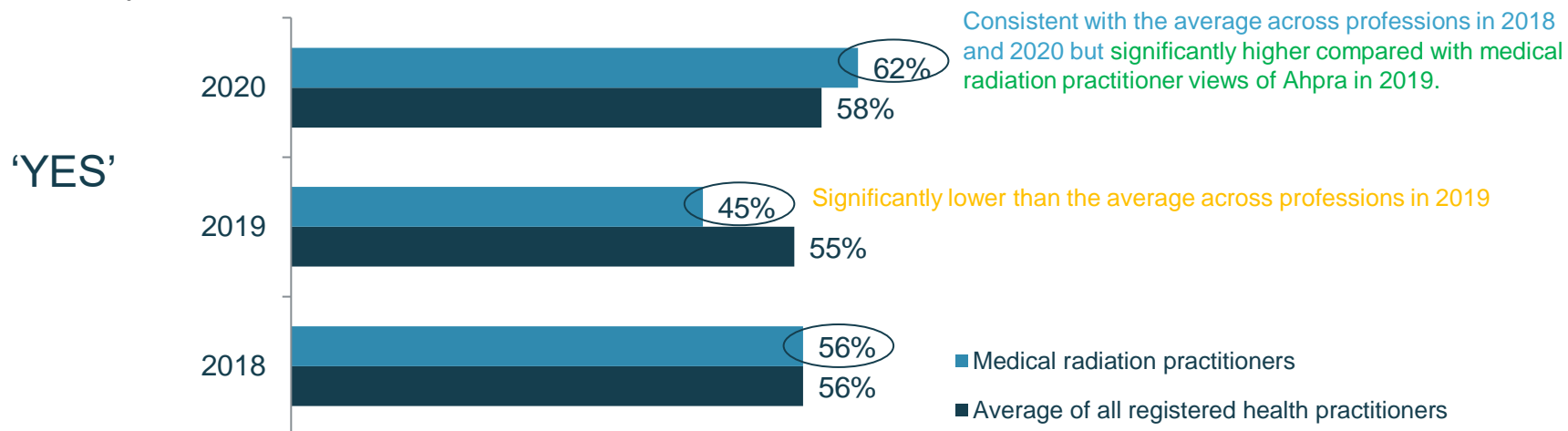


# Levels of confidence and trust in Ahpra among medical radiation practitioners

Q. Do you feel confident that Ahpra is doing everything it can to keep the public safe?



Q. Do you trust Ahpra?



# The indicators of trust and barriers to trust in Ahpra among medical radiation practitioners

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## Indicators of trust: 62% trust Ahpra

*I trust that they will honour their commitment to ultimately keep the community safe by regulating the practices of practitioners.*

*We need a holistic regulation system and Ahpra seems to handle it well, for the most part. Always room for improvement but overall the system has professional and public confidence.*

*I see people in the profession as part of Ahpra and it gives me confidence they are in touch with the processes.*

*In the dealing I had with them, they were responsive, gave me good advice, explained their role and investigated my concern confidentially and within a good time frame.*

*I have trust in the regulatory bodies of Australia and Ahpra does not seem to get involved in much to do with my profession, so it doesn't give me a reason not to trust them.*

*Government departments are mostly forced to be transparent and abide by a basic set of rules.*

*They provide the public that all health professionals are operating correctly and efficiently.*

*Because it provides a platform of checking accreditation that anyone can access and use.*

## Barriers to trust: 10% DO NOT trust Ahpra

*I feel like I am communicating with politicians, rarely getting a straight answer, and with different interpretations in each state.*

*Whenever I have dealt with Ahpra, I found very poor communication, very little response to email or returning calls.*

*Very little transparency when I asked about processes. In the end I gave up communicating. I asked to be forwarded to a manager or for my complaints to be put in writing and nothing was done.*

*It just takes my money every year and does nothing to further my profession. The continuing education is a waste of time and irrelevant. I have no faith that Ahpra does anything useful with the money they get.*

*From information I have seen and heard regarding investigation of some practitioners, I feel their investigation and response was very lacking.*

*I don't understand what our registration fees go towards.*

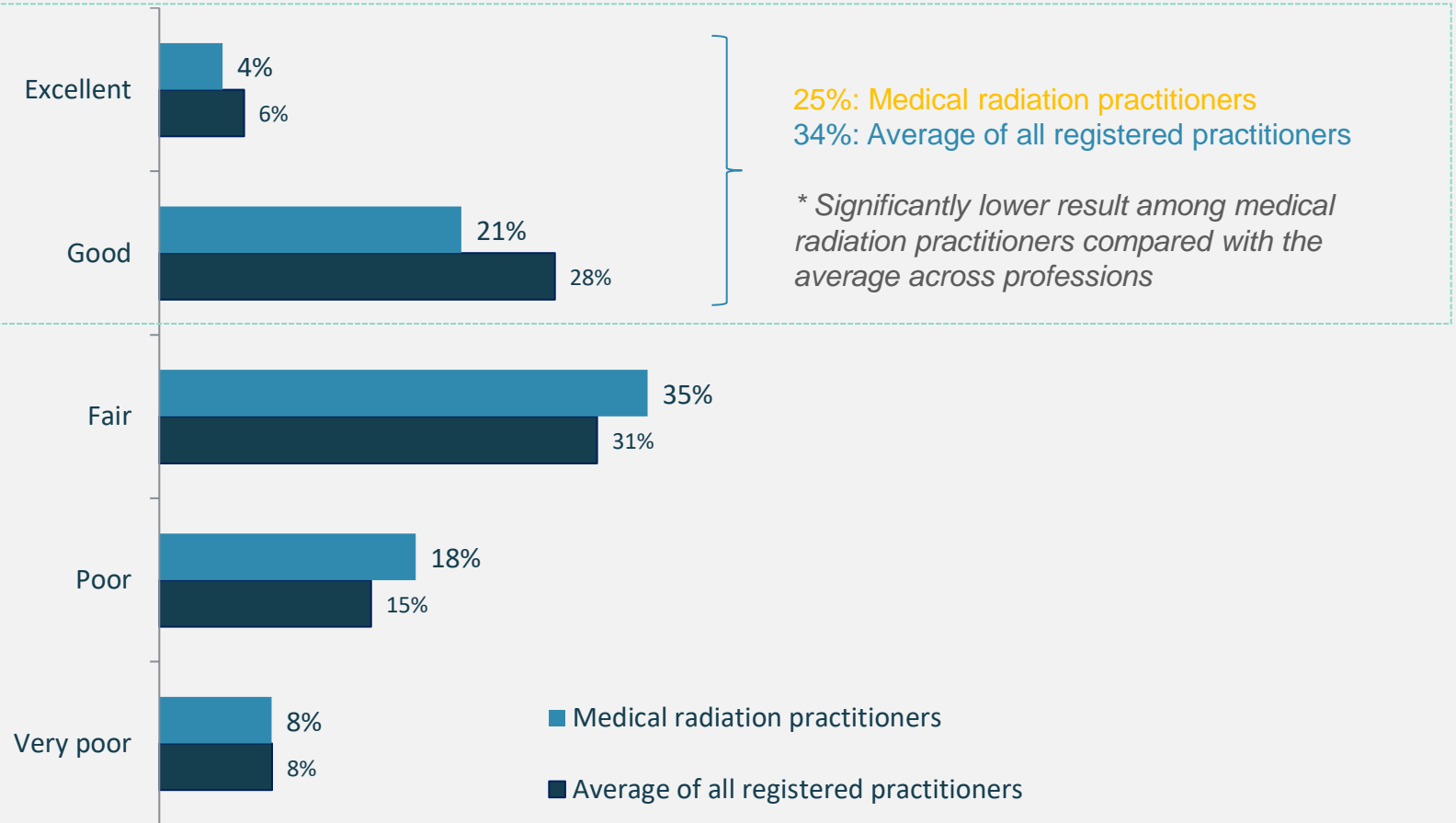
*Too much emphasis on the public and not enough support for the practitioner.*

# Full list of responses provided separately

# Assessment of the level of support provided to practitioners from Ahpra and National Boards to maintain their professional practice

Q. How would you rate the level of support provided by National Boards and Ahpra for you to maintain or improve your professional practice?

## Medical radiation practitioners



# Additional activities or support practitioners would have liked to see from Ahpra and/or the National Boards during the pandemic

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**Practitioners were asked what additional activities or support, if any, they would have liked to see from Ahpra and/or their National Board during the pandemic? Below is a sample of the open-ended responses provided.**

*(Full list of responses provided separately).*

*Checks to ensure practitioners are not being exploited/abused during the pandemic. Emphasis on positive working conditions to offset the stress of being healthcare workers during a pandemic.*

*Support in ensuring that those who were stood down were supported and that stand downs were appropriate. Working to ensure all members were supplied with appropriate PPE.*

*More help, adjustment or waiving of CPD.*

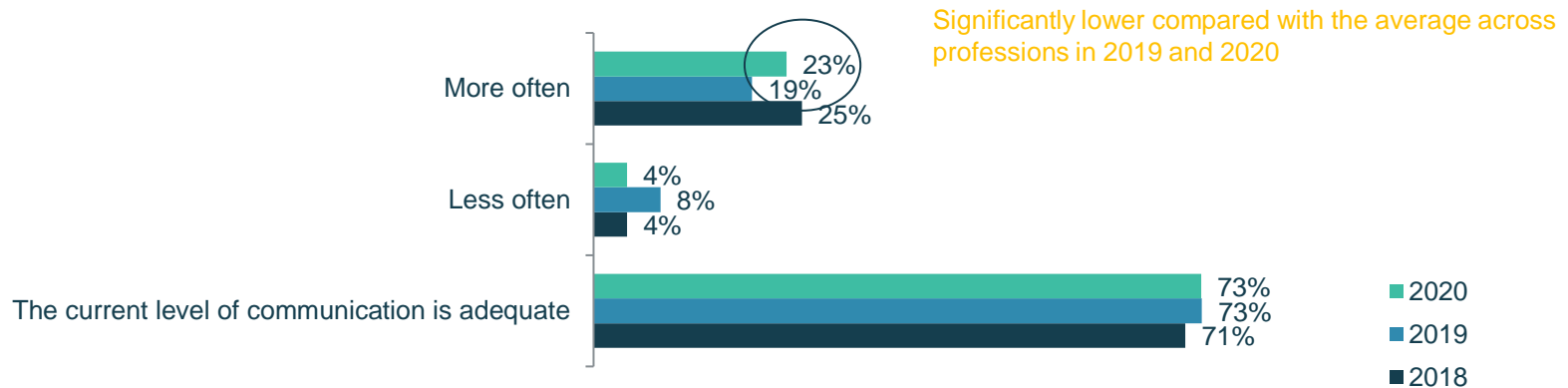
*Free registration would have been nice, given the risks we took just showing up to work.*

*Nationwide consistent standards of PPE.*

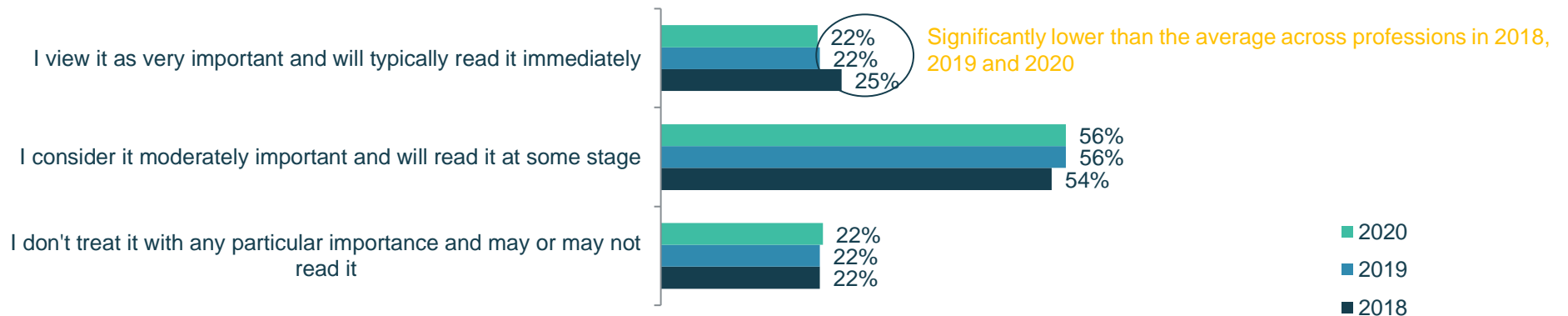
*They could answer the email helpline that they force you to use.*

# Response to communication by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

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



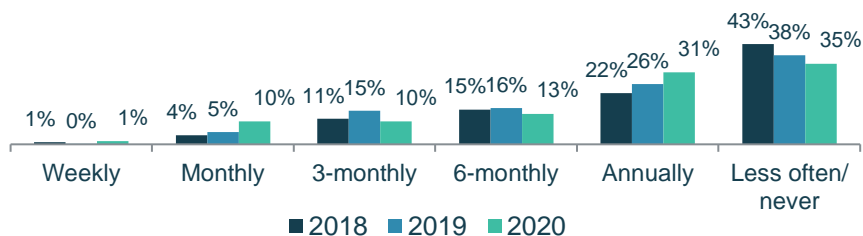
Q. How do you typically respond to communication you receive from (National Board)?



Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this specific Board

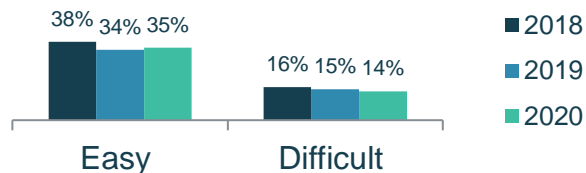
# Use of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia website

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



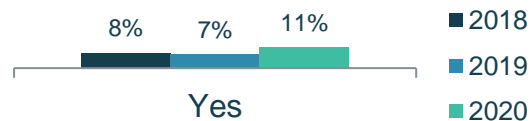
Base: Total sample of practitioners registered with this Board

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



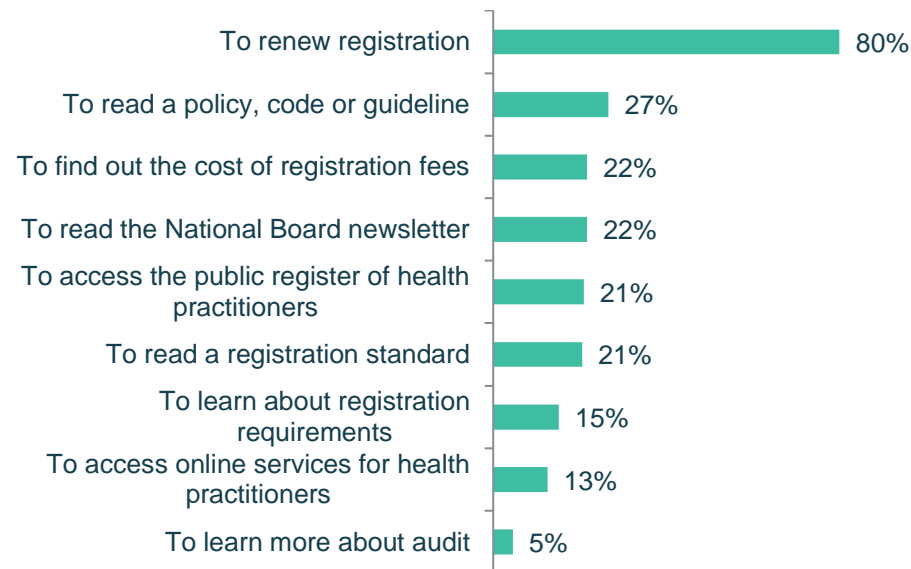
Base: Practitioners who have visited that Board's website

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

2020: Reasons for visiting the National Board website



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

- Practising and non-practising information.
- How to apply for graduate registration.
- Contact details of relevant officer for my query.
- Search function can be improved as it can be difficult to locate policies.
- Change of name, address, contact to be made easier to access.
- Detailed practitioner demographic information.

# Contact details

Truly Deeply  
18 Market St  
South Melbourne  
VIC 3205  
(03) 9693 0000

For further information please contact:

Michael Hughes  
Managing Partner  
[michael@trulydeeply.com.au](mailto:michael@trulydeeply.com.au)

Jane Briggs  
Research Director  
[jane@trulydeeply.com.au](mailto:jane@trulydeeply.com.au)

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