

Under section 26A of the *Health Practitioner National Law (Queensland) 2009*, each year the responsible Minister must determine an amount of registrants' funds to be transferred from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to the Health Ombudsman. This amount funds the work the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) does, that would otherwise have been done by AHPRA and the national boards had the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* not been enacted.

In 2014, the then-Minister for Health directed the transfer of \$4,500,000 from AHPRA to the Health Ombudsman.

In 2014–15 financial year, the OHO dealt with 2031 matters relating to the health, conduct and/or performance of registered practitioners providing a health service in Queensland (see table 1).

Table 1 Matters dealt with by the Health Ombudsman relating to registrants in 2014–15

Registered profession	Matters (number)	Matters (%)
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander health	0	0.00
Chinese medicine	7	0.34
Chiropractor	5	0.25
Dentistry	227	11.18
Medical ¹	1,367	67.31
Medical radiation	13	0.64
Nursing	253	12.46
Occupational therapy	3	0.15
Optometry	24	1.18
Osteopathy	1	0.04
Pharmacy	42	2.07
Physiotherapy	15	0.74
Podiatry	4	0.20
Psychology	70	3.44
Total	2,031	100.00

¹ Medical includes general medical practitioners, specialist medical practitioners, pathologists and surgeons.

In dealing with these matters, the OHO expended \$4,122,955 of the \$4,500,000 (see table 2), leaving surplus funds of \$377,045.

Table 2 Summary of costs associated with dealing with registrant-related matters

Cost area	
Salary	\$3,679,335
On-costs and other costs	\$443,620
Total	\$4,122,955

Table 3 Costs by functional area

OHO functional area	Full time equivalent (FTE)	% of FTE allocated to registrant-related matters	Cost
Assessment and Resolution ¹	43.2	29.00	\$1,358,718
Business Innovation ²	15.6	10.00	\$175,413
Investigations	23.0	46.00	\$1,286,771
Legal Services	9.6	53.00	\$702,675
Health Ombudsman ³	5.0	18.00	\$155,758
Total	96.4	32.00	\$3,679,335

¹ Includes intake, triage, assessment, review and management of AHPRA referrals but excludes local resolution and conciliation.

² Includes provision of administrative support, including financial, human resource and technology services management.

³ Includes immediate action.

Table 4 On-costs and other costs

Cost area		
<i>On costs</i>	Supplies and services	\$255,712
	Depreciation/amortisation	\$12,475
	Miscellaneous expenses	\$770
<i>Other costs</i>	Staff airfares–domestic	\$6,457
	Staff travel allowance	\$3,839
	Staff accommodation expenses	\$3,667
	Hire cars	\$1,793
	Consultancies–clinical opinions	\$158,907
Total		\$443,620

Table 5 provides a comparison between the funds provided in FY 2014–15 by AHPRA (based on AHPRA’s predicted percentages of overall matters by profession) and actual expenditures by the OHO against those professions, based on matters dealt with (table 1) and all the costs associated with dealing with those matters (tables 3 and 4). The differences between AHPRA predicted costs and OHO actual costs are also shown (that is, surpluses and shortfalls).

Table 5 Expenditure predicted by AHPRA vs actual expenditure by profession

Registered profession	AHPRA % of matters predicted	AHPRA \$ allocated	OHO actual %	OHO actual \$	Difference \$
ATSI medicine	0.003	-	0.00	-	-
Chinese medicine	0.26	\$11,700	0.34	\$14,018	(\$2,318)
Chiropractor	0.85	\$38,250	0.25	\$10,307	\$27,943
Dentistry	11.16	\$502,200	11.18	\$460,946	\$41,254
Medical	44.62	\$2,007,900	67.31	\$2,775,163	(\$767,263)
Medical radiation	0.28	\$12,600	0.64	\$26,387	(\$13,787)
Nursing	26.61	\$1,197,450	12.46	\$513,720	\$683,730
Occupational therapy	1.07	\$48,150	0.15	\$6,184	\$41,966
Optometry	0.20	\$9,000	1.18	\$48,651	(\$39,651)
Osteopathy	0.01	\$450	0.04	\$1,649	(\$1,199)
Pharmacy	9.51	\$427,950	2.07	\$85,345	\$342,605
Physiotherapy	0.92	\$41,400	0.74	\$30,510	\$10,890
Podiatry	0.37	\$16,650	0.20	\$8,246	\$8,404
Psychology	4.14	\$186,300	3.44	\$141,829	\$44,471
Total	100.00	\$4,500,000	100.00	\$4,122,955	\$377,045