

**Inquiry into driver education, training and road safety
Responses to questions taken on notice at public hearing on 29 May 2017**

Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) was recently invited to appear at a public hearing as part of the inquiry into driver education, training and road safety.

OTA attended the public hearing in Sydney on Monday 29 May and was represented by Ms Anita Volkert and Mrs Lyndall Cook. OTA's responses to questions taken on notice at the hearing are provided below.

Transcript excerpt (page 29):

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Do you get a lot of referrals from general practitioners saying they need to have an assessment undertaken?

Ms COOK: Yes, we do.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Are they predominantly from rural communities?

Ms COOK: I cannot answer that.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Do you have statistics on the source of the referrals?

Ms VOLKERT: I cannot say for sure.

Answer:

Occupational Therapy Australia does not keep information on referral sources for driving assessments undertaken by our members. In response to this question on notice, we emailed our database of occupational therapists who had completed advanced driver assessment training (about 85 in number) and asked them to provide us with this information.

The response was modest in number (a bit less than 20% responded), and as such the information provided below is anecdotal in nature, but does give an indication as to the trends.

The results indicate the following average % referral rates from GPs only (this does not include medical specialists) for driving assessments received by occupational therapists over the last 12 months.

Far North Coast of NSW – 27.5% of referrals

Newcastle areas – 15% of referrals

Riverina, NSW – 30% of referrals

Central West, NSW – 10% of referrals

Sydney Metro – 45% of referrals

It was interesting to see the Sydney Metro area was higher than regional and rural areas – we did expect the regional/rural areas to be comparable or a little higher, however this could be attributed to GPs in metro areas having more awareness of occupational therapy driving assessments and better access to occupational therapists to undertake driving assessments. In the Riverina area, the occupational therapist providing this service is very proactive and experienced, whereas in the Central West the occupational therapists are less experienced and focus more on insurer work.