



Fair Work  
Commission

# Information note – Gender undervaluation: ACTU data request – ATSIHW Award

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19 November 2024

The data presented in this information note responds to a request from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) that the Fair Work Commission conduct and publish research for the *Gender undervaluation – priority awards review*<sup>1</sup>. This note provides available data that the Commission has been able to source in relation to the occupations of dental assistant and dental technician under review in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award 2020* (ATSIHW Award).

The Commission was unable to source data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing (Census)<sup>2</sup> or the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours as it did with the other Awards under review in the Information Notes published on 28 October 2024<sup>3</sup> and 19 November 2024.

In the absence of ABS data, the Commission has sourced data from the National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS), maintained by the Department of Health and Aged Care. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), in conjunction with the National Boards established pursuant to the *Health Practitioner National Law Act 2009* (Cth), is responsible for the national registration

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<sup>1</sup> See: [Correspondence - request for FWC research](#)

<sup>2</sup> The 2021 Census was undertaken on 10 August 2021.

<sup>3</sup> See: [Information note](#)



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process for 15 health professions. The data from this annual registration process, together with data from a workforce survey that is voluntarily completed at the time of registration, forms the NHWDS.<sup>4</sup>

Dental Therapists are an occupation defined under the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).<sup>5</sup> The tasks of the occupation are to examine and treat “diseases of the teeth in preschool, primary and secondary school children under the general supervision of a Dentist. Registration or licensing is required.” While the occupation is titled as “Dental Therapists”, it also includes “Oral Health Therapists” as a specialisation.<sup>6</sup> The NHWDS includes Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists as two separate Dental divisions, so the data are reported separately.

Table 1 shows data for Dental Therapists and Table 2 shows data for Oral Health Therapists employed in Australia working in the registered profession by Indigenous status and gender. Data provided in the tables are for all Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists regardless of whether they are covered by either the *Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020* (HPSS Award) or the *ATSIHW Award* as the NHWDS does not include data relating to method of pay setting.

Table 3 shows data for Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists employed in Aboriginal Health Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

Data collected by the NHWDS only includes data for registered health professions and not unregulated occupations, therefore, data on Dental Assistants was not available from this data source.

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<sup>4</sup> [National Health Workforce Dataset](#)

<sup>5</sup> ABS, [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations](#), 2022.

<sup>6</sup> ABS, [‘4112 Dental Hygienists, Technicians and Therapists’](#), ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2022.

**Table 1: Number and characteristics of Dental Therapists employed in Australia working in registered profession, by Gender and Indigenous Status**

Item			2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Total no. of employees</i>			1038	1008	960	917	913	835	803	746	783	725
<i>Indigenous (and Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	7	5	6	4	7	7	3	4	0	0
		%	0.67	0.50	0.63	0.44	0.77	0.84	0.37	0.54	0.38	0.00
	Male	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Not Indigenous</i>	Female	No.	999	971	923	883	873	802	768	717	746	691
		%	96.15	96.33	96.15	96.29	95.62	96.05	95.64	96.11	95.03	95.05
	Male	No.	32	32	31	30	33	26	32	25	37	34
		%	3.08	3.17	3.23	3.27	3.61	3.11	3.99	3.35	4.71	4.68
<i>Total</i>	Female	No.	1006	976	929	887	880	809	771	721	746	691
		%	96.92	96.83	96.77	96.73	96.39	96.89	96.01	96.65	95.27	95.31
	Male	No.	32	32	31	30	33	26	32	25	37	34
		%	3.08	3.17	3.23	3.27	3.61	3.11	3.99	3.35	4.73	4.69

Source: National Health Workforce Data Set.



**Table 2: Number and characteristics of Oral Health Therapists employed in Australia working in registered profession, by Gender and Indigenous Status**

Item			2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Total no. of employees</i>			819	1026	1156	1292	1356	1607	1844	2009	2190	2499
<i>Indigenous (and Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	8	9	9	11	15	16	17	23	27	29
		%	0.98	0.88	0.78	0.85	1.11	1.0	0.92	1.14	1.23	1.16
	Male	No.	0	0	3	3	4	4	3	4	5	6
		%	0.0	0.0	0.26	0.23	0.3	0.25	0.16	0.2	0.23	0.24
<i>Indigenous (not Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	5	0
		%	0.0	0.0	0.26	0.0	0.22	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.23	0.0
<i>Not Indigenous</i>	Female	No.	694	885	1001	1120	1174	1411	1590	1732	1878	2163
		%	84.74	86.09	86.59	86.69	86.71	87.75	86.13	86.13	85.75	86.52
	Male	No.	117	132	140	158	160	176	234	250	275	301
		%	14.29	12.84	12.11	12.23	11.82	10.95	12.68	12.43	12.56	12.04
<i>Total</i>	Female	No.	702	894	1013	1131	1192	1427	1607	1755	1910	2192
		%	85.71	87.13	87.63	87.54	87.91	88.80	87.15	87.36	87.21	87.72
	Male	No.	117	132	143	161	164	180	237	254	280	307
		%	14.29	12.87	12.37	12.46	12.09	11.20	12.85	12.64	12.79	12.28

Source: National Health Workforce Data Set.



**Table 3: Number and characteristics of Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists employed in Aboriginal Health Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations**

Item			2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Dental Therapists</b>												
<i>Total no. of employees</i>			12	8	8	8	13	9	9	8	7	4
<i>Indigenous (and Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
		%	25	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Not Indigenous</i>	Female	No.	9	8	8	8	10	9	9	8	7	4
		%	75	100	100	100	77	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Indigenous and non-indigenous</i>	Male	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Oral Health Therapists</b>												
<i>Total no. of employees</i>			3	12	8	16	16	11	7	17	15	10
<i>Indigenous (and Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	4	4	0
		%	100	0	0	18.75	15.8	0	30	23.5	33.3	0
<i>Not Indigenous</i>	Male	No.	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	6
		%	0	33.3	0	18.75	15.8	0	30	17.6	25	60
	Female	No.	0	6	8	10	13	11	4	10	5	4
		%	0	66.7	100	62.5	68.4	100	40	58.9	41.7	40
<i>Indigenous (not Australian Born)</i>	Female	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0

Source: National Health Workforce Data Set.