

Statement on governmental commitment to funding the implementation of the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy

The draft National Allied Health Workforce Strategy (the strategy) addresses issues such as the shortage and maldistribution of allied health professionals in Australia.

What is Osteopathy Australia advocating for?

The development of an allied health workforce strategy will enable better planning and coordination of workforce shortages. However, for the strategy to be useful and effective, it must have funding allocated for implementation. As such, Osteopathy Australia is calling for the government to commit to funding the finalised National Allied Health Workforce Strategy.

Why this benefits Australians

- Helps to address the maldistribution and workforce shortages of allied health professionals.
- Helps to allow allied health professionals work to the top of their scope of practice which in turn helps to reduce the unnecessary burden on other health practitioners.
- Reduces the potential delays in the public accessing osteopathy services.
- A reduction in unnecessary hospitalisations and the wider chronic disease burden.

Policy issues and barriers

- No governmental commitment to fund the implementation of the Strategy.
- A lack of skilled allied health sector experienced staff within the department to guide such implementation.

Osteopathy can play a critical role in improving the healthcare consumer's journey, and better integration of osteopathy under the multidisciplinary team may lead to reduced costs, the reduction of unnecessary burden on other health practitioners and the prevention of delays in receiving high-quality care. More can be done to capture the opportunities that osteopathy can provide to primary healthcare in preventing unnecessary onward referral and hospitalisation and reducing the length of hospital stays. This is particularly important as we work toward a preventive focus on chronic disease management. Currently, our system defaults toward surgical and pharmaceutical intervention instead of high-quality assessment and care, despite decades of published high-quality clinical evidence.

The current workforce

The current osteopathic workforce is concentrated around metropolitan cities, especially in Melbourne, Victoria where 65% of the Osteopathy Australia membership works and resides.¹ The concentration of the membership exacerbates access to services that are needed and may inhibit crucial care being received in rural and remote areas.

Review

This statement will be reviewed as often as required to align with legislative, regulatory, policy and/or practice change. Last review: January 2026.

Need more information or help?

For further information, a suggestion or to discuss this topic, please:

- Email your enquiry to info@osteopathy.org.au
- Call Osteopathy Australia on 1800 467 836
- Access further information via www.osteopathy.org.au

¹ Osteopathy Australia Membership Survey Report. 2022