

ANZSCO comprehensive review – consultation round 4

8. How do you or your organisation intend to use the classification?

a. Please indicate which levels of the classification hierarchy you use and why (i.e. major group, sub-major group, minor group, unit group, occupation level)

Osteopathy Australia will predominately use data from the minor group, unit group and occupation classification levels. Generally, data above these levels (major and sub-major groups) is too broad to be useful for the osteopathy profession or the allied health sector.

The minor group classification will provide useful data at a broad allied health professional sector scale. Minor group data will allow Osteopathy Australia and wider allied health stakeholders to assess the number of professionals available with similar skills or those who practise with similar demographics of patients.

However, the unit group classification does not provide much use to Osteopathy Australia or policymakers as the 'Other Allied Health Physical and Sensory Therapy Professionals' classification is too vague and not specific about the included occupations. Osteopathy Australia is concerned that if policymakers' base policies and workforce strategies on unit group classifications, then professions, such as osteopathy may become underrepresented.

Occupation level classification data is the most valuable for our organisation. It allows for more precise workforce analysis, offering insights into profession-specific workforce growth, distribution, movement, and attrition levels. Therefore, we advocate for the increased reporting and public availability of occupation data.

Osteopathy Australia recommends that the ABS works closely with the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) to ensure that data collected and presented aligns with the needs of DoHAC particularly during the drafting of the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy and other workforce planning activities.

b. Please describe any constraints to your usage in relation to the specific segment or level of the classification you use (i.e. a particular sub-major group)

Currently, most data that is made publicly available is reported at the unit group level or above (minor, sub-major or major group). As osteopathy is a profession under the threshold to hold an individual unit group, data presented at the unit group level does not accurately represent the osteopathic profession as it is combined with professions that do not provide similar services. As such, data present at the unit group level will be vague and not useful in understanding the spread of available services and professions. Thus, occupation level data needs to be publicly available.

It's crucial to note that the number of osteopaths reported by the ABS is significantly lower than the accurate and reliable number of registered osteopaths published by the Osteopathy Board of Australia (OBA) and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra). The regulator has expressed concerns, to Osteopathy Australia, that ABS data is inaccurate for policy makers or the public. By reporting data at the occupation level, we can significantly enhance data

quality, fostering greater consistency between reporting bodies and instilling confidence in the accuracy of the information among policymakers.

9. What is your preferred method of consuming the classification?

- a. Examples of methods include: Google search, ABS website search, coding tool, API, Excel file, JSON file format, other**

ABS website tool and excel files are our preferred method of consumption.

- b. Please indicate the reasons for using your preferred format/s and consumption method/s and the reasons for your preferred or non-preferred formats**

We require simple methods of accessing data rather than an integration.

- c. Please include positive or negative impacts of your preferred method or format**

Having access to simple methods of data collection will have a positive impact for allied health and the osteopathy profession as this data is easily accessed and consumed. Reading and interpreting simple data in these formats does not require any specialist skills or software to do so.

10. Will the new groupings in the draft structure impact the way you or your organisation uses the classification?

- a) Please indicate if the impact is positive, negative or neutral and why**

The creation of the new minor group 'Allied Health Physical and Sensory Therapy Professionals' will have a positive impact on professions included in this group as the category is more aligned in terms of knowledge, skills and capabilities.

Osteopathy Australia is pleased that osteopaths have been separated from the unit group 'Chiropractors and Osteopaths', however, we are concerned that the new unit group 'Other Allied Health Physical and Sensory Therapy Professionals' will cause osteopathy to be underrepresented. As this data will be mixed with other health professionals, it may provide limited benefits as it can only be viewed from the occupation level classification.

- b) Please describe which specific groupings in the proposed structure may impact the way you or your organisation use the classification**

As stated above, osteopathy will now be classified under the unit group 'Other Allied Health Physical and Sensory Therapy Professionals'. These changes could make it harder for the profession to be immediately recognised or represented. Ongoing work in the development of the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy by DoHAC has already identified difficulties with allied health data collection, accuracy and potential misreporting. Therefore, we strongly recommend that occupation level data is released and reported at the same level as unit group data to ensure profession inclusion.

11. Do you have any feedback on the proposed web page layout of the classification?

- a. Please provide any positive or negative impacts the web page layout of the classification might have on your use**

The webpages are easy to navigate, however, professions that are only visible at the occupation level such as osteopathy are difficult to find unless the individual has a prior understanding of the structure of how to navigate ABS data.

b. Please include any positive or negative impacts the web page layout might have on how you navigate through the classification

While the webpage is easy to navigate, it could have a negative impact on our profession as it is difficult to locate the osteopathy occupation code without prior knowledge of the classification and the recent changes. Osteopathy Australia has received feedback from OBA, the osteopathy profession regulator, noting that they have concerns that osteopathy has ‘dropped down’ in the classification list as it is no longer visible at the unit group level.

The ABS must also ensure that the ANZSCO search function is equipped to return results for variations of search terms. For example, the search function currently returns no results for ‘osteopathy’ but does return results for ‘osteopath’. Having adequate search function capability is essential to limit confusion and potential misrepresentation of occupations.

c. Please consider any positive or negative impacts regarding the order in which the information is displayed

The order that the information is displayed is logical. However, additional information on how to navigate the classification should be provided to policymakers and the public so that no profession is underrepresented.

12. Do you or your organisation have any key implementation concerns about the proposed structure?

a. Please describe any positive or negative impacts regarding the implementation of the proposed structure

Osteopathy Australia’s main concern is that stakeholders may perceive osteopathy to have dropped off or down a classification level as ‘osteopath’ was previously visible in the unit group name. Given some of these concerns have already been raised with Osteopathy Australia, it is especially concerning for a small profession such as osteopathy that is already underrepresented in workforce planning and policy work. These changes will create confusion within and outside of the profession.

b. Please provide details to help us understand why implementing the new classification is a concern to you

Again, Osteopathy Australia is concerned that policymakers and key stakeholders may only use data from the minor and unit group levels and not take into consideration occupation level data. While the osteopathic profession will be captured in the minor and unit group data they will not have specific profession representation and thus may be overlooked in workforce planning.

Osteopathy Australia recommends that the ABS provides stakeholders with a classification implementation pack, which includes how to navigate and understand the proposed structure. Implementation packs may include educational documents and webinars and sector specific training to ensure the intention and scope of the classifications are understood.

Other Information

13. Is there any other information to help support your feedback?

Osteopathy Australia suggests the below description is included in the 'Osteopaths' description with the ANZSCO description:

Advanced Practice Title: Titles awarded by Osteopathy Australia for osteopaths who can demonstrate long-term commitment to sustained practice within their focus area.

- *Paediatrics*
- *Pain Management*
- *Sports Management*
- *Exercised-Based Rehabilitation*
- *Occupational Health*

Including information about practitioners with advanced skills, knowledge and capabilities will help to better inform workforce strategies so practitioners are appropriately utilised and patients can receive the care they need.