

31 May 2016

Karen Molyneux
President
Occupational Therapy New Zealand/Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa
PO Box 10493
WELLINGTON

Dear Karen

Thank you for your email of 15 May 2016 and earlier letter of 2 March 2016 regarding occupational therapy and the Health Workforce New Zealand (HWNZ), Health of the Health Workforce Report 2015 (the Report).

First, let me assure you that HWNZ does recognise and acknowledge the important role of occupational therapists in the health sector. The list of professions in the Report is drawn specifically from allied health, science and technical professions that are both regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) and those not regulated under the Act. One of the key objectives of the Report is to provide data about a wide range of health professions within one publication rather than provide detailed information about all health professions.

The Allied Health, Science and Technical Taskforce (the Taskforce) was set up to support the allied health, science and technical workforces to ensure that health practitioners are qualified and available to support the health system of the future.

The Taskforce has a focus on:

- recruitment and retention
- education and training
- data, intelligence and information.

A working group will develop allied health workforce profiles - similar to the Medical Specialty Factsheets, see <http://www.kiwihealthjobs.com/rmo/fact-sheets>, to increase visibility of the workforce and provide those considering a career in an allied health, science and technical profession with the necessary information to aid career decision making.

HWNZ will also be testing a workforce forecasting tool, which is extensively used for the medical and nursing professions. The tool uses entry age distributions, age-specific exit rates and specialists working patterns over a lifetime to allow finely tuned, dynamic forecasting. HWNZ will ensure that the workforce forecasting tool captures information relevant to each profession. Occupational therapists will be one of the groups in the second round of professional groups to be modelled.

I agree that the way in which information is disseminated and presented is powerful and continues perceptions of what health care consists of. The workforce profiles and the workforce forecasting tool will be two tools that we can collectively use to increase the profile of allied health, science and technical professions.

Occupational Therapy New Zealand - Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa may wish to think about how the profession can work with HWNZ to provide data and information about the profession in order to increase awareness about occupational therapy as a health profession and its role within health settings.

I look forward to seeing Occupational Therapy New Zealand - Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa work with HWNZ to increase the visibility of New Zealand's allied health, science and technical workforces.

Yours sincerely



Professor Des Gorman
Executive Chair
Health Workforce New Zealand