



**Optometry
Council
of NSW**

Optometry Council of NSW

Annual Report 2017-18

President's Message



It is with great pleasure I begin the new term as President with a competent and capable Council.

I take this opportunity to thank the current members for their contribution and due diligence throughout the year to make the Council effective in its deliberations. I congratulate and welcome them back for the new term. Pauline O'Connor as Deputy President and legal member has been invaluable with her input and perspective in the management of complaints. Both John Davis and Derek Fails are experienced practitioners and have a wealth of experience in regulatory affairs having served on a number of Boards and Councils.

The Council, in consultation with the HCCC, conducts its duty to protect the public through effective regulation and takes appropriate action against practitioners that place the public at risk of harm.

This year the HPCA has had an organisational review, refurbishment of its Pitt Street offices and adopted HealthShare as its financial management system in order to better support the Councils. We have also upgraded our website to provide better end user experience for a wide range of stakeholders. New drug and alcohol screening policies have been introduced to better manage practitioners at risk.

In the management of complaints, it is evident there have been some communications issues between practitioners and patients. We aim to raise awareness amongst practitioners about the need to ensure they understand concerns of their patients and develop the ability to manage these before escalation to a complaint. Adequate record keeping provides practitioners with stronger evidence in the event of a complaint. Practitioners also need to familiarise themselves with the National Board's requirements for registration, in particular continuing professional development and public indemnity insurance requirements.

The Council would like to thank the HPCA staff dedicated to this Council, Mr Michael Jaques, Ms Christine Gursen and Mr Anthony Tobin for their kindness, support and sage advice throughout the year.



Mr Albert Lee
President
Optometry Council of New South Wales

Regulation of Optometrists in 2017/18

SNAPSHOT



Practitioner information

1,857

optometrists registered in NSW

2.8% more than last year

33.6% of registered optometrists in Australia

26

NSW optometrists had complaints made about them

1 less than last year

1.4% of registered optometrists in NSW



Complaints received

28

new complaints were received

1 more than last year

2 mandatory notifications were received

42.9% of complaints were about clinical care (n12)

followed by:

- billing – 4 complaints and
- behaviour, communication, hygiene, National Law breach, National Law offence – 2 complaints each

53.6%

of complaints were from patient (n 15) followed by:

- AHPRA and relative – 4 complaints each
- treating practitioner – 2 complaints



Complaints managed

15

complaints were managed directly by the Council

5 more than last year

3

assessments and hearings were concluded

3 more than last year

3

immediate actions were considered or taken by Council

3 more than last year

0

outcomes for closed complaints involved

cancelled or suspended registration or conditions on practice or counselling or interview



Practitioners monitored

2

cases were being actively monitored at year end

0 conduct

0 performance

2 health

Council Members

Four members sit on the Optometry Council as prescribed by the National Law.

Registered optometry practitioner members:

- Mr Albert Lee M Optom, Grad Cert Oc Ther, B Optom
- Mr John Davis B.Optom (Hons)
- Mr Derek Fails BSc(Hons), MCOptom (UK), Cert Oc Ther (SUNY), G Dip Bus (Tas), FAICD

Legal member:

- Ms Pauline O'Connor LLB, LLM

The NSW Governor appointed Mr Albert Lee as the President and Ms Pauline O'Connor as the Deputy President of the Optometry Council.

Executive Officer

Ms Asha Mears is the current Executive Officer for the Optometry Council. Mr Michael Jaques was the previous Executive Officer. Ms Farina Bains and Mrs Christine Gursen also provided Executive Officer support to Council during the year. Their work is acknowledged with thanks and appreciation. The Executive Officer leads a team that works directly and indirectly with the Council as part of the HPCA Combined Councils Team.

All staff working both directly and indirectly with the Council are employed by the HPCA as an executive agency of the Ministry of Health. Councils cannot employ staff under the National Law.

Council Meeting Attendance

The Optometry Council met 11 times.

Table i: Member attendance at Council meetings, eligibility to attend and term of office

Member	Meetings Attended	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Date of First Appointment	Current Term of Office
Mr Albert Lee – President	9	11	1 July 2012	1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018
Ms Pauline O'Connor – Deputy President	8	11	1 July 2012	1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018
Mr John Davis	11	11	1 July 2015	1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018
Mr Derek Fails	11	11	1 July 2015	1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

Council members are appointed for a term up to three years and may be reappointed up to a maximum of nine years.

Regulatory Committees and Panels

The National Law sets out the committees and panels that support the Council in undertaking its regulatory activities.

Regulatory committees and panels include:

- Assessment Committee
- Impaired Registrants Panels (IRP)
- Performance Review Panels (PRP)

The Council appoints regulatory committees and panels as needed.

The Council acknowledges and thanks the practitioners and lay members who assist with panels and hearings.

Council Committees

Councils may establish committees to assist with Council functions. Committee members are not necessarily Council members.

The Optometry Council did not appoint any committees during the year.

Meetings and Events

The Optometry Council was represented at the following meetings and events during the year.

Table ii: Optometry Council representation at meetings and events

Name of Meeting / Event	Attended By
Optometry Regulatory Reference Group Annual Meeting	Mr Albert Lee – President
National Board Chairs and NSW Council Presidents joint meeting	Mr Albert Lee – President
Quality Decision-Making, Risk Assessment and the Impaired Practitioner Education Meeting	Mr Albert Lee - President

Overseas Travel

The Optometry Council did not incur any overseas travel costs during the year.

Remuneration

Council members received the following remuneration.

President	\$2,336 per annum
Deputy President	\$1,752 per annum
Council Members	\$1,752 per annum

Council members also receive sitting fees for conducting Council Inquiries, attending committee meetings and undertaking other regulatory activities if these are on a day other than the regular Council meeting.

Council members are reimbursed for expenses when travelling on official business at Council direction.

Panel and Tribunal members receive remuneration and reimbursement of expenses related to Council business.

Education and Research Account

The Optometry Council maintains an Education and Research account. This helps fund activities that promote better understanding of professional standards and compliance, issues that can lead to complaints and how complaints are managed. The account may also be used to fund relevant research activity including both Council specific initiatives and collaborative projects.

There was no expenditure from the Education and Research account this year.

Financial Management

The Optometry Council's accounts performance was reported in the Financial Statement as follows.

Accounts Performance 2017/18	\$
Revenue	232,954
Operating expenditure	193,185
Gain / (loss) on disposal	(41)
Net result	39,728
Net cash reserves* (cash and cash equivalents minus current liabilities)	427,544

* Included in the cash reserves is an Education and Research bank account balance of \$47,036.

The Optometry Council's budget for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 is as follows.

Budget 2018/19	\$
Revenue	234,800
Operating expenditure	213,034
Net result	21,766

Full financial statements are presented in Part 3 of this report 'Financial Statements for NSW Health Professional Councils'.