

***THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
BOARD***

OF QUEENSLAND

ANNUAL REPORT

and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended

30 JUNE 2000

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**Organisational Chart, Financial Statements, Accompanying Notes and
Audit Certificate**

FOREWORD

The Hon Wendy Edmond MLA
Minister for Health
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting the 1999-2000 Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland.

My appreciation is extended to all members of the Board and its sub-committees for their considerable efforts during the year. The Board also records its appreciation for the continued work and support of the staff of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards in assisting the Board to fulfill its statutory functions and obligations.

Yours sincerely

Judith Trevan-Hawke
Chairperson
Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland

1. CONSTITUTION

The Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland is constituted under the provisions of Section 6 of the *Occupational Therapists Act 1979* ("the Act") as a body corporate with

perpetual succession. The Board is subject to the provisions of the *Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act 1966*, the *Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999*, the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999* and the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977*.

2. GOAL

The primary goal of the Board is to promote and maintain high standards of professional competence and conduct in the practice of occupational therapy in Queensland and to protect the public from unprofessional, improper and incompetent practice by Occupational Therapists.

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

The Board is directly responsible to the Minister for Health in all matters relating to the administration of the *Occupational Therapists Act 1979* and the *Occupational Therapists By-law 1995* made thereunder.

The major functions of the Board are:

- To keep a Register of Occupational Therapists.
- To determine applications for the registration of Occupational Therapists pursuant to the provisions of the Act, the *Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1992* and the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1999*.
- To investigate complaints made against Occupational Therapists and to take disciplinary action where appropriate under the *Occupational Therapists Act 1979* and the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*.
- To regulate the practice of Occupational Therapists in Queensland and exercise a general oversight over the standards of occupational therapy practice in Queensland.
- To publish and distribute information concerning the Act and its subordinate legislation to Occupational Therapists and other interested persons.

The registration and disciplinary functions of the Board reduce the risk to public health and safety by:

- ensuring only appropriately qualified and fit persons may be registered as Occupational Therapists; and

- requiring that proper professional standards are maintained by registered Occupational Therapists.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

Membership of the Board during the year comprised the following members appointed in accordance with the membership categories specified in s.7 of the Act:

- (a) Four persons nominated by the Minister of whom at least two shall be Occupational Therapists

Ms JA Trevan-Hawke	Dip COT (UK), M Occ Thy	[Chairperson]
Mr JT Carmichael	B Occ Thy, Grad Dip OH & S, M Hlth Sc	
Mrs J Rabbitt	Dip OT	
Dr J Ziviani	Dip OT, B App Sc (OccThy), BA, M Ed, PhD	

- (b) Three Occupational Therapists acceptable to and nominated by the Minister from a panel or panels of names submitted by one or more associations accepted by the Minister as representative of Occupational Therapists

Mrs P Bjerregaard	Dip Occ Thy	[Deputy Chairperson]
Ms M Boyle	B OccThy	
Ms J Willey	B OccThy	

- (c) One person representing users of the services of Occupational Therapists

Ms L Newcombe

- (d) A barrister or solicitor of the Supreme Court

Ms S Field	LLB	(from April 2000)
Mr G Poole		(resigned December 1999)

The term of appointment for members is three years, except in the case of an appointment made to fill a casual vacancy when the appointment is for the unexpired portion of the three year period. The current term of appointment of the Board members expires on 24 May 2001.

A brief outline of the professional background of each current Board member is given below.

Judith Trevan-Hawke is Associate Professor and Head of the Occupational Therapy Department, James Cook University. She obtained her initial Occupational Therapy qualification in 1969 followed by a Master of Occupational Therapy degree in 1993. Judith's special interests are in mental health, the provision of rural/remote occupational

therapy services, clinical research and curriculum development. She has been a Board member since June 1990 and Chair of the Board since April 1992.

Patsy Bjerregaard is currently Director of Occupational Therapy Services, Cairns District Health Services, as well as Team Leader of the Child Developmental Unit, Cairns. She graduated from the University of Queensland in 1965 and has been a member of the Board since September 1988.

Patsy has established occupational therapy services in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi as well as in Far North Queensland. Her special interests are paediatrics, remote Aboriginal and Islander health, and the development of clinical services in rural and remote areas.

Moira Boyle currently operates a private occupational therapy practice in paediatrics, her area of special interest. She graduated from the University of Queensland in 1972 and was appointed to the Board in October 1994.

Jim Carmichael is Director of Workplace Health and Safety of the Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety. He has responsibility for the operational program that administers the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* across Queensland. Jim has occupational therapy experience in industrial rehabilitation, ergonomics, occupational health and safety and risk management. He has been a Board member since April 1992.

Susan Field is a solicitor based in Brisbane who was formerly an academic and the Executive Officer of the Nursing Board of Tasmania. Sue was appointed to the Board in April 2000.

Lynne Newcombe is currently the Education Officer for the Arthritis Foundation of Queensland and has a background in nursing. Her special interests are patient education for people with arthritis and musculo-skeletal problems.

Lynne was appointed to the Board in May 1995 as the representative of the users of occupational therapy services.

Judy Rabbitt is currently Director of Occupational Therapy Services for the Townsville District Health Service. She has been a Board member since May 1993.

Judith Willey is currently Senior Occupational Therapist, Mackay Base Hospital. Judith has extensive occupational therapy experience with both the public and private sectors and with community based organisations. She was appointed to the Board in May 1998.

Jenny Ziviani is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Queensland. She has undergraduate qualifications in occupational therapy and psychology, a masters degree in Education and was awarded a PhD in 1988. Jenny's clinical, educational and research interests pertain to children with development disabilities. She was appointed to the Board in May 1998.

5. BOARD AND SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Regular Ordinary Meetings of the Board are convened on the second Thursday of each month at 5.00 pm in a boardroom at the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards. In addition, Special Board Meetings are held as required, as are meetings of the Board's Sub-committees which are established for specific tasks and comprise selected Board members.

During 1999-2000, 11 Ordinary Board Meetings and nine Sub-committee meetings were held. Attendance by Board members at these meetings was as follows:

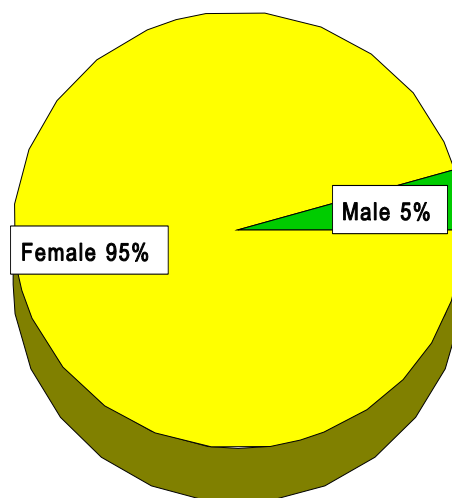
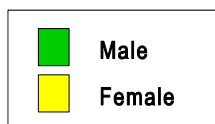
	Board Members Meeting Attendance 1999-2000	
	Ordinary Meetings	Sub Committee Meetings
Mrs Patsv Bierregaard	10	1
Ms Moira Bogle	10	5
Mr Jim Carmichael	10	1
Ms Susan Field <i>(from April 2000)</i>	1	-
Ms Lynne Newcombe	9	2
Mr Goodwin Poole <i>(until December 1999)</i>	6	-
Mrs Judy Rabbitt	9	3
Ms Judith Trevan-Hawke	8	2
Ms Judith Willev	10	1
Dr Jenny Ziviani	4	1

6. THE REGISTER

The Board maintains a Register of Occupational Therapists pursuant to section 17 of the Act.

As at 30 June 2000, the Register of Occupational Therapists contained a total of 1,244 names representing a net increase of 58 (approximately 5%) over the June 1999 figure. This net change is the product of significant numbers of additions and deletions to the Register during the year. In total during 1999-2000, 17 former registrants were restored to the Register and a further 154 Occupational Therapists were registered for the first time.

Of the 154 new registrants, five (approximately 3%) were granted registration in mutual recognition pursuant to the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* on the basis of holding current registration as Occupational Therapists in New Zealand, Australian Territories;



names added to the Register, (approximately 6%) were granted registration in mutual recognition pursuant to the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* on the basis of holding current registration as Occupational Therapists in other States or Territories; while four persons

lodge registration notices pursuant to the provisions of the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1999* on the basis of holding current registration as Occupational Therapists in New Zealand.

The following bar chart illustrates the significant growth since 1986 in the number of registered Occupational Therapists at 30 June each year.

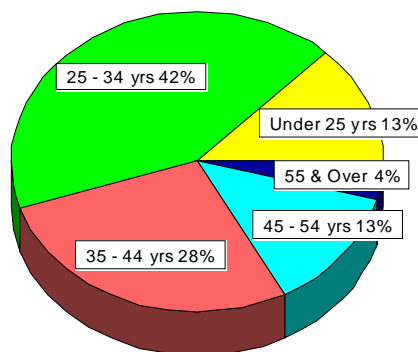
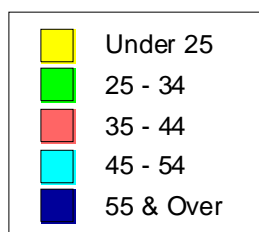
An analysis of the registration data base as at 30 June 2000 provides the following information.

Gender of Queensland Occupational Therapists

- 5% of registrants were male; 95% were female.

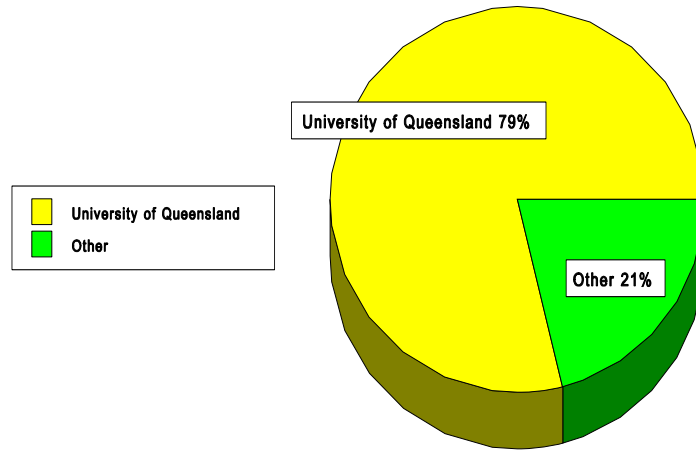
Age Groupings of Queensland Occupational Therapists

Age Grouping	% of Registrants
Under 25 years	13%
25 - 34 years	42%
35 - 44 years	28%
45 - 54 years	13%
55 years and over	4%
Total	100%



Educational Institution from which Initial Occupational Therapy Qualification Obtained

➤ 79% of



Queensland registrants obtained their initial Occupational Therapy qualification from the University of Queensland; 21% from other educational institutions.

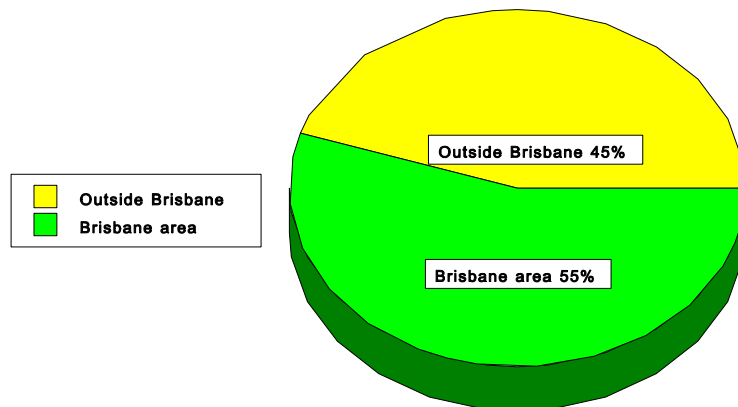
Queensland Based Registrants

Geographical Distribution of Queensland Registrants

➤ 95% of

registrants gave their addresses on the Register as within Queensland; 5% had addresses outside of Queensland.

➤ Of the registrants with addresses within Queensland, 55% had addresses within Brisbane and 45% had addresses elsewhere in Queensland.



The geographical statistics are based on an analysis of post codes of the addresses of the registrants as shown on the Register. In some cases the Register address differs from the practice address of a registrant. Registrants with addresses outside of Queensland have chosen to retain Queensland registration even though, in most cases, they do not currently practise their profession in Queensland.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Administrative and operational support for the Board's day to day operations is provided by the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards which is established under the *Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999*. The Office also provides administrative and operational support for 10 other Queensland Health Practitioner Registration Boards. The Office has a staff complement of 23 permanent officers (22 of whom are State public servants employed pursuant to the *Public Service Act 1996*) and 14 temporary staff.

Members of the staff of the Office with primary responsibilities for the administrative tasks of the Board during the year were:

Executive Officer and Registrar	Mr J Greenaway
Deputy Registrar	Mr G Connell
Assistant Registrar	Mrs D Ramsay
Administrative Officer	Ms K Brims

The Assistant Registrar and Administrative Officer are assigned the task of handling and managing the day to day administrative affairs of the Board (and other Health Practitioner Registration Boards) under the direction of the Executive Officer and Registrar, and Deputy Registrar.

A number of other staff of the Office support the Board by providing services in such areas as financial management, information technology, counter enquiries, records management and general administrative assistance.

8. ACCESS TO THE BOARD AND ITS DOCUMENTS

8.1 General Access

The Office of the Board is located at Level 19, 160 Mary Street, Brisbane.

Correspondence to the Board should be addressed to:

The Registrar
Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland
GPO Box 2438
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Board communication links are:

Telephone: (07) 3225 2508
Facsimile: (07) 3225 2527
E Mail: occupationaltherapy@healthregboards.qld.gov.au
Web Site: <http://www.occuptherapyboard.qld.gov.au>

8.2 Arrangements for Public Participation in Board Policy-making Activities and the Exercise of Board Functions

Membership of the Board includes a member of the public "*representing the users of the services of Occupational Therapists*" who participates with other Board members in the functions and policy-making activities of the Board.

In addition, members of the public have the right to make a complaint to the Board or the Health Rights Commission concerning the conduct of any Occupational Therapist. Any complaint received by the Board or the Commission must, under the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*, be the subject of consultation between the Board and the Health Rights Commission. If the Commission considers that a complaint is not suitable for conciliation and should be investigated, it may refer the complaint directly to the Board.

8.3 Literature Available Free of Charge from the Board

The following are available for inspection or free of charge from the Board:

- Annual Report of the Board
- Annual Statement of Affairs of the Board
- Code of Conduct for Board Members.

8.4 Arrangements to obtain Access to Documents held by the Board

The Register

The Register of Occupational Therapists may be inspected between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday, at the Board's Office. A fee of \$5.00 is payable for such inspection.

Printed copies of the Register as at 1 May 2000 are available for purchase from the Queensland Government Printing Office (Goprint), 371 Vulture Street, Brisbane, 4102.

Free of Charge Documents

The free of charge documents described earlier may be inspected at, and copies obtained from, the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards at the aforementioned times and place or by written request to the Board.

Policy Documents

Copies of the Board's policy documents may also be inspected and obtained at the Board's office or by written request to the Board.

Other Documents

Access to other documents held by the Board is provided through the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* and associated Board procedures. Applications made under the Act should be in writing and either posted or delivered to the FOI Decision-maker, Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland, 160 Mary Street, Brisbane, 4000.

No fee is payable for access to documents that concern an applicant's personal affairs. Applications requesting access to documents that do not concern the applicant's personal affairs should be accompanied by a \$31.00 application fee. For non-personal affairs documents, a charge may also be applied for the reasonable costs incurred by the Board in photocopying or otherwise preparing documents for viewing by the applicant.

Any further enquiries in relation to the accessibility of documents held by the Board may be directed to the Board's FOI. Decision-maker.

9. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS

9.1 Legislative Review of the Occupational Therapists Act 1979

During 1999-2000 the Board participated in ongoing consultation with the Queensland Health Department's Legislative Projects Unit, in the development of a new legislative scheme for the registration of health practitioners. The new legislative scheme is being developed in two stages.

Administration and Professional Standards Legislation

The first stage culminated in the enactment of the following two Acts which were passed

on 12 November 1999 by Queensland Parliament and became effective as from 7 February 2000:

- the *Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999*; and
- the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*.

The *Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999* introduced formal administrative arrangements to assist the Health Practitioner Registration Boards, including the Occupational Therapists Board, to perform their functions. To this end the Act provided for the establishment of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards to provide administrative and operational support to the Health Practitioner Registration Boards in accordance with service agreements between the Office and each Board.

The *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999* ("Professional Standards Act") provides for the handling of complaints and discipline of health practitioners; the management of impaired registrants; the relationship between the Health Practitioner Registration Boards and the Health Rights Commission; and associated amendments to other legislation. The Professional Standards Act establishes a three tier disciplinary process under which the Boards are able to deal with minor disciplinary matters but are required to bring more serious matters before Professional Conduct Review Panels or the Health Practitioners Tribunal.

Profession Specific Legislation for the Registration of Health Practitioners

The second stage of the new legislative scheme involves the development of 13 new profession-specific registration Acts for the registration and regulation of health practitioners, including Occupational Therapists. The Board's involvement during 1999-2000 included:

- participation in consultation meetings with the Legislative Projects Unit of Queensland Health;
- lodgement of a detailed written submission outlining the Board's views on the provisions of a consultation draft of the Occupational Therapists Registration Bill;
- provision of advice to the Legislative Projects Unit on a range of matters to be included in proposed Regulations to the new profession-specific Acts.

It is anticipated that the 13 new pieces of legislation will be finalised and presented to State Parliament for consideration during the 2000-2001 financial year.

9.2 Amendments to the Occupational Therapists Act 1979

The *Occupational Therapists Act 1979* was amended during the year by the Professional Standards Act. The amendments involved removing provisions in the Act which:

- pertained to the handling of complaints about, and the discipline of, registrants;

- empowered the Board to formulate rules governing the practice of occupational therapy, for which the failure of an Occupational Therapist to comply was deemed to constitute discreditable conduct on the part of the Occupational Therapist.

New provisions for the handling of complaints and the conduct and discipline of registrants, are now contained in the Professional Standards Act.

9.3 Amendments to the Occupational Therapists By-law 1995

The *Occupational Therapists By-law 1995* was amended on two occasions during the reporting period.

Firstly, the *Occupational Therapists Amendment By-law (No.2) 1999*, which became law on 5 November 1999, amended the 1995 By-law to increase the Annual Licence Fee for registrants as set out in the schedule to the the By-law. Details of the fee change are provided in the "Fees" section of this Report.

Secondly, the *Occupational Therapists Amendment By-law (No.1) 2000*, which became law on 9 June 2000, amended section 19 of the 1995 By-law to extend until 1 July 2001, the date on which the By-law will expire.

9.4 Complaints

Complaints under the Occupational Therapists Act 1979

During the 1999-2000 year the Board considered three complaints under the *Occupational Therapists Act 1979*. One of these complaints was carried over from the previous year.

Two complaints considered by the Board alleged that the Occupational Therapists concerned provided inaccurate reports. Following extensive investigation, the Board concluded that both Occupational Therapists had acted competently with respect to their reports.

The third complaint alleged unsatisfactory treatment. Following extensive investigation, the Board concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to warrant further consideration of the matter.

Complaints under the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999

The Board did not receive or consider any complaints under the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999* during 1999-2000. Nonetheless the Professional Standards Act requires the Board to report in its Annual Report, the following information relevant to that Act.

During 1999-2000, the Board did not receive from the Minister for Health:

- any directions under section 13 of the Professional Standards Act, about matters

relevant to the Board's functions; or

- any authorisations under section 392 of the Professional Standards Act, for a person performing functions under that Act to disclose information acquired in the performance of those functions, about another person's affairs.

The Board, under sections 118(1)(c)(iv), 165(2)(b), 276(2)(a), and 299(2)(c) of the Professional Standards Act, did not enter into any undertakings with registrants about the professional conduct or practice of the registrants. Consequently no copies of undertakings with registrants were provided by the Board to the Health Rights Commissioner pursuant to section 379 (5) of the Professional Standards Act.

The following information is provided, as required by section 264(1) of the Professional Standards Act, on the Board's handling of complaints, disciplinary proceedings and health assessments under the Professional Standards Act during 1999-2000:

- The Board did not receive any complaints either directly from clients of practitioners or from the Health Rights Commissioner.
- The Board did not refer any complaints to the Health Rights Commissioner.
- No investigations were conducted by the Board.
- No disciplinary proceedings were started by the Board.
- No Board's funds were spent on investigations.
- No Board's funds were spent on health assessments of practitioners.

9.5 Code of Practice for Registered Occupational Therapists

During the year the Board further considered and revised its Draft Code of Practice (formerly known as Guidelines for Practice) for registered Occupational Therapists in Queensland. At the close of the reporting period the Board was awaiting legal advice regarding the Draft. The Board expects to be in a position to provide the final document to stakeholders during the 2000-2001 year.

9.6 Devolution of the Assessment of Qualifications of Overseas Qualified Occupational Therapists

Substantial progress was made during 1999-2000 in the process to devolve responsibility from the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition [NOOSR] to the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Australia and New Zealand) [COTRB], for the assessment of qualifications of overseas qualified Occupational Therapists who seek registration in Australia.

The Board was active in facilitating this change through Board member participation in several teleconferences and face to face meetings with representatives from NOOSR, COTRB, the Australian Association of Occupational Therapists [OT Australia] and Occupational Therapists Registration Boards elsewhere in Australia.

By the close of the reporting period it was anticipated that COTRB would take over the examination process early in the 2000 - 2001 financial year.

9.7 Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Australia and New Zealand) and the Trans-Tasman Conference of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards

On 20-21 October 1999 in Wellington, New Zealand, the Board Chairperson, J Trevan-Hawke and Board Member J Carmichael, together with the Assistant Registrar, P Collie, attended meetings of:

- the Trans-Tasman Conference of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards; and
- the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Australia and New Zealand) [COTRB].

The meetings included representatives from New Zealand, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. There were no representatives from New South Wales, Victoria or the ACT.

The following major items were discussed at the Trans-Tasman Conference of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards:

- Australian National Competition Policy/Legislative Review
- Review of the New Zealand Occupational Therapy Act
- Electrotherapy Devices including Ultrasound
- Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition
- Occupational Physiotherapy
- Devolution of Examination Process by the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
- OT Australia National Standards Scheme
- Internet Web Sites.

The COTRB meeting considered the following matters:

- Assessment of overseas qualifications / devolution from the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
- Item Bank
- Directors and Association Insurances
- Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition
- COTRB Constitution
- Uniform Approaches to Registration
- Uniform Approaches to Legislation.

The operations of the COTRB are funded by the participating Occupational Therapists Registration Boards of Australia and New Zealand. During the year the Queensland Board contributed \$2,653.20 to the operations of the COTRB for the 1999-2000 financial year. This contribution was based on 1,206 Queensland registrants as at 17 May 2000 at \$2.20 per registrant.

9.8 Board Participation in Professional Meetings and Workshops

In addition to Board participation in meetings of COTRB and the Trans-Tasman Conference of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards, the Board was also represented during the year at the following meetings and workshops:

- Board Chairperson, J Trevan-Hawke, and Board member, J Rabbitt, represented the Board at a meeting with OT Australia to discuss complaints handling mechanisms.
- Board members M Boyle and J Carmichael represented the Board at two meetings of the Board of Studies of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences of the University of Queensland.
- Board members M Boyle, S Field and J Ziviani attended a workshop on the workings of the Professional Standards Act.
- Board member M Boyle represented the Board at several meetings with representatives of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards to negotiate the first service agreement between the Office and the Board, to take effect from 1 July 2000.
- Board Chairperson, J Trevan-Hawke and Board member J Carmichael represented the Board at one and two meetings respectively of the Presidents and Chairpersons of the Health Practitioner Registration Boards. Topics covered at these meetings are outlined in section 9.14 of this Report.

9.9 Practice Names

Under section 15 of the *Occupational Therapists By-law 1995*, Board approval is required for any name (other than personal and partnership names) used in carrying on a practice as an Occupational Therapist. During 1999-2000 the Board approved five practice names.

9.10 Freedom of Information

In accordance with section 18 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, the Board during the year issued a "Statement of Affairs" as at 19 August 1999 which sets out a range of information about the Board including details of the categories of documents held by the Board and the arrangements for obtaining access to such documents.

During the year the Board did not receive any applications under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* for access to documents held by the Board.

9.11 Statement of Reasons: Judicial Review Act

Under section 32 of the *Judicial Review Act 1991*, a person who is aggrieved by an

administrative decision is entitled to request from the decision maker, a written Statement of Reasons in relation to the decision.

During the year the Board received one request for a Statement of Reasons. Basic information on the processing of this request is as follows:

Title of decision-maker	Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland
Date the request was received	2 May 2000
Date requestor notified of the outcome	19 May 2000
Estimated hours involved in processing the request	3 hours
Brief description of outcome	Statement of Reasons issued.

9.12 Fees

The Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland is self-funding in that monies raised by way of registration and annual licence fees are used to fund the Board's activities.

During the year there was a substantial increase in the annual licence fee for registrants (up \$56.50 to \$167.00). The primary reasons for this increase were:

- Firstly, from 7 February 2000 the Board acquired significant new responsibilities (with associated costs) under the *Health Practitioner (Professional Standards) Act 1999*. Details regarding that Act are provided earlier in this Report under the heading "Legislative Review of the Occupational Therapists Act 1979".
- Secondly, from 1 January 2000, the Board assumed financial responsibility for rent, telephone, electricity and other building service costs which had previously been met by Queensland Health.

The Board will not be including a Goods and Services Tax (GST) after 1 July 2000 in the annual licence fee or other registration fees payable by registrants, with the exception of examination fees. This is because such fees, with the exception of examination fees, are exempt from the GST under the provisions of Division 81 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*. [Nonetheless, from 1 July 2000 the Board must pay the GST on its purchases and on the administrative and operational support it obtains from the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards.]

9.13 Code of Conduct of the Board

Under section 23 of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, every public sector entity is required to ensure that each Annual Report of the entity includes a statement giving details of action taken during the reporting period to comply with various provisions in the Act pertaining to the entity's Code of Conduct.

The Board's Code of Conduct applies to all Board members and Board staff and covers a range of issues including ethical obligations, professional conduct, accountability and protection of privacy. The Board's administrative procedures and management practices have proper regard to the Code and the ethics obligations of public officials as set out in the Act.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, copies of the Code of Conduct:

- have been provided to all Board members;
- have been made available to all Board staff;
- are available upon request to interested persons free of charge; and
- have been placed on display at the Office of the Board [between 9 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday] for inspection free of charge by interested persons.

9.14 Combined Meetings of the Presidents and Chairs of the Health Practitioner Registration Boards

During the year the Board shared the resources of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards with 10 other Health Practitioner Registration Boards. Combined meetings of the Presidents and Chairpersons were held in July 1999, December 1999 and March 2000. The meetings provided opportunities for the Boards, through their principal officers, to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. Among the issues discussed at the meetings were:

- Service Agreements with the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards
 - Refurbishment of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards
 - Implementation of the Professional Standards Act
 - Impact of the Goods and Services Tax
 - Results of the Annual Audits
 - Fringe Benefits Tax
 - Employment of Investigators
 - Financial Reporting by the Office to the Boards
 - Consultation Processes with the Health Rights Commissioner
 - The Health Practitioners Tribunal and the Professional Conduct Review Panels.
-