



AUSTRALIAN
PHYSIOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION



Australian Physiotherapy Association

2025 Workforce Census

Prepared by Survey Matters

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Executive Summary

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is the peak body representing physiotherapists across the country, advocating for the profession and supporting its members to deliver high-quality care.

Physiotherapy plays a critical role in the Australian healthcare system, supporting Australians of all ages through the management of acute and chronic conditions and injury prevention. Physiotherapists work in a variety of hospital and primary care settings: supporting mobility, function and quality of life across the lifespan and disease continuum. With a workforce that is both diverse and widely distributed, physiotherapists are central to meeting the growing demand for allied health services as Australia faces demographic change, rising rates of chronic conditions and increased pressures on the health system.

To support its mission and guide evidence-based advocacy, the APA conducts regular workforce research. The 2025 APA Workforce Census builds on the survey conducted in 2023 to provide a comprehensive, representative snapshot of the profession today. The research explores workforce composition and demographics, employment structures, remuneration, practice ownership, gender pay equity, professional development and career satisfaction.

By examining both current conditions and emerging trends, the census offers critical insights into the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of physiotherapy in Australia.

Physiotherapy is a young, female-dominated workforce with growing self-employment.

The physiotherapy workforce is predominantly female (65%), with most physiotherapists based in metropolitan areas (69%), while 15% work in regional settings, and another 15% in rural and remote communities. The profession is also relatively young, with nearly half aged under 35.

Private practice remains the dominant employment setting for physiotherapists, with 64% of respondents working in this sector in 2025, up from 57% in 2023. In contrast, public hospital physiotherapists made up a smaller proportion of the census sample, down from 16% to 13%.

Career stage and area of practice also influence workforce structure. The profession has a strong mid-career base, with 49% of physiotherapists identifying as intermediate and 32% as highly developed. Expert-level practitioners make up 5% of the workforce and are more

common in academic and public sector settings. Foundation-level physiotherapists make up 14% of the workforce.

Musculoskeletal is the most prevalent specialisation among respondents, with physiotherapists saying their main practice area is sports and exercise, pelvic health, gerontology, and advanced practice also represented in the sample. Only 7% of respondents indicated they were generalists. Senior professionals are more likely to diversify into management, education, and research roles, with 14% of this group indicating they do not work clinically.

Employment arrangements shifted slightly, potentially reflecting changing expectations around flexibility and professional independence. In 2025, 63% of working physiotherapists were employed, while self-employment increased from 19% to 22%. An additional 11% worked in a blended capacity, both employed and self-employed.

Among those who are employed, the split between full-time (59%), part-time (36%), and casual (5%) employment remained steady.

Physiotherapy salaries rose 7.4% over the past two years but growth is uneven across career stages and lags behind allied health peers.

Physiotherapy salaries have continued to increase over the past two years, with the APA Workforce Census recording an average rise of 7.4% between 2023 and 2025, lifting the average full-time salary from \$95,000 to \$102,000. While this reflects healthy nominal growth, the picture is uneven across career stages, sectors and employment arrangements.

Early-career physiotherapists reported the slowest wage increases, while senior practitioners saw stronger gains. Foundation-level practitioners recorded a 3.9% increase to \$80,000, while intermediate practitioners rose 4.3% to \$96,000. More substantial gains were evident among highly developed (+9.4% to \$116,000) and expert practitioners (+8.0% to \$149,000).

Remuneration also varies significantly by employment type and specialisation. Full-time physiotherapists saw an 8.2% income boost to \$105,000, while part-time salaries grew more slowly (+3.3% to \$95,000). Respondents working in private practice reported a 4.7% gain, while public hospital physiotherapists saw their remuneration increase by 5.8% over the two years.

When benchmarked against the broader economy, physiotherapy salaries are broadly in line but slightly underperforming relative to the health sector. The Wage Price Index (WPI), which tracks changes in hourly wages across Australia, rose by 4.1% in the year to June 2024¹, and by a further 3.4% in the year to June 2025², equating to a cumulative two-year increase of 7.8%. Meanwhile, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry recorded even stronger growth, recording 5% annual wage growth to the year ending 30 June 2024¹, and 3.8% in the year to June 2025², making it the fastest-growing sector nationally.

Against this backdrop, the 7.4% increase for physiotherapists indicates they are keeping pace with the national average, but potentially falling behind their allied health peers, raising concerns that physiotherapy may lose competitiveness within the broader healthcare workforce.

Employment arrangements also shape remuneration outcomes. Among employed physiotherapists, 63% are paid via a fixed salary and 23% receive a base salary plus commission. Commission-based models are most prevalent in private practice and among musculoskeletal practitioners, offering higher earning potential but also greater income variability. While only 12% are on contract arrangements, this group saw a 14.8% increase in their remuneration, compared to 6.1% for fixed salary and 1.1% for salary-plus-commission arrangements.

Satisfaction with current pay structures is relatively high, with 75% of salaried physiotherapists, and 71% of those on salary plus commission preferring to remain on their current arrangements. However, preferences diverge significantly by gender and sector: men are more likely to favour commission-based models (39%) than women (24%), while fixed salaries are heavily preferred in the public sector (85%).

The gender pay gap has widened—particularly at senior levels.

The gender pay gap increased from 5.1% in 2023 to 7.9% in 2025. On average, men earn \$8,444 more than women, up from \$5,043 in 2023. While entry-level salaries are relatively equal, the gap grows with experience: expert-level men earn \$160,000 compared to \$141,000 for women, a difference of \$19,000.

Men also out-earn women in both private practice (by 10.5%) and public hospitals (by 12.3%). The gap persists in full-time roles, with men earning \$109,000 compared to \$102,000 for women.

Distinct career pathways are also evident. Although women make up 65% of the physiotherapy workforce, men are more likely to work full-time (74% vs 51%), hold management roles (22% vs 15%), be self-employed (37% vs 30%) and choose to own a practice (33% vs 26%).

By contrast, women are more often part-time (43% vs 21%) and are more likely to work in the public sector (14% vs 10%). Senior roles remain male-dominated, with gender differences most pronounced among experts and practice owners.

These findings suggest that inequities in role access, sector distribution and leadership opportunities continue to shape remuneration outcomes.

Practice owners earn more but are increasingly concerned about the business environment.

Practice owners continue to report higher average earnings than non-owners in 2025, at \$117,000 compared to \$92,000. However, despite the financial premium, there is growing unease about the sustainability of private practice.

Health system reforms are the most pressing concern. In 2025, 37% of owners identified health system reforms as a major threat to business viability, more than double the 17% recorded in 2023. Much of this anxiety stems from ongoing uncertainty around the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), with concerns about funding cuts, pricing structures and the administrative burden of compliance. These pressures were most acutely felt in practices with a higher reliance on NDIS clients, particularly among those working in disability, neurology and paediatrics.

Concerns about regulatory and funding complexity also grew, with 34% of practice owners nominating this as a key issue, up from 22% in 2023. Distinct patterns in income sources by clinical practice highlight how different specialisations rely on varied funding streams and underscore the administrative and compliance demands that continue to weigh on private practices.

[1. Wage Price Index, Australia, June 2024 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

[2. Wage Price Index, Australia, June 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

Competition from other professions is increasing. In 2025, 32% of owners reported competition from adjacent professions such as chiropractors, osteopaths and exercise physiologists as a concern, up from 28% in 2023. This reflects a growing perception of encroachment into traditional physiotherapy service areas.

Meanwhile, fewer practice owners identified workforce supply and retention issues as major threats, suggesting either an easing of labour market pressures or simply a reprioritisation in light of systemic reforms and policy uncertainty.

Training satisfaction has declined and fewer physiotherapists are pursuing further development.

To practise as a physiotherapist in Australia, individuals must complete a university-accredited degree and the majority of respondents hold either a bachelor's degree (49%) or a clinical master's (35%). Graduate certificates and doctoral qualifications are less common, though more frequently held by part-time or senior professionals in public sector roles.

Despite these high education standards, perceptions of training quality are declining. Confidence in physiotherapy training has dropped sharply; just 35% of respondents agreed their training prepared them well for practice, down from 61% in 2023. Similarly, only 46% reported a positive placement experience (down from 71%), indicating growing concern about the adequacy of practical learning environments. Encouragingly, feedback suggests that blended placement models—offering a mix of clinical settings and delivery modes—are seen as a promising strategy for improving training outcomes.

Intentions to pursue further development have also weakened. In 2025, just 20% of physiotherapists planned to undertake advanced skill development, a marked drop from 31% in 2023. Many respondents cited the cost (31%) and time (40%) to undertake further study, limited financial incentives (48%) and scepticism that additional qualifications will lead to improved employment or remuneration outcomes (51%). These concerns appear to be dampening enthusiasm for ongoing professional development across much of the workforce.

However, interest is not evenly spread. Foundation-level physiotherapists are the most likely to express an intention to upskill (31%), reflecting both their career stage and the need to build expertise to progress. In contrast, mid- and late-career physiotherapists report lower intentions, with many already established in their fields.

Among those who do plan to pursue further development, nearly 40% intend to use the APA's Career Pathway

Framework, reinforcing its role as a structured and recognised route to titling and specialisation.

This demonstrates that while fewer physiotherapists overall are pursuing advanced development, those who do are looking for clear, profession-endorsed pathways to support their careers.

Rural and remote recruitment continues to be a challenge, with support and incentives underutilised.

Only 15% of physiotherapists work in rural and remote areas, however the rural intention of the profession remains consistent with 32% of respondents stating they would consider moving to a rural location. Interest declines with career stage, falling from 39% at the foundation level to 26% among highly developed professionals.

Key barriers include distance from family (64%), leaving social and professional networks (38% and 24%) and financial costs (31%). However, financial incentives may help; 65% said higher pay would support rural and remote work and 52% would be swayed by relocation support.

Only 2% reported being employed through the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) and 15% were unsure, demonstrating that current reforms aren't supporting recruitment of physiotherapists to rural and remote locations.

Job satisfaction remains high and is closely linked to remuneration and professional autonomy.

Overall job satisfaction remains strong, with 71% of physiotherapists satisfied in their current role. Satisfaction is highest among expert practitioners (81%) but has declined among intermediate and highly developed professionals. However, it has increased significantly among foundation-level physiotherapists, up from 62% being satisfied or highly satisfied in 2023 to 74% in 2025.

The profession also continues to attract and engage early-career professionals. Of those at the foundation stage, 71% remain satisfied with their decision to pursue physiotherapy as a career, indicating a generally positive entry into the workforce.

However, satisfaction is closely tied to perceptions of fairness and financial security. Only 44% of physiotherapists who felt they were underpaid expressed job satisfaction, compared with 93% of those who believed they were fairly remunerated. This highlights remuneration not only as a financial concern but as a key driver of professional contentment.

Other factors influencing satisfaction include personal fulfilment, the ability to make a positive impact, work life balance and reasonable working hours. The specific drivers differ by career stage. Early-career physiotherapists place strong emphasis on access to mentoring, supervision and development opportunities, while more experienced clinicians value professional autonomy, recognition and opportunities for leadership.

Most mid-career respondents believe physiotherapy offers a viable career pathway, although concerns about career progression and remuneration drive uncertainty about the future.

Just over half (52%) of mid-career physiotherapists believe there is a viable career pathway in the profession, with 28% unsure and 20% saying they do not see a future path.

Pay is the most frequently cited concern. Of those unsure or pessimistic about the future, 83% say remuneration is not adequate for the workload and qualifications. Compounding this, 69% of these respondents believe that further qualifications do not lead to better opportunities, raising concerns about career structure and recognition.

While most physiotherapists intend to stay in the profession, long-term commitment is weakening.

Most physiotherapists intend to remain in the profession long-term, with 52% planning to stay for more than a decade. Commitment is strongest among men (57%) compared with women (49%) and highest at the foundation level (62%). By contrast, one in four expert practitioners (25%) plan to exit within five years. Only a small minority expect to leave in less than one year, though a notable share remain uncertain about their future.

Financial and structural pressures are the main drivers of exit intentions. Inadequate pay is the most prominent

concern, cited by 60% in 2025 (up from 45% in 2023), particularly among early-career professionals. Burnout is also worsening, affecting 35% of respondents, especially women and those early in their careers, driven by heavy workloads, limited autonomy and administrative demands such as the NDIS. Concerns about career progression (28%, up from 24%) and professional recognition (19%, up from 10%) are rising, with men more likely to cite advancement barriers.

One in 10 physiotherapists report declining fulfilment in their work, most notably intermediates, while 10% highlight the physical demands of the role as unsustainable. These pressures are prompting some to consider careers in policy, research, education or adjacent health fields, while others are leaving health altogether. For many, especially in early- and mid-career, uncertainty remains, reflecting the tension between a strong commitment to patient care and mounting professional challenges.

Conclusion

The **2025 APA Workforce Census** reaffirms physiotherapy as a vital and growing profession within Australia's health system. Despite challenges around pay, training and career progression, overall satisfaction remains strong, particularly among both early-career and senior practitioners. The workforce continues to expand, attract new talent and diversify into emerging areas of practice.

With strong advocacy, targeted reforms and greater recognition of its contribution, physiotherapy is well placed to build a sustainable future and play an even greater role in meeting the nation's health needs.



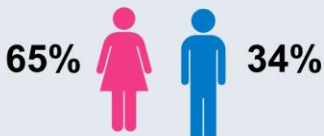
About respondents

2025 Workforce Census



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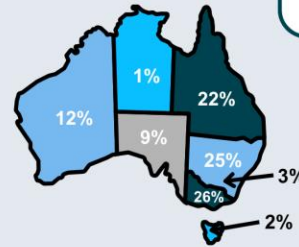
Gender



Background

1%
identify as Aboriginal
and / or Torres Strait
Islander origin

State / Territory



Victoria had the highest
number of respondents,
accounting for 26%

Main Practice Location

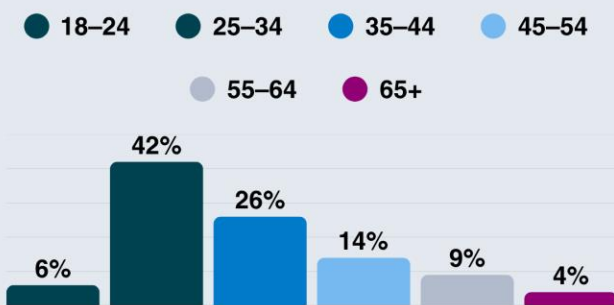


Primary Practice Setting



The APA 2025 Workforce Census received responses from 2,778 participants

Respondents' Age



Current Employment Situation



Highest Level of Qualification



85% of respondents gained their entry-level
qualifications in **Australia**

Current Career Stage



Key Findings

<p>01</p>	<p>The physiotherapy workforce is predominantly female and metropolitan-based, with a significant proportion aged under 35.</p> <p>The physiotherapy workforce is predominantly female (65%), with most physiotherapists based in metropolitan areas (69%), while 15% work in regional settings and another 15% in rural and remote communities. The profession is also relatively young, with nearly half aged under 35 and nearly two-thirds either foundation (14%) or intermediate (49%) level practitioners. Approximately 1% of survey respondents identify as being of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander origin.</p>
<p>02</p>	<p>Private practice remains the largest employer, with a slight shift towards self-employment.</p> <p>Private practice remains the dominant employment setting for physiotherapists, with 64% of respondents working in this sector in 2025, up from 57% in 2023. Employment arrangements also shifted slightly; while 63% of working physiotherapists are employed, self-employment increased from 19% to 22%. An additional 11% worked in a blended capacity, both employed and self-employed.</p>
<p>03</p>	<p>Average earnings increased 7.4% since 2023, with gains strongest for more experienced practitioners.</p> <p>Average earnings increased by 7.4% since 2023, reaching \$102,000 in 2025. This compares to 7.8% for the Wage Price Index, which tracks changes in hourly wages across Australia. Salary growth was strongest among highly experienced practitioners, with experts earning \$149,000 and highly developed professionals earning \$116,000. In contrast, foundation level-practitioners experienced a smaller 3.9% increase to \$80,000, while those with intermediate-level experience rose 4.3% to \$96,000.</p>
<p>04</p>	<p>Gender pay gap widens, with men earning 7.9% more than their female counterparts.</p> <p>The gender pay gap widened in 2025, with men earning 7.9% (\$8,444) more than women on average, nearly double the gap in 2023. While entry-level salaries are similar, the disparity exceeds \$19,000 at the expert level. Men also earned significantly more in both private practice (10.7%) and public hospitals (12.3%).</p>
<p>05</p>	<p>Practice owners enjoy higher earnings but face mounting concerns about health system reforms and policy uncertainty.</p> <p>Physiotherapy practice owners earned significantly more than their non-owner counterparts in 2025, with average incomes rising 6.4% to \$117,000 compared to \$92,000 for non-owners. However, concerns about business viability have intensified, with the proportion citing health system reforms as a threat more than doubling since 2023 (17% to 37%). Regulatory and funding complexity (up from 22% to 34%) and growing competition from adjacent professions (up to 32%) also emerged as an increasing concern.</p>
<p>06</p>	<p>Only two in five physiotherapists believe they are fairly remunerated, with public sector employees the least satisfied with their pay.</p> <p>Nearly half (44%) of physiotherapists are dissatisfied with their pay, with satisfaction closely tied to income level, employment type and specialisation. While higher salaries improve perceptions of fairness, casual (36%) and contract (37%) workers, as well as physiotherapists in public hospitals (35%), report lower satisfaction with remuneration.</p>

07	<p>Confidence in training quality has declined, with blended placements endorsed by 75% as a way to improve skill development.</p> <p>Fewer early-career physiotherapists felt adequately prepared for practice when they commenced, with only 35% agreeing their training prepared them well, down from 61% in 2023. Similarly, only 46% reported a positive placement experience (down from 71%). Three-quarters believe that blended placement models, offering a mix of clinical settings and delivery modes, would improve training outcomes.</p>
08	<p>Intentions to pursue further skill development have fallen, with widespread doubt that it will improve employment or remuneration outcomes.</p> <p>Overall intention to pursue advanced skill development has dropped from 31% in 2023 to 20% in 2025, although early-career professionals remain more engaged (31%). Of these, nearly 40% intend to pursue skill development through the APA's Career Pathway Framework. Many respondents are discouraged from pursuing further study due to time constraints (40%), limited financial incentives (48%) and doubts that additional qualifications will improve job prospects or pay (51%).</p>
09	<p>Over seven in 10 physiotherapists report being satisfied in their current role – with a majority of early-career practitioners satisfied with their career choice.</p> <p>Satisfaction is highest among expert (81%) and foundation-level (74%) practitioners but has declined among those at the intermediate (65%, down from 69%) and highly developed (76%, down from 79%) stages. Satisfaction improved strongly among foundation-level practitioners (up from 62%) and 71% of early-career professionals remain satisfied with their decision to pursue a career in physiotherapy.</p>
10	<p>Financial security, fair remuneration and personal fulfilment are the strongest drivers of job satisfaction.</p> <p>In 2025, physiotherapists reported that financial stability, making a positive impact, salary, work life balance and working hours were the most critical factors influencing job satisfaction. Perceptions of being fairly paid had the strongest link to satisfaction; only 44% of those who felt underpaid were satisfied, compared to 93% who believed they were fairly remunerated.</p>
11	<p>While 52% of mid-career physiotherapists see a long-term career pathway in the profession, some remain uncertain.</p> <p>Just over half (52%) of mid-career physiotherapists see a viable career pathway within the profession, with 28% unsure and 20% not seeing one at all. Pay is a central concern; 83% of those uncertain or pessimistic cited inadequate remuneration for the workload and qualifications. Many also reported that additional training does not lead to better job opportunities, highlighting concerns about career progression structures.</p>
12	<p>Most physiotherapists plan to stay in the profession, with concerns about pay, burnout and limited career progression behind most intentions to leave physiotherapy.</p> <p>Most physiotherapists intend to remain in the profession long-term, with 52% planning to stay for more than a decade. Commitment is strongest among men (57%) compared with women (49%) and highest at the foundation level (62%). Among those not planning to remain in the profession beyond the next five years, the top reasons cited were poor remuneration (60%, up from 45%), mental burnout (35%) and limited career advancement opportunities (28%).</p>



01.

Workforce Profile

Employment Profile

Private practice dominates the physiotherapy landscape, with a growing proportion of respondents working in small practices.

Work Setting

The 2025 census reaffirms private practice as the primary workplace for physiotherapists, employing 64% of respondents, up from 57% in 2023.

This expansion is almost entirely driven by respondents working in small practices, with 40% working in practices with fewer than 10 employees (up from 37%) and 20% in small-to-medium enterprises with between 10 and 200 employees (up from 16%). Corporate private providers remain a niche employer, covering only 3% of respondents.

In contrast, the proportion of respondents in public hospital employment has fallen to 13% (from 16% in 2023) and private hospital work has remained at 4%.

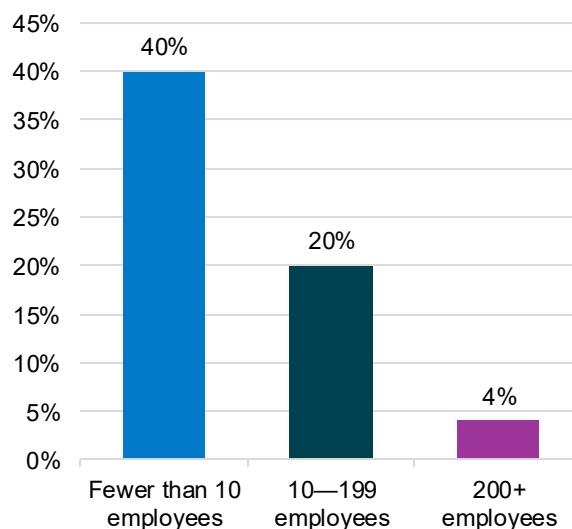
Location plays a significant role in shaping sector distribution. Small private practices are far more prevalent in rural and remote areas (54%) than in metro (38%) or regional (37%) locations, reflecting the role of small, locally owned clinics in servicing dispersed communities.

Private practices with fewer than 10 employees are more common in New South Wales (49%), while public hospitals remain a key employer in Tasmania (20%) and rural and remote areas (16%). Community clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are strongly represented in the Northern Territory (20%), underscoring their importance in delivering regionally tailored care.

Table 1: Practice Setting

	2025	2023
Private practice	64%	57%
Public hospital	13%	16%
Private hospital	4%	4%
Aged care facility	4%	8%
Tertiary education sector	3%	3%
Community clinic/Aboriginal service	4%	3%
Not-for-profit organisation	3%	3%
Government health department	1%	1%
Other	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%

Figure 1: Private Practice Size



Career Stage and Experience

The census sample is composed of 14% foundation practitioners, 49% intermediate practitioners, 32% highly developed or experienced practitioners and 5% expert or fellow practitioners. This distribution reflects a profession with a strong mid-career base and a smaller but specialised senior cohort.

Gender differences are minimal, although men are slightly more represented in the highly developed (35% vs 31%) and expert (6% vs 5%) categories.

Practice setting strongly correlates with career stage. Private hospitals and aged care facilities have the highest

proportion of early-career respondents; foundation and intermediate practitioners make up 80% of physiotherapists in both settings.

In contrast, tertiary education is dominated by senior practitioners, with 82% highly developed or experts. Experts and highly developed practitioners are also more common in the public hospital physiotherapy workforce (50%). Community clinic and not-for-profit settings attract a greater proportion of intermediate physiotherapists (62%) compared with the profession overall.



Career stage distribution varies by location and practice setting, with highly developed practitioners more common in metropolitan and academic settings.

Table 2: Workforce Experience Distribution

	2025	Female	Male	Private Practice	Public Hospital	Private Hospital	Aged Care	Tertiary Education	NFP and Community
Sample	2581	1740	834	1592	331	83	83	109	168
Foundation	14%	15%	13%	16%	14%	21%	15%	2%	11%
Intermediate	49%	50%	46%	49%	36%	59%	65%	16%	62%
Highly Developed	32%	31%	35%	31%	42%	19%	20%	54%	25%
Expert	5%	5%	6%	4%	8%	2%	0%	28%	2%

Workforce Role

Across the profession, 91% of respondents work as clinicians, 18% in management, 12% in education, 8% in research or academic roles and 5% in other positions. These proportions are consistent with the 2023 census, where clinician roles also dominated, followed by management (16%), education (11%) and research (7%). The small 'other' category includes roles such as policy advisers, consultants, case managers and project officers.

While clinical practice is the starting point for almost all physiotherapists (97% of foundation-level practitioners), there is a clear and significant shift toward broader roles as careers progress. Among expert-level practitioners, just 70% remain in clinical roles, while significantly higher proportions work as managers (37%), educators (34%) and researchers (40%) compared to their less experienced peers.

Gender and setting also influence role distribution, with men more likely than women to hold management roles (22% vs 15%).

Physiotherapists in tertiary education are significantly more likely to work as researchers or academics (95%), while those in public or private hospitals remain strongly clinical (91% and 94%) respectively. The pattern holds across all states, locations and qualification origins.



Over nine in 10 physiotherapists work clinically, with men more likely to hold management roles than women.

Table 3: Role, by Career Stage and Gender

	2023	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	3134	2522	223	1085	998	216	1689	827
Clinician	91%	91%	97%	94%	87%	70%	91%	91%
Manager	16%	18%	0%	14%	27%	37%	15%	22%
Educator	11%	12%	6%	7%	18%	34%	11%	15%
Research/Academic	7%	8%	3%	4%	12%	40%	7%	10%
Other	5%	5%	4%	4%	7%	9%	5%	6%

Q. Which role(s) best describes your current role in the health workforce? 2025 n=2522, 2023 n=3134 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Employment Type

Physiotherapists work across a variety of employment types, with 63% employed, 22% self-employed, 11% combining both and 4% working as contractors or locums. Compared with the 2023 results, the proportion in standard employment (67%) has fallen, while the proportion who are in self-employment (19%) has increased, suggesting a growing shift toward flexible or independent work models.

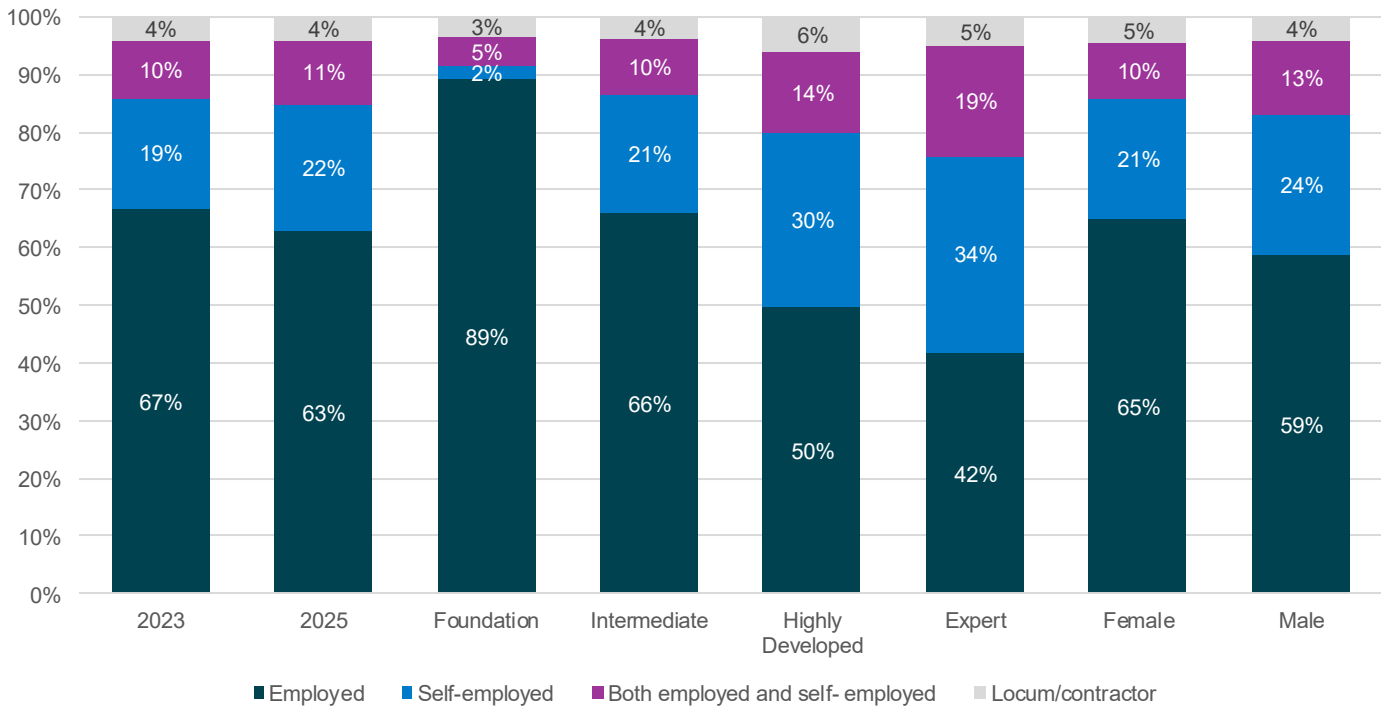
Gender differences are evident across employment types. Men are more likely than women to be self-employed (24% vs 21%) or combine employment types (13% vs 10%). Women, meanwhile, are more likely to report being employed (65% vs 59%).

Career stage and location also shape employment pathways. While 89% of foundation-level practitioners are employed, this figure drops steadily across the career span to just 42% at expert level. Senior practitioners are significantly more likely to be self-employed (34%) or combine roles (19%).

Self-employment is also more prevalent in rural and remote areas (32%) than in metro (20%) or regional locations (21%) and far more common in private practice (32%) than in hospital settings (0%).

The number of respondents describing themselves as self-employed grew over the past two years, most commonly among experienced, male physiotherapists.

Figure 2: Employment Type, by Career Stage and Gender



Employment

Working patterns across the profession are broadly consistent with 2023, with women continuing to be more likely to work part-time than men.

Overall, 59% of responding physiotherapists work full-time, 36% part-time and 5% casually. This is consistent with 2023.

Men are significantly more likely to work full-time than women (74% vs 51%) and less likely to work part-time (21% vs 43%). By career stage, full-time work is most common among foundation practitioners (70%) and falls steadily to 51–56% among highly developed and expert practitioners, reflecting greater flexibility or reduced clinical load at senior levels. Casual work is most common in private hospitals (15%).

Part-time practitioners most often work 0.6 (37%) or 0.8 (36%) of a full-time load. Lower load levels are more common among experts (23%) and in rural and remote areas (27%). Men working part-time are more likely to be at 0.8 FTE (45%), while women are more evenly spread across 0.6–0.8 FTE arrangements.

Public hospital part-time staff most often work either 0.6 or 0.8 FTE (38% each), while aged care and tertiary education staff tend toward 0.8 FTE (44–45%). Private practice employees, particularly in smaller practices, show a broad distribution of part-time hours, though 0.6 FTE is most common (39%).

Figure 3: Employment Type

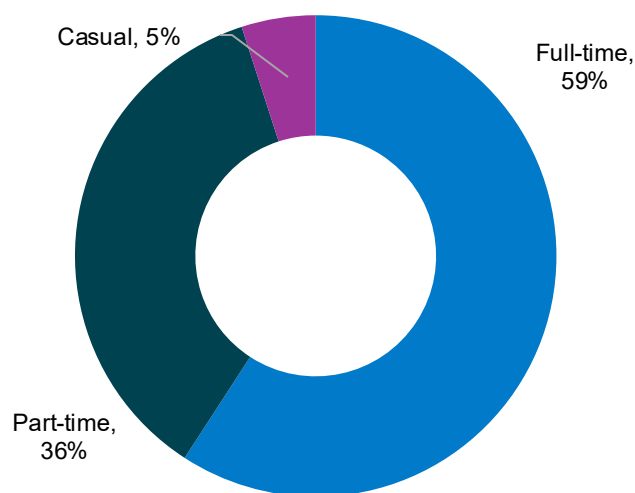


Table 4: Employment Basis, by Career Stage and Gender

	2023	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	2368	1805	214	792	656	143	1243	558
Full-Time	59%	59%	70%	60%	51%	56%	51%	74%
Part-Time	35%	36%	25%	35%	43%	43%	43%	21%
Casual	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	1%	6%	4%

Q. In your PRIMARY role or position, are you employed? n=1805 | Q. You indicated you work on a part-time basis. Approximately, what proportion of a full-time load do you usually work? n=737 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Geographic Distribution

The largest proportion of physiotherapists surveyed were based in Victoria (VIC) and Tasmania (2%), followed by NSW and the Australian Capital Territory (28%) and Queensland (22%). Smaller proportions worked in Western Australia (12%) and South Australia and the Northern Territory (10%). Career stage distribution was relatively consistent across states, though experts were slightly more likely to be based in New South Wales/the Australian Capital Territory (34%) and early-career practitioners were more likely to be in Victoria/Tasmania (34%).

Most physiotherapists continue to work in metropolitan settings, particularly those at more senior career stages.

Around 69% of all respondents work in metropolitan areas, rising to 73% of highly developed practitioners and 78% among expert-level physiotherapists.

The likelihood of rural and remote employment is highest among early-career physiotherapists, with 17% of foundation-level and 18% of intermediate respondents worked in rural and remote locations, compared to just 7% of expert-level respondents.

Men and women had similar rural and remote representation and regional representation, though men were slightly less represented in rural and remote areas overall.

Figure 4: Geographic Distribution, State

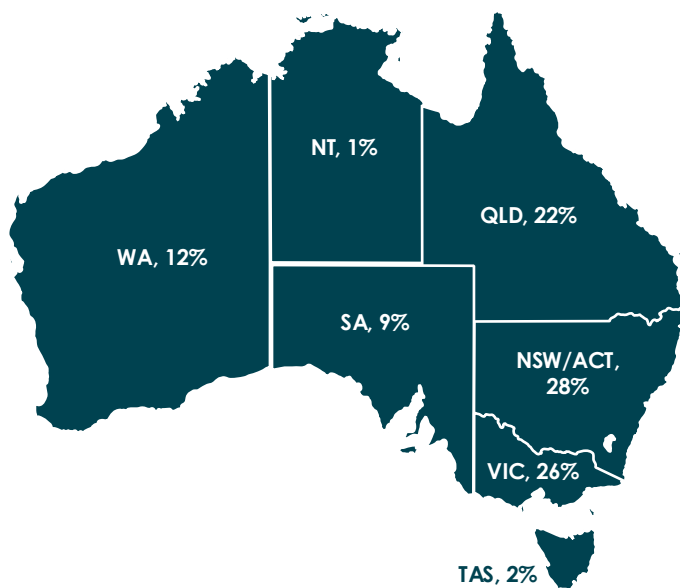


Table 5: Geographic Distribution, Rurality

	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	2522	223	1085	998	216	1689	827
Metropolitan	69%	73%	65%	73%	78%	69%	70%
Regional	15%	11%	17%	14%	15%	15%	17%
Rural and Remote	15%	17%	18%	13%	7%	17%	13%
Would consider rural work	32%	39%	33%	26%	31%	32%	33%

Q. What state/territory are you currently working in? n=2521 / Q. Please state your principal practice location. n=2522 / Q. Would you consider working in a rural area? n=2248 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Intentions to Work Rurally

Overall, 32% of respondents expressed willingness to work rurally, broadly consistent with 2023, when 35% of respondents indicated they would be willing to work in a rural location. Half of respondents said they would not consider rural work, while 17% are unsure.

While 39% of foundation-level practitioners would consider working in a rural area, interest declines among intermediate (33%) respondents and highly developed (26%) physiotherapists.

Expert-level practitioners show slightly more openness (31%), but overall, half of all respondents say they would not consider rural work, with 17% unsure. These patterns suggest that rural attraction strategies may need to target physiotherapists earlier in their career.

Barriers to Working Rurally

Lifestyle and personal factors are the primary barriers to rural work. Across all groups, distance from family and friends (64%) and leaving social (38%) and professional (24%) networks are the most frequently cited challenges. Financial barriers (31%) and unfamiliarity with rural settings (21%) also feature prominently.

Importantly, more experienced practitioners and male physiotherapists were more likely to cite professional network disruption as a barrier, while early-career physiotherapists noted the lack of professional support and the difficulty of moving to an unfamiliar environment.

The most common 'other' barriers preventing physiotherapists from working rurally include family commitments (particularly partners' employment and children's education), established metro-based businesses

or careers and limited availability of suitable or specialist roles in rural areas. Concerns about reduced income, lifestyle disruption and access to healthcare and infrastructure were also frequently raised.

Enablers of Rural Work

To attract physiotherapists to rural areas, financial incentives and structured career opportunities are key.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said higher remuneration would support them to undertake rural employment, followed by relocation support (52%) and opportunities for skill development and career advancement (31%).

Intermediate-level respondents in particular are more likely to be swayed by higher remuneration (72%), financial support to relocate (56%) and scholarships (21%). Conversely, highly experienced and expert physiotherapists are less motivated by these incentives and more likely to say that none would persuade them to work rurally (19% and 28% respectively), with foundation-level physiotherapists more likely than others to say that professional mentoring (37%) and HELP fee reduction (29%) would be attractive to them.

Employment through the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) was low, with 2% employed through the program and 15% unsure, suggesting the WIP isn't supporting the growth of the rural physiotherapy workforce.

This highlights the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and explore other reform opportunities to improve access to physiotherapy in rural communities.

32%

of respondents would consider working in a rural location – broadly consistent with 35% in 2023.



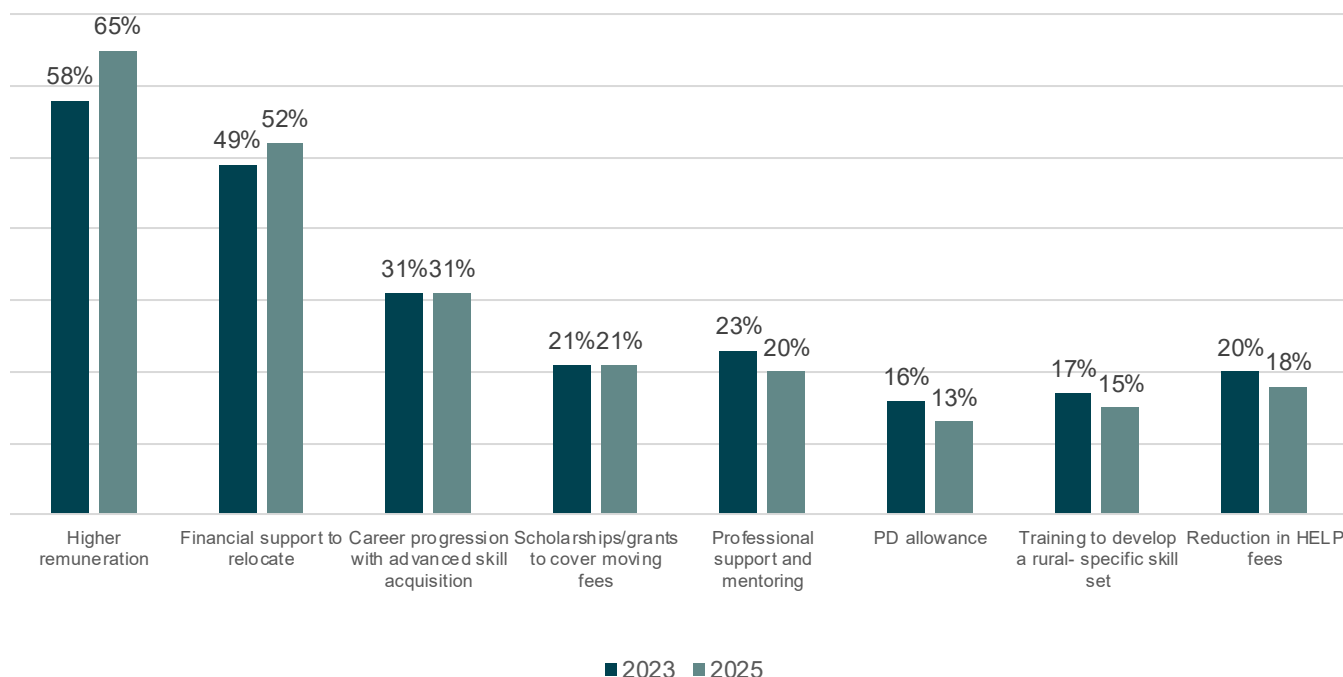
Q. Would you consider working in a rural area? n=2248

Table 6: Barriers to Working Rurally

	2023	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	1456	1031	118	426	353	89	669	358
Distance from family and friends	62%	64%	63%	67%	59%	58%	62%	67%
Leaving social networks	33%	38%	39%	39%	36%	23%	36%	42%
Financial commitment to move	29%	31%	33%	33%	28%	21%	32%	29%
Leaving professional networks	23%	24%	17%	23%	33%	23%	20%	31%
Moving to unfamiliar setting	21%	21%	31%	23%	13%	9%	21%	20%
Lack of professional support	15%	16%	31%	12%	10%	3%	16%	15%
Availability of permanent work	10%	12%	8%	14%	10%	15%	12%	12%
Lack of professional development	15%	13%	16%	14%	11%	3%	13%	12%
Other	14%	15%	7%	14%	20%	28%	16%	12%

Q. What barriers are preventing/might prevent you from working rurally? n= 1031 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Figure 5: Support Required to Work Rurally



Q. What factors would support you in undertaking employment in a rural area? n=1031 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups



02.

Remuneration

Remuneration

Fixed salary remains the dominant pay model, with only small shifts since 2023.

Salary Arrangements

In 2025, 63% of full- or part-time physiotherapists are paid a fixed salary, similar to 2023. Base salary plus commission is received by 23% of respondents, a slight increase from 19% in 2023, while 12% work under a contract agreement (similar to 14% in 2023).

Gender differences are clear. Men are more likely than women to receive base salary plus commission (29% vs 20%) and slightly less likely to be on a fixed salary (59% vs 65%). Fixed salaries are most common among experts (76%) and in public hospitals (94%), residential aged care (78%) and government health departments (99%).

Commission-based pay is concentrated in private practice and is the salary arrangement of 34% of respondents working in small practices with fewer than 10 staff and 47% of respondents working in small and medium sized enterprises. It is most common among respondents who specialise in musculoskeletal physiotherapy (43%).

Among physiotherapists receiving commission, the proportion earning up to 10% of their salary from commission has risen sharply from 26% in 2023 to 37% in 2025, indicating a shift toward lower commission structures. On average, respondents working on commission attribute 26.3% of their salary to commission.

Contract agreements are most common in private hospitals (17%), aged care (12%) and small private practices (21%). They are also more often the basis of pay for physiotherapists working on a part-time basis (17%).

Table 7: Salary Arrangements

	2023	2025	Private Practice	Public Hospital	Private Hospital	Aged Care
Sample	2209	1689	853	324	71	77
Fixed Salary	64%	63%	42%	94%	82%	78%
Base Salary plus Commission	19%	23%	40%	1%	1%	0%
Contract Agreement	14%	12%	16%	4%	17%	12%

Physiotherapy Salaries

The average annual salary for physiotherapists has grown from \$95,000 in 2023 to \$102,000 in 2025, representing a 7.4% increase.

Median earnings are now \$96,000, with the middle 50% of salaries ranging from \$80,000 at the 25th percentile to \$118,000 at the 75th percentile.

The salary distribution reveals a shift toward higher income brackets. The proportion of physiotherapists earning less than \$80,000 has dropped from 28% in 2023 to just 20% in 2025.

Conversely, the share earning \$120,000 or more has increased notably, from 17% to 24%, reflecting both higher pay for senior practitioners and upward movement within mid-career roles.

The largest group now earns between \$80,000 and \$100,000 (33%), followed by those earning \$100,000–\$120,000 (23%).

Remuneration by Career Stage

Salary growth has been strongest among the most experienced practitioners; highly developed practitioners report a 9.4% increase to \$116,000 and experts have seen an 8% rise to \$149,000.

In contrast, foundation-level practitioners experienced a smaller 3.9% increase to \$80,000, while those with intermediate-level experience rose 4.3% to \$96,000, indicating that wage growth is more pronounced at advanced career stages.

Average salaries for physiotherapists are up 7.4% since 2023, with strongest growth at senior levels.

Remuneration by Location

By state and territory, Queensland recorded the largest salary growth since 2023, as well as the highest salaries, up 10.3% to \$107,000, followed by the Australian Capital Territory (+10.2% to \$108,000). South Australia (+7.8%) and Western Australia (7.4%) also saw above-average increases. New South Wales (+6.3%) and Victoria (+3.2%) had more modest rises, while Tasmania was the only state to see a decline, falling 4.7% to \$101,000.

While a 15.2% increase was recorded in the Northern Territory, due to the small sample size this should be viewed as directional only.

By location, regional practitioners saw the largest increase (+10.4% to \$106,000), followed by rural (+8.7% to \$100,000) and metropolitan (+5.2% to \$101,000). Remote salaries declined 9% to \$101,000, reversing their previous premium over other locations.

Remuneration by Employment Type

Analysis by employment type reveals that full-time employees recorded the largest increase in average salaries between 2023 and 2025 (+8.2% to \$105,000), outpacing part-time workers (+3.3% to \$95,000).

By pay arrangement, contract agreements saw the most significant rise (+14.8% to \$101,000), followed by fixed salaries (+6.1% to \$104,000). Base salary plus commission showed minimal growth (+1.1% to \$94,000).

Salary differences between full-time and part-time work widen with experience. At the foundation level, full-time practitioners earn an average of \$81,000 compared with \$78,000 part-time, a relatively small gap. By the expert stage, the gap expands sharply, with full-time experts earning \$167,000 on average versus \$124,000 for part-time peers. This reflects both the higher hourly earnings and increased capacity for income growth in full-time senior roles.

Figure 6: Average Annual Salary by Career Stage, 2023–2025

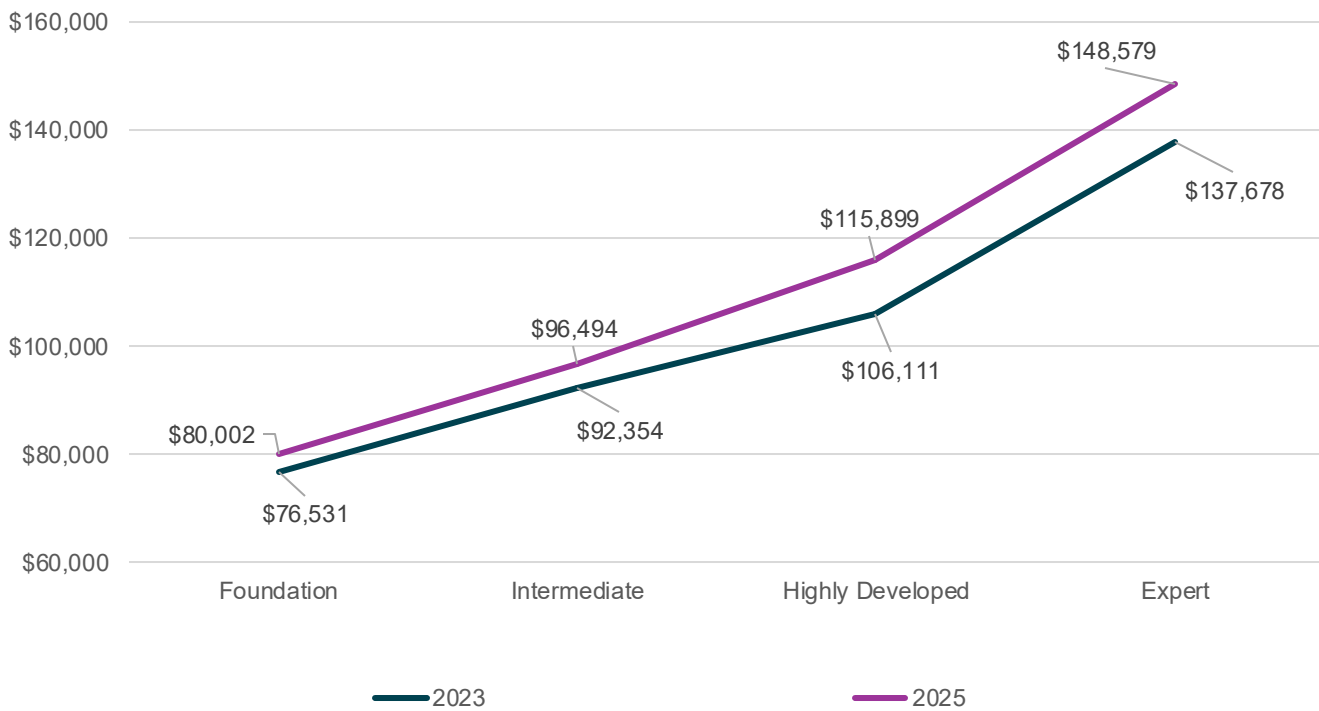


Table 8: Annual Salaries, by Career Stage

Annual Salary, 000s	n	2023 Average	2025 Average	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Overall	1467	\$95	\$102	7.4%	\$80	\$96	\$118
Foundation	175	\$77	\$80	3.9%	\$70	\$77	\$85
Intermediate	647	\$92	\$96	4.3%	\$83	\$93	\$109
Highly Developed	524	\$106	\$116	9.4%	\$100	\$115	\$130
Expert	121	\$138	\$149	8.0%	\$118	\$133	\$169

Figure 7: Average Annual Salary by State, 2023–2025

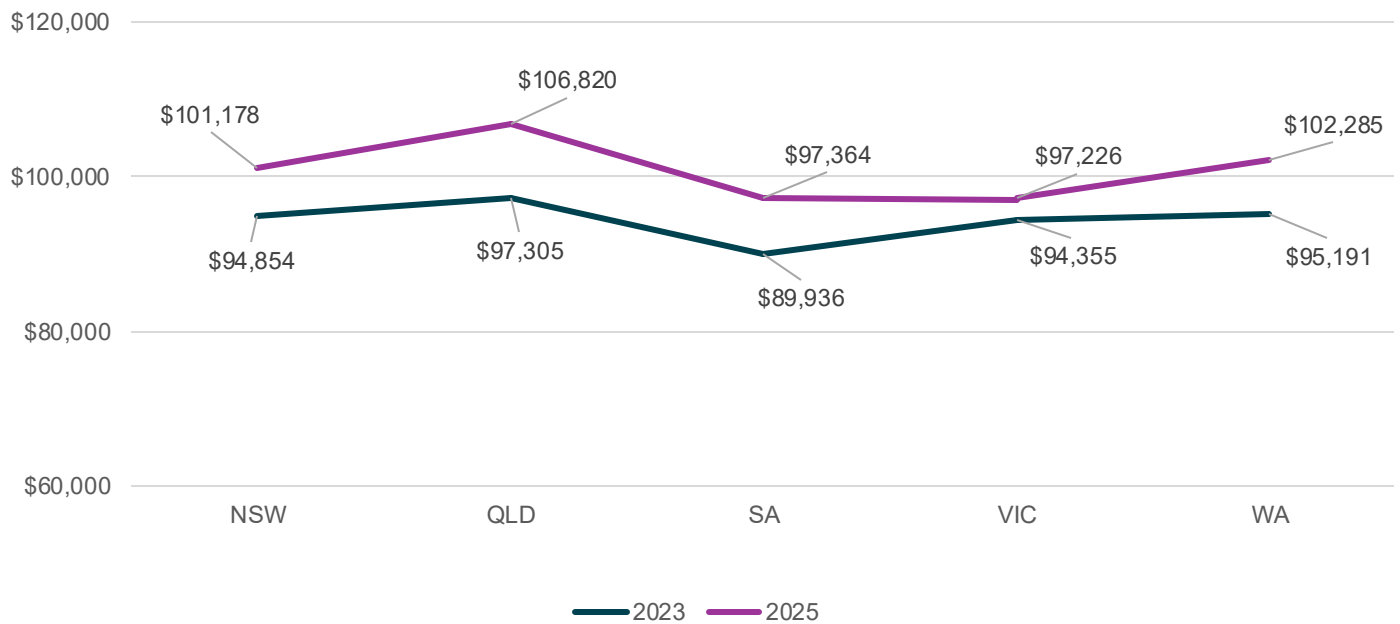


Table 9: Annual Salaries, by State and Location

Annual Salaries, 000s	n	Average 2023	Average 2025	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
ACT	41	\$98	\$108	10.2%	\$86	\$102	\$117
NSW	357	\$95	\$102	6.3%	\$80	\$95	\$116
NT	16	\$106	\$122	15.1%	\$100	\$110	\$145
QLD	310	\$97	\$107	10.3%	\$85	\$100	\$125
SA	124	\$90	\$97	7.8%	\$80	\$97	\$110
TAS	32	\$106	\$101	-4.7%	\$85	\$100	\$110
VIC	417	\$94	\$97	3.2%	\$77	\$91	\$110
WA	169	\$95	\$102	7.4%	\$80	\$95	\$120
Metropolitan	1055	\$96	\$101	5.2%	\$80	\$95	\$116
Regional	221	\$96	\$106	10.4%	\$85	\$100	\$120
Rural	174	\$92	\$100	8.7%	\$80	\$91	\$119
Remote	17	\$111	\$101	-9.0%	\$82	\$96	\$125

Figure 8: Average Annual Salary by Employment Type, by Career Stage

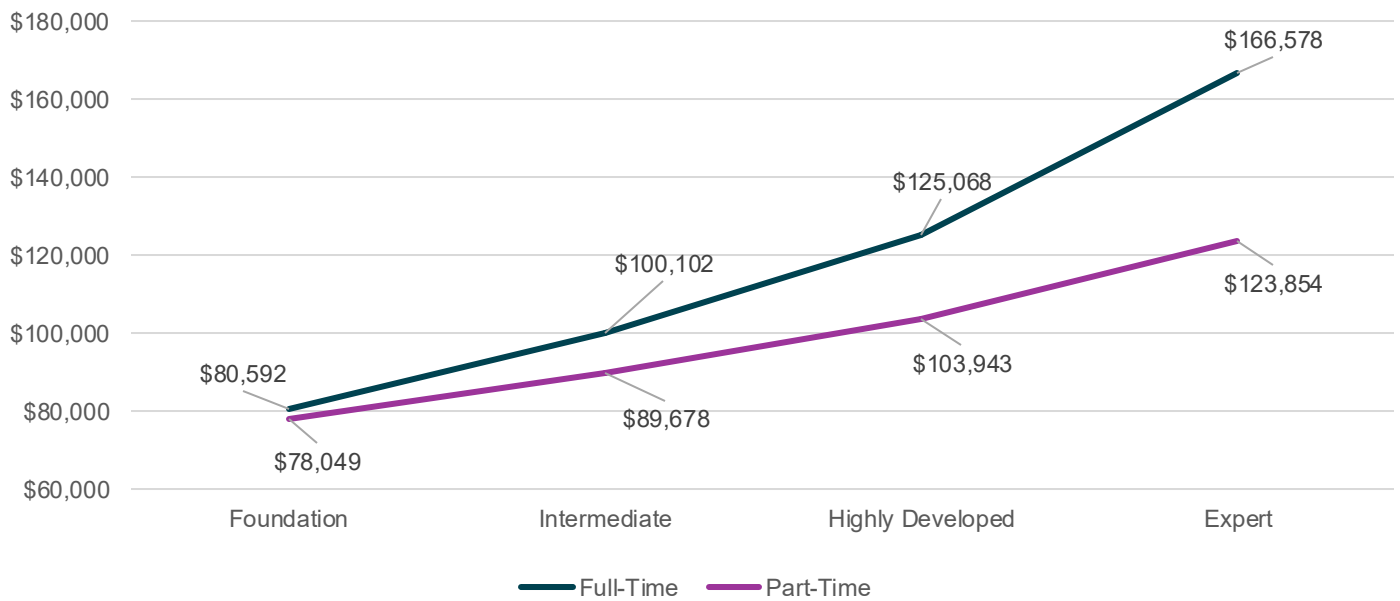


Table 10: Annual Salaries, by Employment Type, Remuneration Arrangement and Work Setting

Annual Salary, 000s	n	Average 2023	Average 2025	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Full-Time	868	\$97	\$105	8.2%	\$85	\$100	\$120
Part-Time	599	\$92	\$95	3.3%	\$75	\$93	\$110
Fixed Salary	982	\$98	\$104	6.1%	\$84	\$100	\$120
Base Salary plus Commission	300	\$93	\$94	1.1%	\$80	\$90	\$108
Contract Agreement	185	\$88	\$101	14.8%	\$75	\$95	\$116
Private Practice	741	\$91	\$95	4.7%	\$79	\$90	\$105
Public Hospital	331	\$103	\$109	5.8%	\$90	\$110	\$128

Q. How much is your annual salary per annum (including commission if applicable), excluding superannuation and other benefits? n=1467. Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups



Casual Employment

In 2025, casual physiotherapists reported working an average of 18.3 hours per week, a slight decrease from 19.5 hours in 2023.

Working Hours

The median was 16 hours, with a quarter working less than 10 hours and another quarter exceeding 24 hours weekly.

Gender differences were notable, with male physiotherapists averaging 23.6 hours compared with 16.2 hours for women. Men were more concentrated in higher-hour categories, with over one-quarter working more than 33 hours per week compared with only one in 10 women. Women were more likely to work fewer than 16 hours.

By career stage, foundation-level casuals recorded the highest average at 21.4 hours, with a median of 24 hours and many exceeding 36 hours per week. Intermediate-level physiotherapists averaged 18.6 hours, while those at the highly developed level had the lowest average at 16.2 hours. Expert-level casuals were too few for reliable hour estimates.

Casual Hourly Rates of Pay

Casual physiotherapy pay rates have risen solidly over the past two years, with the overall average increasing by 12.1% from \$58 per hour in 2023 to \$65 in 2025.

The median hourly rate is \$60 and the middle half of casuals earn between \$50 and \$70, indicating a relatively tight spread around the median despite some outliers at the top end.

Gender differences are modest in dollar terms. Female casual physiotherapists now average \$66 per hour after increasing 11.9%, while men average \$62 following a rise of 10.7% over the past two years. Women's higher average pay is paired with a wider spread in earnings, while men tend to cluster more tightly around their median of \$56.

Career stage is a major driver of rates. Foundation casuals earn the least at \$51 per hour (up 8.5%), with rates increasing to \$62 for intermediate (+8.8%) and \$75 for highly developed practitioners (+19%), the largest percentage rise of any group.

Geographic location also shapes earnings. The biggest gains were in New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory (+20.4% to \$65) and Victoria/Tasmania (+17.2% to \$68). Metro casuals now enjoy the highest average (\$68, up 19.3%), while regional casual rates fell 10.6% to \$59 and rural and remote rates have remained flat at \$61.

Sector differences show private practice casuals earning \$63 per hour (+5%), with private hospital casuals at \$56 (+12%). Few public sector casuals responded to the survey, so casual rates are not reported for this group.

Casual physiotherapy pay rates have risen solidly over the past two years, with the overall average increasing by 12.1% from \$58 per hour in 2023 to \$65 in 2025.



Gender differences were notable, with male physiotherapists working casually averaging 23.6 hours compared with 16.2 hours for female physiotherapists.

Figure 9: Average Casual Hours Worked, by Gender

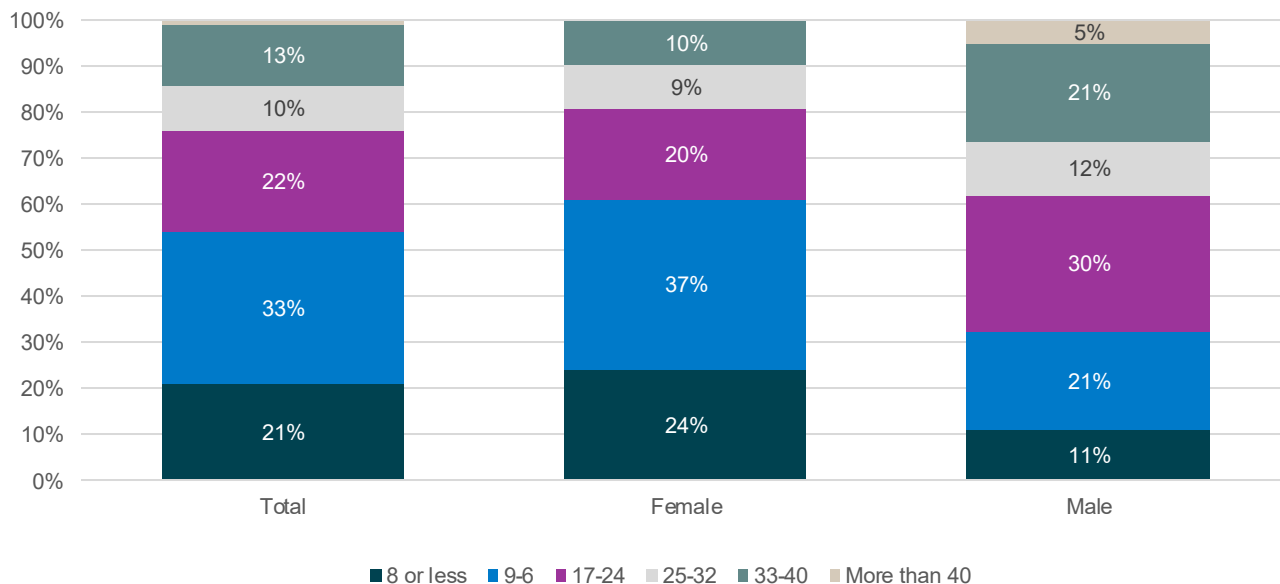


Table 11: Casual Hours Worked, by Gender and Career Stage

	n	Average 2023	Average 2025	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Overall	119	19.5	18.3	10.0	16.0	24.0
Female	91	17.7	16.2	9	14	20
Male	28	24.4	23.6	15	20	35
Foundation	16	24.8	21.4	10	24	36
Intermediate	52	17.5	18.6	10	16	29
Highly Developed	47	19.5	16.2	8	12	21
Expert	4	-	-	-	-	-

Table 12: Hourly Rates, by Gender, Career Stage, State, Location, Practice Area

		Average 2023	Average 2025	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Overall	119	\$58	\$65	12.1%	\$50	\$60	\$70
Female	91	\$59	\$66	11.9%	\$50	\$60	\$70
Male	28	\$56	\$62	10.7%	\$50	\$56	\$65
Foundation	16	\$47	\$51	8.5%	\$45	\$50	\$60
Intermediate	52	\$57	\$62	8.8%	\$47	\$58	\$70
Highly Developed	47	\$63	\$75	19.0%	\$56	\$67	\$84
Expert	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
NSW/ACT	36	\$54	\$65	20.4%	\$50	\$60	\$70
SA/NT	19	\$53	\$60	13.2%	\$45	\$50	\$80
QLD	29	\$62	\$68	9.7%	\$54	\$60	\$70
VIC/TAS	20	\$58	\$68	17.2%	\$45	\$65	\$70
WA	15	\$72	\$61	-15.3%	\$50	\$55	\$60
Metro	76	\$57	\$68	19.3%	\$51	\$60	\$76
Regional	28	\$66	\$59	-10.6%	\$47	\$55	\$65
Rural and Remote	15	\$61	\$61	0.0%	\$50	\$60	\$70
Private Practice	68	\$60	\$63	5.0%	\$50	\$58	\$70
Public Hospital	7	\$56	-	-	-	-	-
Private Hospital	13	\$50	\$56	12.0%	\$45	\$54	\$70

Q. What is your current hourly rate? n=119 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups



Salary Satisfaction

Only two in five physiotherapists believe they are fairly remunerated for the work that they do.

Physiotherapists' satisfaction with remuneration is mixed. Across the workforce, 44% are dissatisfied with their pay, compared to only 41% who are satisfied.

Pay is a clear dividing line. Dissatisfaction dominates among those earning under \$60K, with only 25% satisfied, and remains high for \$60K–\$80K earners (22% satisfied). In contrast, satisfaction steadily rises with income, peaking at 67% for those earning over \$140K.

Work arrangement and career stage also influence sentiment. Casual physiotherapists and those on contract agreements report some of the lowest satisfaction rates (36% and 37% respectively), while advanced practice roles, despite higher salaries, do not translate into overwhelming satisfaction, with only one in four expressing satisfaction.

Specialisation plays a role too: pain management and disability practitioners record the lowest satisfaction levels (31% and 26%), whereas orthopaedics and cardiorespiratory specialists are more positive, with over

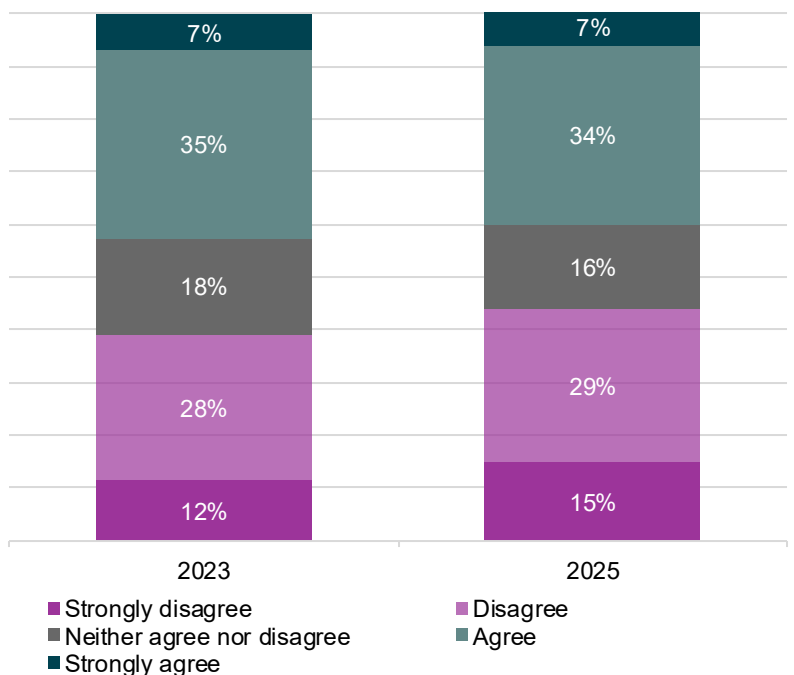
half (54% each) reporting satisfaction.

Interestingly, despite the gender pay gap, men are only slightly more likely than women to feel they are fairly paid, although dissatisfaction remains relatively high for both groups.

Sector also matters. Physiotherapists in public hospitals (35%) tend to report lower satisfaction with remuneration compared to those in private practice (41%), reflecting differences in pay structures, funding stability and perceived recognition of skills. Respondents working in a tertiary institution are significantly more satisfied with their remuneration (61%) than those in all other sectors.

These patterns suggest that while higher salaries generally boost perceptions of fairness, structural and role-specific factors such as employment type, sector, specialisation and career progression opportunities also shape how physiotherapists feel about their pay.

Figure 10: Remuneration Satisfaction



41%
satisfied

Highest satisfaction

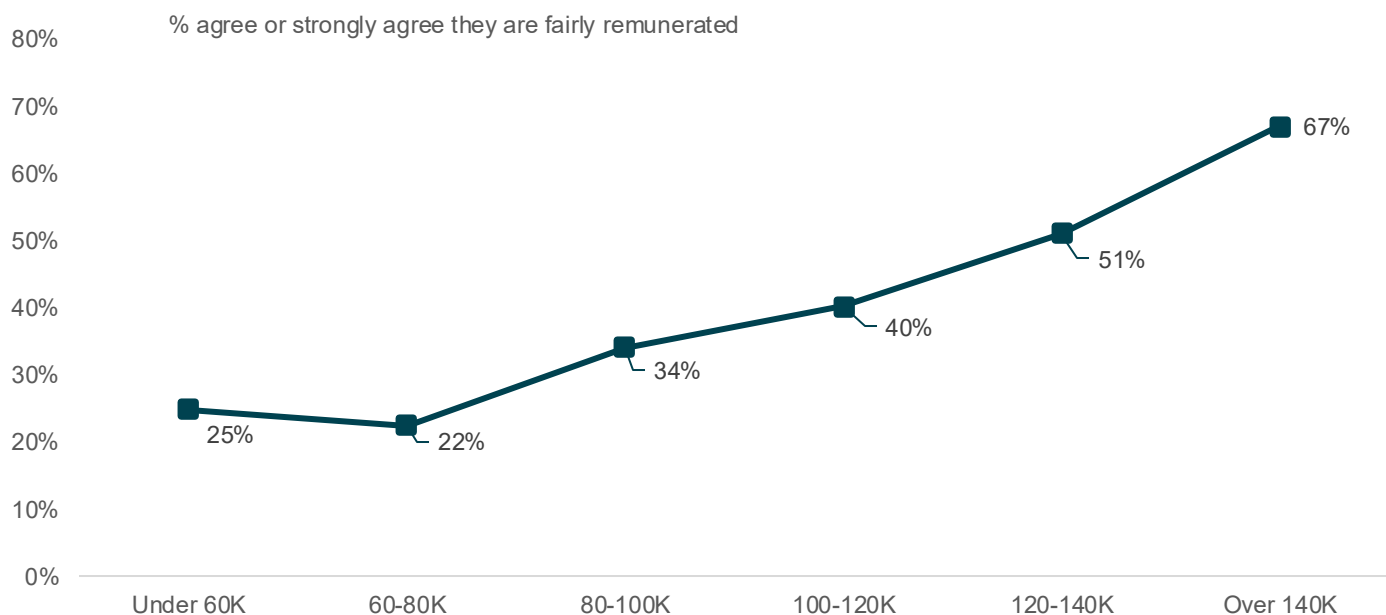
- Tertiary, 61%
- Orthopaedic, 54%
- Cardiorespiratory, 54%

44%
dissatisfied

Lowest satisfaction

- Advanced Practice, 25%
- Disability Specialist, 26%

Figure 11: Satisfaction with Remuneration, by Annual Salary Bands



Physiotherapists' views on whether they are fairly paid are strongly driven by their current level of remuneration.



Table 13: Satisfaction with Remuneration, by Career Stage and Gender

	Total	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	2522	223	1085	998	216	1689	827
Top 2% Satisfied	41%	39%	39%	42%	48%	40%	42%

Remuneration Preferences

Between 2023 and 2025, preferences for remuneration structures among physiotherapists remained relatively stable, with only minor shifts.

Fixed salary continues to be the most common preference, though it edged down slightly from 49% to 48%. Interest in a base salary combined with commission increased from 27% to 30%, suggesting a modest rise in appetite for performance-linked pay.

Meanwhile, the proportion selecting 'other' pay arrangements grew from 8% to 10% and those unsure about their preferred pay structure fell from 16% to 13%.

Interestingly, respondents prefer remuneration models that align with their current pay structures, with clear patterns emerging between preference and existing arrangements. Those on a fixed salary overwhelmingly favour continuing with this model (75%), while most earning a base salary plus commission would also prefer to remain on that

structure (71%). Men were significantly more likely to prefer a base salary with commission (39%) compared with women (24%), while women were more likely to prefer a fixed salary (51% vs 43%).

Public sector roles showed a strong preference for fixed salaries, with the highest rates among those in public hospitals (85%), the tertiary education sector (87%) and government health departments (89%).

In contrast, private practice physiotherapists were the most likely to favour base salary plus commission (41%) and the least likely to prefer a fixed salary (32%).

Career stage has less impact on preferences, although fewer highly experienced (25%) and expert (19%) level practitioners favour a base salary with commission than less experienced respondents.

Figure 12: Preferred Salary Arrangements

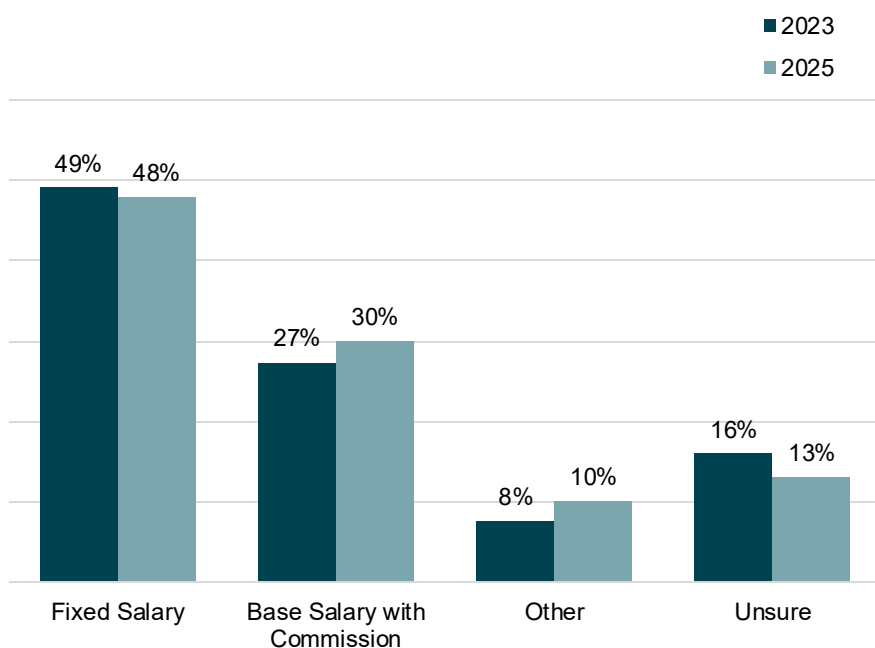


Table 14: Fixed Salary Preference

	2025
Female	51%
Male	43%
Private Practice	32%
Public Hospital	85%
Private Hospital	77%
Aged Care	55%
Tertiary Education	87%
Currently Fixed Salary	75%
Currently Base plus Commission	19%



03.

Gender Pay Gap



7.9%

gender pay gap, with men earning \$8,444 per annum more than women on average in 2025.

Remuneration by Gender

The gender pay gap grew to 7.9% in 2025, up from 5.1% in 2023.

In 2025, the gender pay gap for physiotherapists has widened compared to 2023, with men earning on average \$8,444 (7.9%) more than women, up from \$5,043 (5.1%) in 2023. Overall, the annual average male salary in 2025 is \$106,992, compared to an average annual salary earned by female respondents of \$98,548.

While starting salaries remain relatively close – foundation-level male physiotherapists earn \$83,007 compared to \$78,634 for women, the gap increases steadily with experience. At the highly developed level, men earn around \$12,000 more than women and at the expert level, the gap expands to over \$19,000 (11.9%) annually, with men earning \$159,624 compared to \$140,618 for women.

The gap is also evident across sectors. Men in private practice earn 10.7% more, with an average salary of \$101,668 compared to \$90,808 for women, while in public hospitals the gap increases to 12.3% (\$119,708 vs \$104,963). The smallest gap is in the tertiary education sector, where male and female wages are close to equivalent at \$145,260 for men and compared to \$144,983 for women. Pay parity is also evident in the aged care sector, where men earn \$92,090 and women earn \$91,764.

Differences according to employment capacity are also apparent, with the gap widest among full-time workers. Men working full-time earned an average of \$109,324 compared with \$101,786 for women working full-time, a

difference of \$7,538. Among part-time workers, men averaged \$98,573 full-time equivalent while women earned \$94,269, creating a gap of \$4,304.

Overall, the gender gap has increased both in dollar and percentage terms since 2023; although female salaries have risen across the board, male salaries have grown more quickly, particularly at the top end of the career spectrum with a variety of complex and inter-related factors leading to this outcome.

While male and female physiotherapists begin their careers on broadly comparable starting salaries, a clear and widening gender pay gap emerges as careers progress. Although women are more likely to be on higher paid fixed-salary arrangements, men are more likely to work full-time, hold management or leadership roles and own practices. Men are also more concentrated in higher paid sports and exercise settings, while women are disproportionately represented in lower paid paediatrics, pelvic health and disability sectors. Men are also more likely to hold higher level qualifications than females.

These factors intersect and compound over time; potentially boosting male earning capacity through access to senior pay scales and remuneration structures that reward higher capacity and career continuity.

Figure 13: Average Annual Salary by Gender and Career Stage



Table 15: Annual Salary Distribution, by Gender and Career Stage

	Total	Female	Male	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert
Sample	1467	970	493	175	647	524	121
Less than \$60,000	3%	4%	1%	4%	3%	3%	0%
\$60,000 – \$79,999	17%	19%	11%	50%	12%	6%	9%
\$80,000 – \$99,999	33%	32%	36%	40%	43%	16%	3%
\$100,000 – \$119,999	23%	24%	22%	5%	28%	27%	15%
\$120,000 – \$139,999	14%	14%	15%	1%	9%	28%	31%
\$140,000 – \$159,999	6%	5%	8%	0%	3%	13%	15%
\$160,000 and over	4%	3%	6%	1%	1%	6%	28%
Average 2025	\$101,544	\$98,548	\$106,992	\$80,002	\$96,494	\$115,899	\$148,579
25th Percentile	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$85,000	\$70,000	\$83,000	\$100,000	\$118,000
Median	\$96,000	\$95,000	\$100,000	\$77,000	\$93,000	\$115,000	\$133,000
75th Percentile	\$118,000	\$115,000	\$120,000	\$85,000	\$108,806	\$130,000	\$169,000

Q. How much is your annual salary per annum (including commission if applicable), excluding superannuation and other benefits? n=1467. Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Figure 14: Average Annual Salaries, by Gender

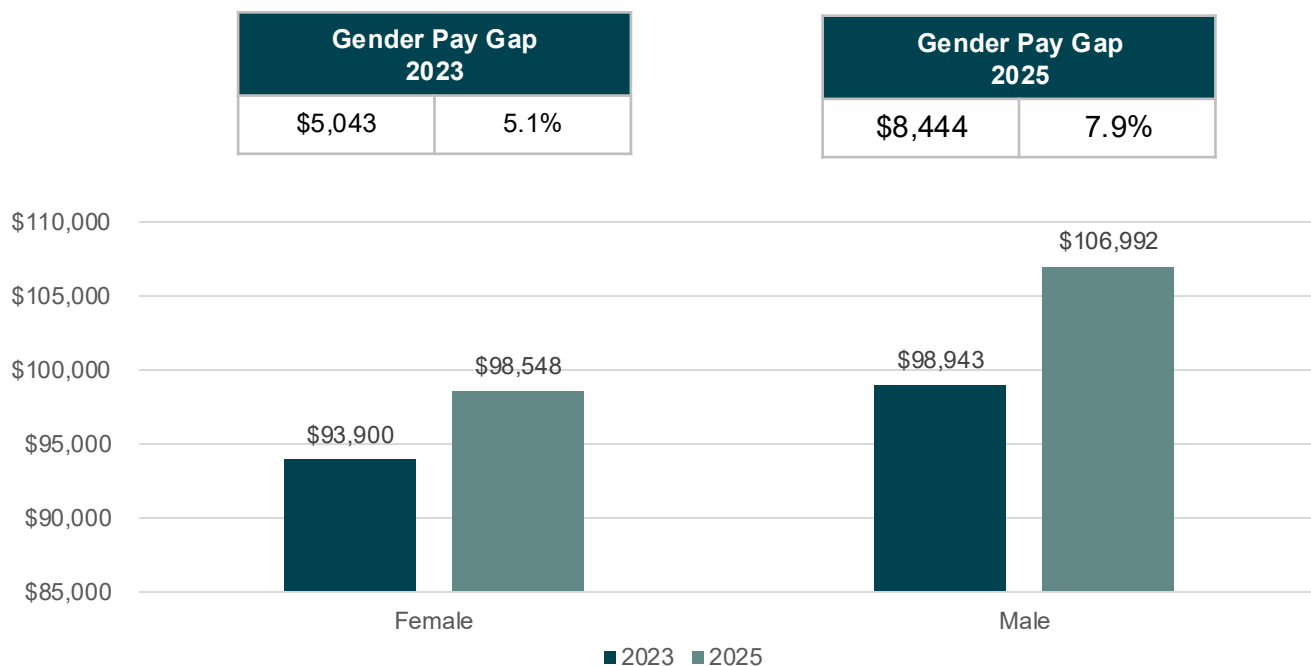


Table 16: Average Annual Salaries, Career Stage, Employment Type and Practice Area

	Female	Male	Difference	% Gap
Overall	\$98,548	\$106,992	\$8,444	7.9%
Foundation	\$78,634	\$83,007	\$4,373	5.3%
Intermediate	\$95,643	\$98,217	\$2,574	2.6%
Highly Developed	\$111,074	\$123,387	\$12,313	10.0%
Expert	\$140,618	\$159,624	\$19,006	11.9%
Full-Time	\$101,786	\$109,324	\$7,538	6.9%
Part-Time (FTE salary)	\$94,269	\$98,573	\$4,304	4.4%
Private Practice	\$90,808	\$101,668	\$10,860	10.7%
Public Hospital	\$104,963	\$119,708	\$14,745	12.3%
Tertiary	\$144,983	\$145,260	\$277	0.2%





04.

Workforce Capacity and Skill Development

Workforce Qualifications

The composition of the 2025 physiotherapy workforce points to a profession characterised by more advanced degrees and a stronger focus on local qualifications.

Compared to 2023, the proportion of practitioners holding a bachelor’s degree declined slightly from 52% to 49%, while those with a master’s degree increased from 31% to 35%. Although only a small share, the number of respondents with a PhD or doctorate rose from 6% to 7%, reflecting a growing emphasis on advanced qualifications.

There was also a noticeable shift in the country of qualification. In 2025, 85% of respondents reported gaining their initial qualification in Australia, up from 77% in 2023. This may reflect changes in migration or registration pathways or a stronger focus on domestic workforce planning.

The number of overseas-qualified physiotherapists declined across several countries, including India (6% to 3%) and the Philippines (4% to 1%), with rates for the United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa and Brazil remaining stable. Hong Kong also appears in the 2025 data set, albeit representing only 1% of respondents.

Training Experiences

Despite the trend toward higher qualifications, physiotherapists in 2025 were less likely to feel prepared for workforce entry through their training. Only 35% agreed that their training prepared them well to enter the workforce, a significant drop from 61% in 2023.

Similarly, just 46% said their placements were a positive experience (down from 71%) and only 52% described the clinical and learning experience during placements as high quality (down from 74%). Positively, fewer respondents felt they still needed more exposure to varied clinical scenarios (56%, down from 62%).

Blended placements, those combining work experience in private practice and hospital settings, continue to be seen as a valuable way to develop the broad skills that are needed by graduate physiotherapists, though support has softened (75% in 2025, down from 86% in 2023). In addition, a declining proportion would choose a rurally based internship (30%, down from 41%).

These results suggest growing dissatisfaction with clinical training experiences and point to a need for stronger integration of education with practical, real-world preparation.

Figure 15: Current Workforce Qualifications

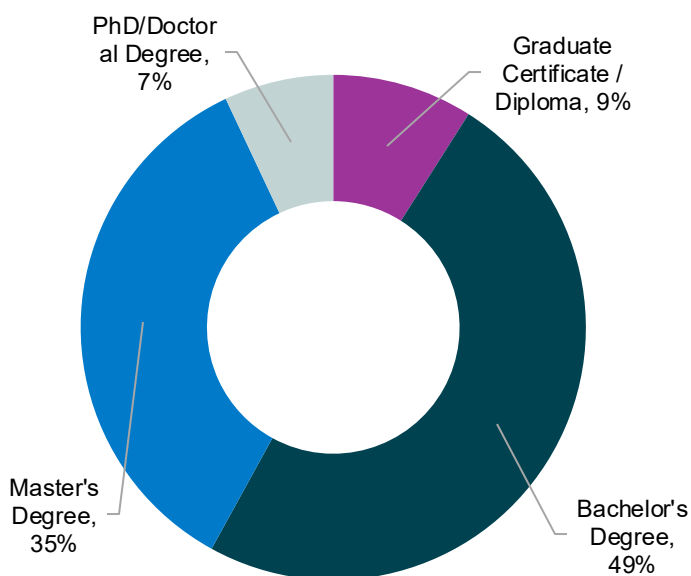
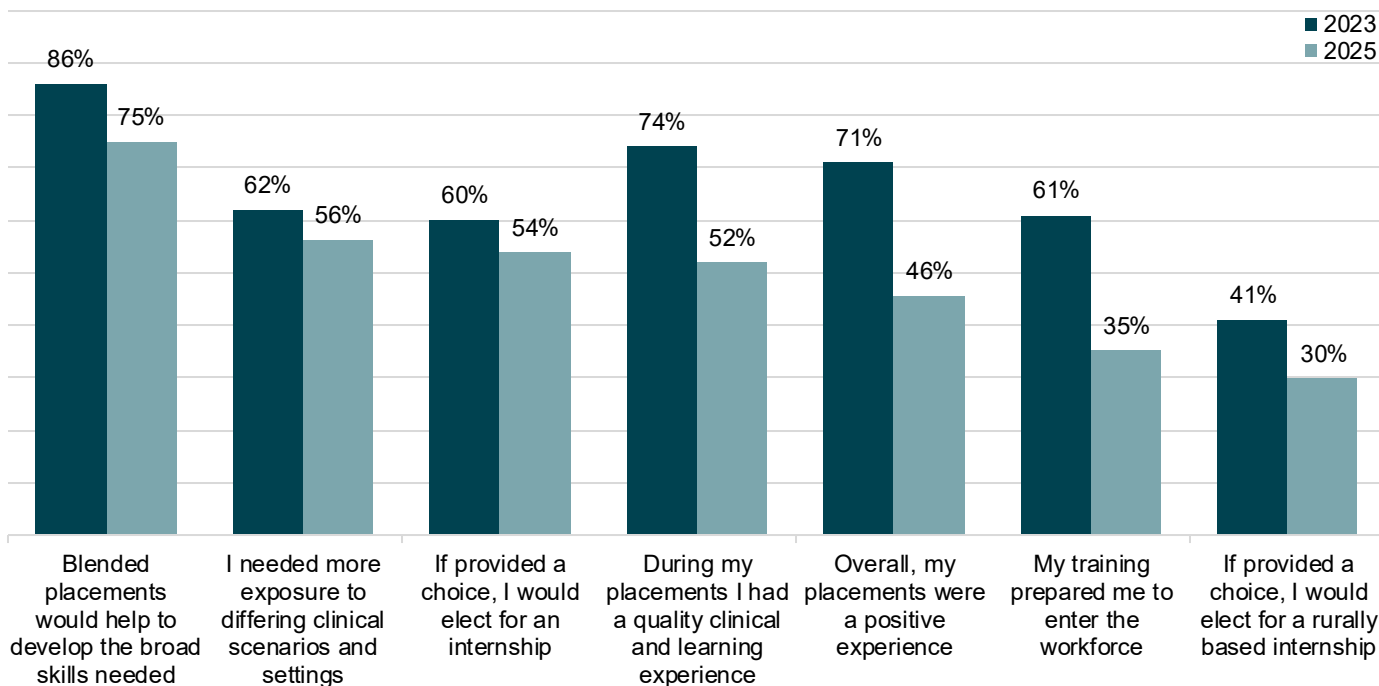


Table 17: Top eight Education Locations

	2023	2025
Australia	77%	85%
India	6%	3%
United Kingdom	3%	3%
New Zealand	2%	2%
Philippines	4%	1%
South Africa	1%	1%
Hong Kong	<1%	1%
Brazil	1%	1%

Despite the trend toward higher qualifications, physiotherapists in 2025 were less likely to feel prepared for workforce entry through their training, with many supporting blended placements as a way to develop the skills needed.

Figure 16: Training Pathway Experiences



Q. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to your training? n=126



Intentions to Pursue Advanced Skills

Between 2023 and 2025, there was a notable decline in physiotherapists intending to pursue advanced skill acquisition in the next two years, dropping from 31% to 20%.

At the same time, the proportion who indicated they do not intend to pursue further skill acquisition rose significantly from 32% to 46%. Approximately a quarter of respondents remain unsure.

The share of those currently undertaking titling or specialisation with the Australian College of Physiotherapists (ACP) decreased slightly from 5% to 4%, while those pursuing advanced skills elsewhere shifted up from 3% to 4%. The proportion already holding Fellowship status remained unchanged at 3%.

Intentions to pursue advanced skill acquisition over the next two years are most prominent among early-career physiotherapists, with 31% of foundation practitioners and 22% of intermediate practitioners indicating interest. In contrast, only 14% of highly experienced practitioners and just 9% of experts plan to undertake further skill development, with many expert-level practitioners already Fellows of the ACP (22%).

Physiotherapists who obtained their qualifications overseas were more likely to intend to pursue the Physiotherapy Career Pathway (34%) compared to those qualified in Australia (18%), although the overseas-qualified cohort's interest in pursuing advanced skills has declined since 2023 (from 54%). Employment arrangements also influence intent, with full-time workers more likely to plan skill acquisition (24%) than part-time (18%) or casual (10%) workers.

The APA's Career Pathway Framework

Nearly two in five physiotherapists (39%) indicated that they intend to pursue further skill development through the APA's Career Pathway Framework, with interest highest among those in the early stages of their career, particularly foundation practitioners (46%) and intermediate practitioners (39%).

In contrast, 37% of highly developed practitioners explicitly stated they would not pursue their skill development through the ACP. Similarly, interest was notably lower among those working in public hospitals, with only 30% intending to pursue the framework and 39% saying they would not, a significantly higher rate than in other settings.

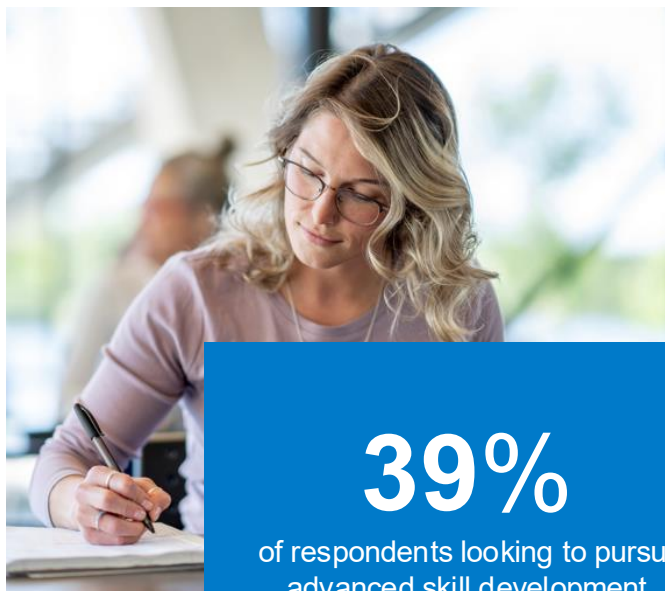
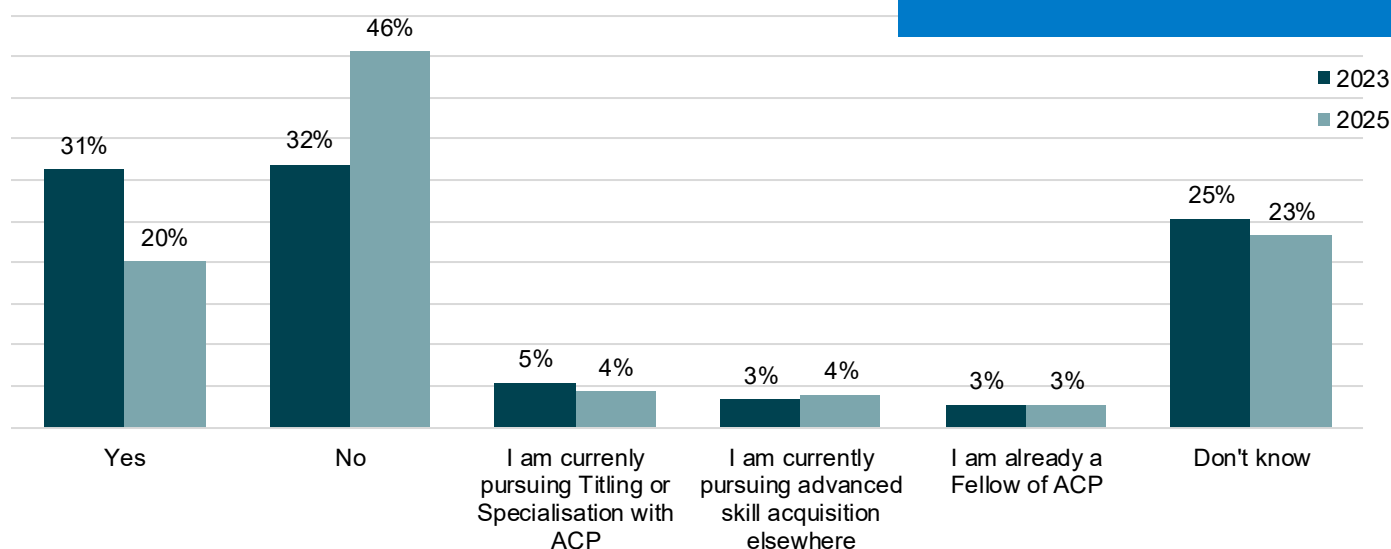


Figure 17: Intention to Pursue the Physiotherapy Career Pathway



Q. Do you intend to pursue the Physiotherapy Career Pathway or similar advanced skill acquisition in the future? n=2581 / Q. Are you intending to achieve this through the APA's career pathway framework? n=413

Table 18: Barriers to Further Study

	2023	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert
Sample	2055	1358	80	595	582	101
No higher salary for study	46%	51%	37%	55%	51%	40%
Lack of financial incentives	44%	48%	45%	52%	45%	26%
Time commitment too great	40%	40%	35%	46%	37%	18%
Financial barrier	37%	37%	42%	44%	30%	15%
No change to job title	32%	37%	35%	35%	40%	36%
No public recognition	26%	30%	22%	28%	38%	19%
Content in current role	27%	29%	26%	29%	29%	27%
Not required for promotion	21%	26%	25%	26%	25%	35%
Funding models don't recognise	22%	25%	11%	22%	34%	23%
Not interested	14%	20%	25%	21%	17%	23%
Lack of clarity on 'senior' title	17%	17%	17%	22%	12%	5%
No study leave	16%	16%	14%	22%	10%	4%
Personal reasons	16%	15%	14%	17%	15%	8%
Lack of structured pathways	-	13%	11%	18%	8%	5%
Lack of clarity on pathways	13%	9%	7%	14%	3%	2%
Lack of professional support	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%
Other	12%	13%	13%	10%	15%	28%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%

Barriers to Further Study

While the barriers to further study remained broadly consistent with 2023, the lack of financial incentive is increasingly prominent in 2025.

Overall, 51% stated there is no higher salary for additional qualifications, up from 46% in 2023. A similar proportion (48%) cited a lack of financial incentives, also increasing from 44%. These concerns were most prominent among intermediate practitioners.

Time commitment also remained a consistent challenge, with 40% across both years stating that study demands were too great, while 37% indicated that financial barriers prevented them from undertaking additional study. Again, intermediate practitioners were most likely to cite these barriers, at 46% and 44% respectively.

Notably, other structural disincentives also appear to be increasing; 37% said there is no change to job title post-study (up from 32%) and 30% highlighted lack of public recognition (up from 26%). These barriers may explain

why a growing proportion of physiotherapists are opting not to pursue further qualifications.

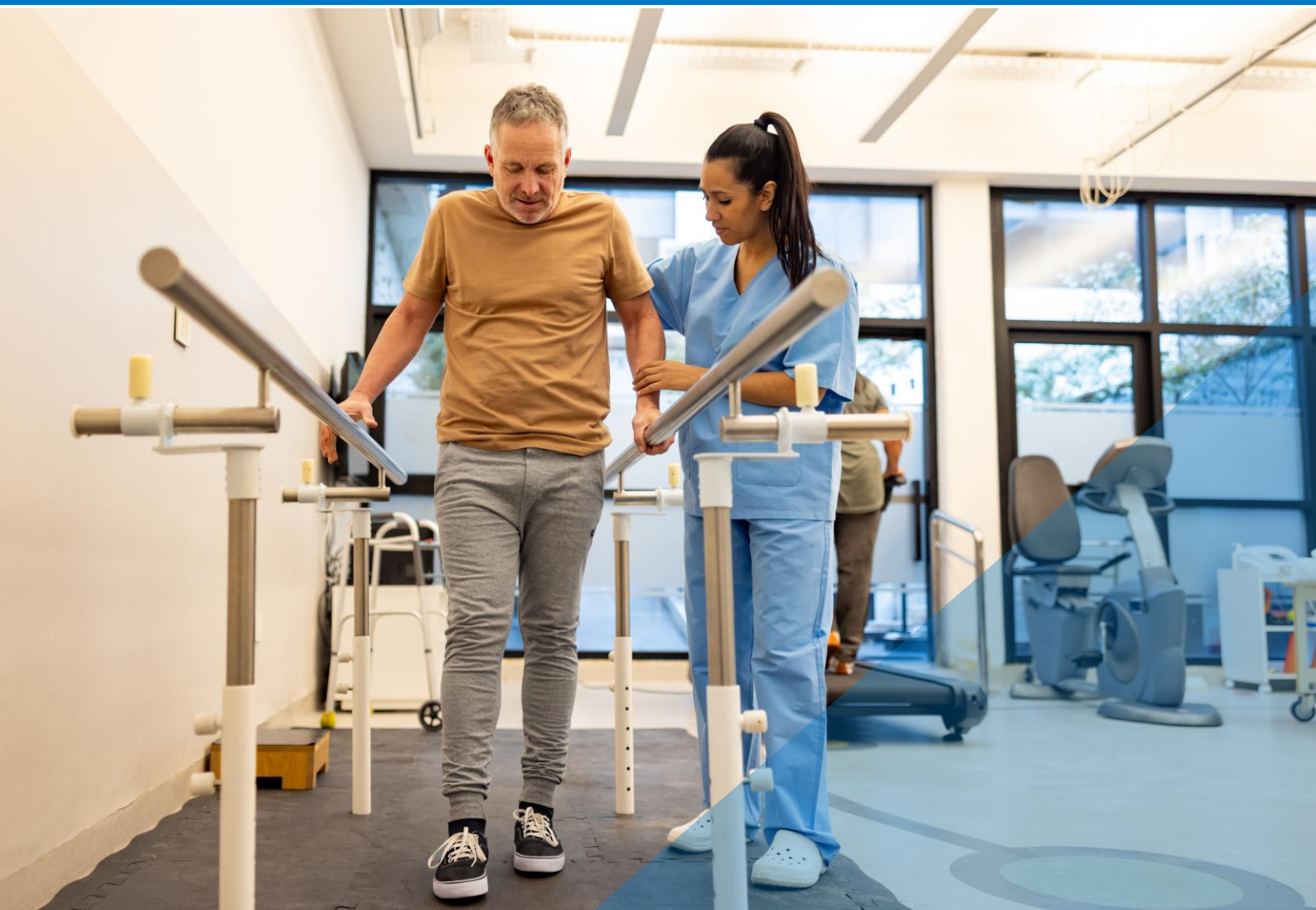
Study Outside of Physiotherapy

A small but notable proportion of physiotherapists, 10% in 2025, reported they are currently undertaking study outside of their primary profession. While unchanged from 2023, the sheer diversity of subjects being pursued paints a picture of a workforce actively broadening its horizons.

While many are pursuing further education in fields closely aligned with health, such as public health, pain management, mental health, counselling and clinical education, others are branching into business, management, IT and law. Some respondents also suggested an interest in expanding professional scope, taking on leadership roles or transitioning into new sectors.

A smaller number are engaging in studies related to holistic health, lifestyle medicine or creative pursuits, potentially reflecting an interest in more integrative practice models or personal fulfilment.





05.

Early- and Mid-Career
Physiotherapists

Graduate Satisfaction

Among foundation-level practitioners, 71% are satisfied with their decision to pursue physiotherapy, including 22% who are very satisfied.

However, 17% reported feeling dissatisfied and another 12% expressed no strong feelings, highlighting a significant minority who are either ambivalent or regretful about their career choice.

Satisfaction is notably lower among those working in private practice (70%) and higher among those in public hospitals (77%).

Graduates working full-time (70%) are less likely to be satisfied with their career choice than those working part-time (76%), having dropped from 77% in 2023. In contrast, part-time graduates are more satisfied with their choice than they were in 2023.

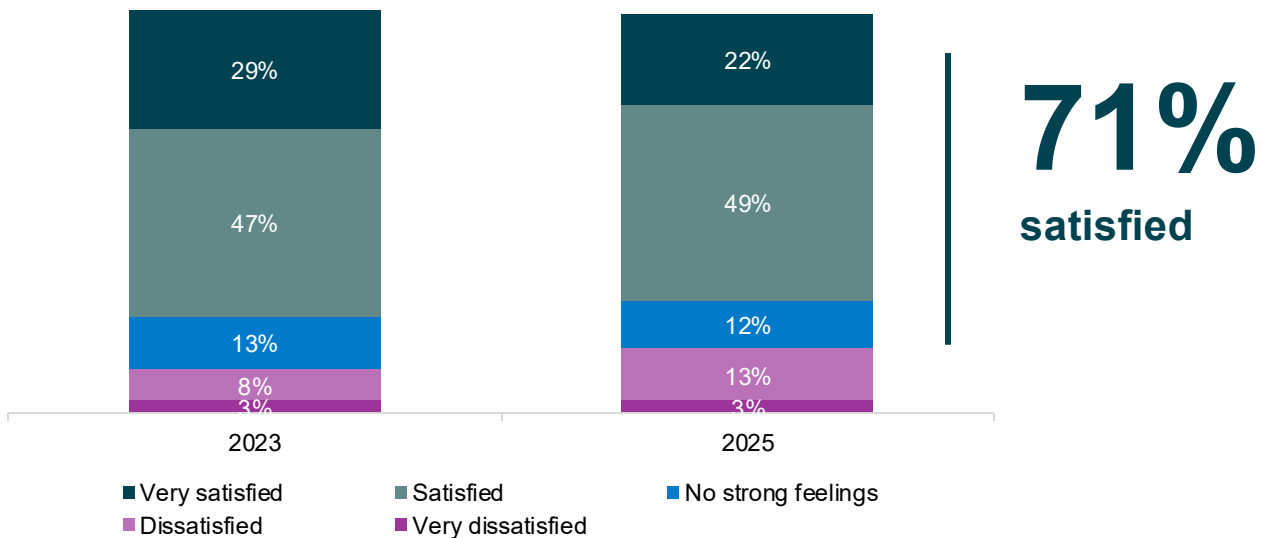
Importantly, early-career professionals who feel they are well rewarded for their work (88%) are significantly more satisfied with their decision to pursue a career in physiotherapy than those who feel they are not adequately remunerated (57%).

Table 19: Graduate Satisfaction with Career Decision, by Employment Type

	Top 2 Satisfaction		
	2023	2025	Change
Private Practice	76%	70%	-6
Public Hospital	76%	77%	+1
Full-Time	77%	70%	-7
Part-Time	60%	76%	+16
Female	78%	72%	-6
Male	72%	69%	-3
Metro	74%	68%	-6
Regional	68%	75%	+7
Rural and Remote	74%	76%	+5

Graduates who feel adequately remunerated are significantly more likely to be satisfied with their career choice.

Figure 18: Satisfaction with Physiotherapy Career Choice



Q. How satisfied are you with your decision to pursue physiotherapy as a career? 2025 n=489, 2023 n=576

There are growing concerns about the reality of physiotherapy work among early-career professionals.

Perhaps explaining the fall in the proportion of early-career respondents reporting satisfaction with their career choice, a significant proportion of these respondents expressed dissatisfaction with key aspects of their roles. In particular, 77% agreed that the reality of physiotherapy work was not what they expected, a notable increase from 63% in 2023, indicating a growing mismatch between expectations and experience.

Remuneration, workload and work hours are the key challenges.

The top concern remains remuneration, with 82% agreeing that their pay is not commensurate with their skill level, up slightly from 78% in 2023. Inflexible work hours

(53%) and heavy workloads (52%) were also cited frequently, both seeing increases from the previous year (44% and 49% respectively). These findings suggest persistent structural issues in early career-physiotherapy roles.

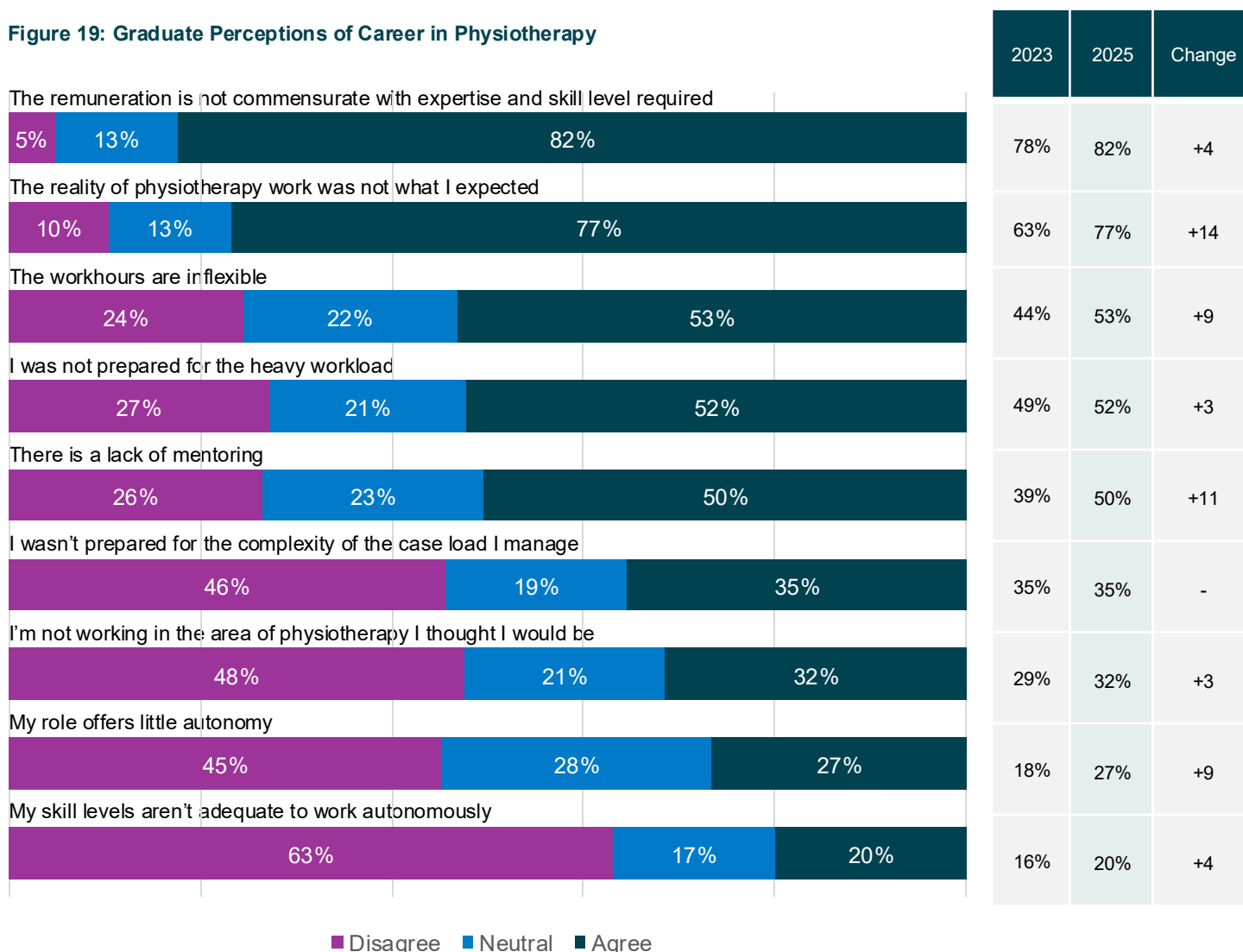
Half (50%) of early career physiotherapists also identified a lack of mentoring as an issue, rising from 39% in 2023. This suggests that many new graduates may not be receiving the guidance and support they need to thrive in their roles.

A similar proportion indicated they were not prepared for the complexity of the case load they manage (35%), with a smaller but significant proportion noting that they are not working in their expected area of physiotherapy (32%, up from 29%).

Despite this, most feel they have the skills they need to work autonomously.

Table 20: Graduate Perceptions of Career in Physiotherapy, 2023 and 2025

Figure 19: Graduate Perceptions of Career in Physiotherapy



Mid-Career Satisfaction and Pathways

Intermediate-level respondents are less likely to report high job satisfaction than those at other stages of their career and only 52% said they see a viable career pathway within the profession.

Overall, two-thirds (65%) of mid-career physiotherapists who completed the survey reported having high job satisfaction. This is the lowest level among all career stages and compares to 74% of foundation-level practitioners, 76% of highly developed and 81% of expert level respondents.

While half of the mid-career respondents see a viable career in physiotherapy, a substantial proportion either remain unsure (28%) or outright do not see a viable path (20%). Optimism about the prospects offered by the profession is slightly higher among men (54%) than women (51%) and more common among rural (64%) and regional respondents (54%) than those in metropolitan areas (48%).

Differences between practice settings are also evident. While 56% of private practice respondents said they see a viable career path, this falls to 52% of those in public hospitals. This reflects feedback by clinical specialisation; 61% of generalists and 55% of musculoskeletal

practitioners see a viable career pathway in physiotherapy.

Among those who did not see a viable pathway (or were unsure), the most common issue was inadequate pay relative to workload and qualifications, cited by 83% of respondents.

In addition to pay, 69% said that additional qualifications and skills do not lead to improved employment opportunities, suggesting a disconnect between training and real-world progression. Many also cited a lack of specialisation pathways (39%), formalised structures (37%) and leadership (32%) or management (28%) opportunities as barriers to progression.

The lack of opportunities for advancement or specialisation (67%) and limited access to professional development (37%) were significantly more likely to be cited by respondents working in public hospitals. Those in private practice were the least concerned by a lack of leadership opportunities (25%).

Just under half of mid-career physiotherapists intend to remain in the profession for over ten years (49%).



52%

of mid-career respondents see a viable career pathway within the profession.

Private practice mid-career physiotherapists are more likely to see a viable future career in the profession than respondents working in the public sector.

Figure 20: Perceptions of Viable Career Pathways in the Profession, Mid-Career Professionals by Sector

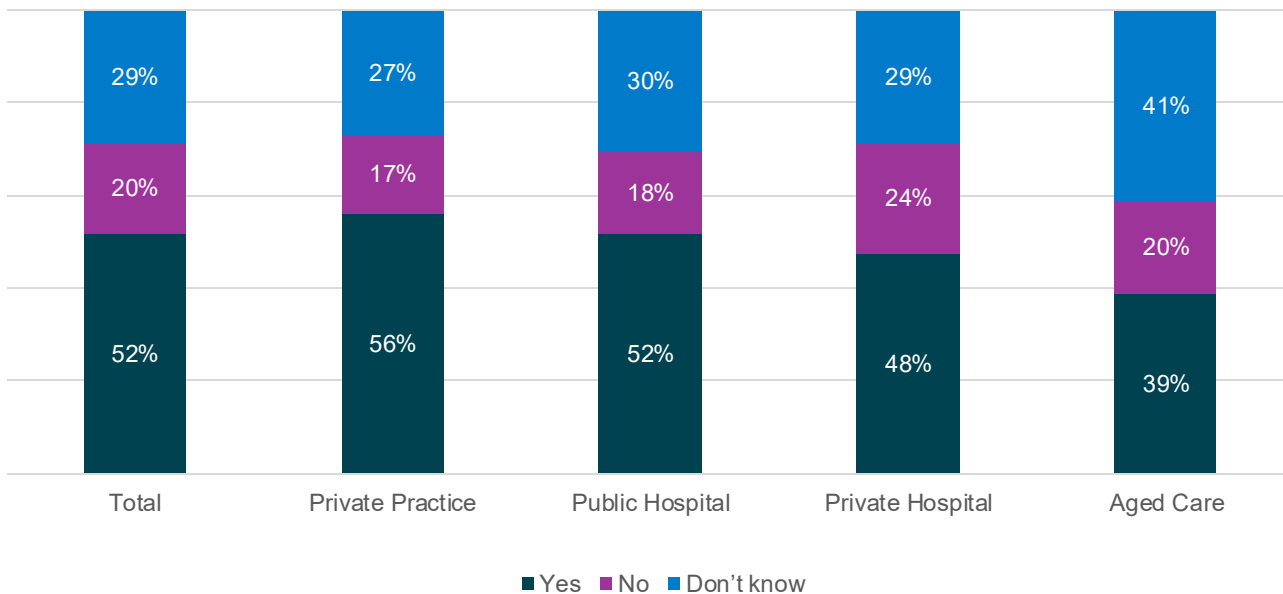


Table 21: Reasons for Lack of Career Pathways, Mid-Career Professionals by Sector

	2025	Private Practice	Public Hospital	Private Hospital	Aged Care
Sample	1050	643	104	48	51
Yes, there is a viable career pathway	52%	56%	52%	48%	39%
No	20%	17%	18%	24%	20%
Don't know	28%	27%	30%	28%	41%
Sample	489	271	51	22	32
Inadequate pay relative to workload and qualifications	83%	85%	73%	91%	75%
Additional qualifications and skills don't improve opportunities	69%	70%	74%	74%	68%
A lack of opportunities for advancement or specialisation	39%	33%	67%	55%	52%
A lack of formalised pathway	37%	33%	50%	42%	63%
A lack of leadership opportunities	32%	25%	46%	40%	48%
A lack of management opportunities	28%	24%	42%	13%	50%
Limited access to professional development	18%	14%	37%	18%	33%
Other	6%	6%	3%	3%	4%

Q. Do you see a viable career pathway within physiotherapy? n=1050, intermediate level respondents only. / Q. What factors contribute to a lack of career pathways within the profession? n=489 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

“

There is a ceiling for progression to senior roles as there is a severe bottleneck. Would be more inclined to finish a PhD and lighten my clinical load at that time.

”



06.

Job Satisfaction and Career Intentions

Current Job Satisfaction

In 2025, 71% of physiotherapists reported high job satisfaction, with half agreeing and 21% strongly agreeing that they were satisfied with their role. However, a notable minority expressed ambivalence (16% neutral) or dissatisfaction (13% disagree or strongly disagree), indicating room for improvement across the profession.

Job satisfaction was significantly higher among more experienced practitioners and those who are self-employed.

Top-two satisfaction ratings reached 81% for expert-level physiotherapists and 76% among highly developed or APA titled professionals. In contrast, satisfaction was lower among early-career respondents, with 74% of foundation-level and 65% of intermediate practitioners reporting high satisfaction. Notably, however, satisfaction among foundation-level practitioners increased substantially, from 62% in 2023 to 74% in 2025.

There is also a significant difference based on employment type, with 80% of self-employed respondents satisfied with their role, compared to just 68% of employed physiotherapists.

There is a clear correlation between higher earnings and higher job satisfaction among physiotherapists.

Just 59% of those earning under \$60,000 reported being satisfied in their role, compared to 86% of those earning over \$160,000. Satisfaction improves steadily with each income band, with a notable increase above the \$120,000 threshold.

Perceptions of being fairly remunerated are even more closely tied to job satisfaction than income alone.

Only 44% of those who strongly disagreed that they are fairly paid reported job satisfaction, compared to 93% of those who strongly agreed. Satisfaction rose sharply with each increase in agreement, with 55% satisfaction among those who selected the bottom two options, and 89% among those selecting the top two.

Figure 21: Job Satisfaction

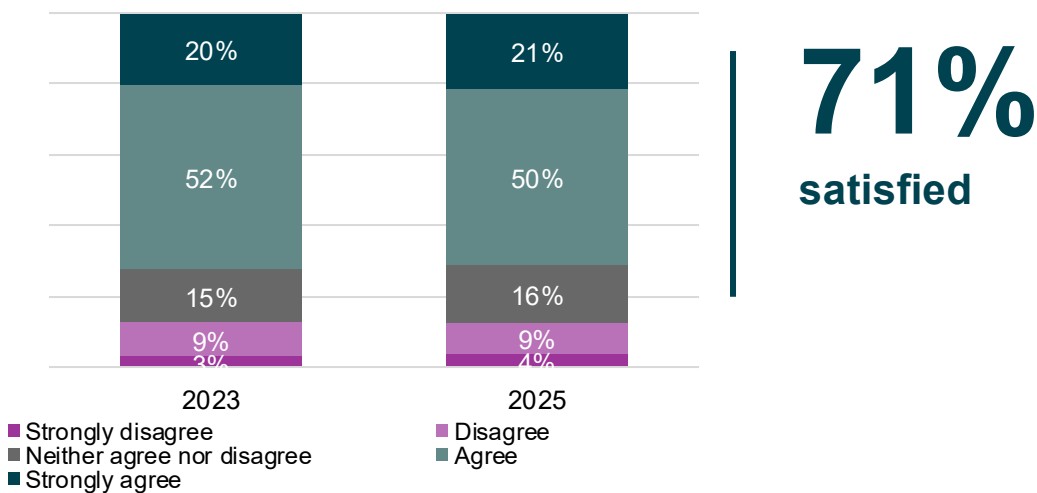
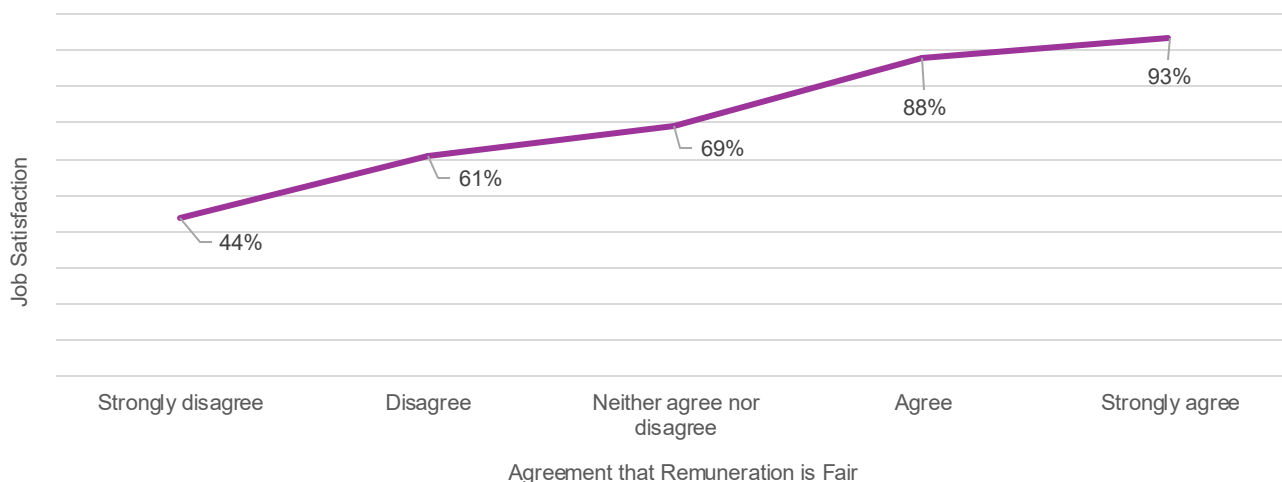


Table 22: Job Satisfaction, by Career Stage and Gender

	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample 2025	223	1085	998	216	1689	827
Top 2 Agreement 2025	74%	65%	76%	81%	71%	71%
Top 2 Agreement 2023	62%	69%	79%	86%	73%	70%

Figure 22: Job Satisfaction, by Level of Satisfaction with Remuneration

The data highlights the importance not only of competitive remuneration but also of perceived fairness. Even moderate dissatisfaction with pay fairness correlates with a drop in job satisfaction. This suggests that transparent and equitable pay structures may be just as crucial as pay rises in improving morale and retention across the physiotherapy workforce.



While job satisfaction improves with the level of remuneration, there is also a strong relationship between job satisfaction and perceptions of pay equity.



Table 23: Satisfaction with Remuneration, by Income Levels

Income Level	% Satisfied 2025
Under \$60K	59%
\$60–80K	67%
\$80–100K	63%
\$100–120K	69%
\$120–140K	75%
\$140–160K	83%
Over \$160K	86%

Job satisfaction remains stable in some areas and improves in others.

Overall job satisfaction among physiotherapists has remained relatively consistent between 2023 and 2025, though some employment types and specialisations have seen noticeable shifts.

Employment Setting Comparisons

Satisfaction declined slightly for those working in private practice (from 75% to 72%) and public hospitals (from 74% to 71%). However, there was a notable increase in satisfaction for those in private hospitals, rising from 63% to 69%. Aged care satisfaction remained unchanged at 54%, the lowest across employment settings. Those in education reported the highest levels of satisfaction overall, rising from 82% in 2023 to 87% in 2025.

Employment Type Trends

Self-employed physiotherapists remained more satisfied than employed counterparts, though satisfaction dropped from 85% to 80%. Those combining employment and self-employment also experienced a decline (74% to 69%), as did locum/contractor physiotherapists (75% to 69%). Satisfaction among employed physiotherapists remained unchanged at 68%.

Specialist Areas of Practice

Satisfaction improved most in sports and exercise (78% to 83%) and orthopaedics (66% to 71%).

Respondents working in cancer care reported a sharp decline in satisfaction, from 95% in 2023 to 78% in 2025. Other areas with decreases included paediatrics (79% to 69%), musculoskeletal (73% to 69%) and disability, which dropped from 63% to 58%, now the lowest among all specialisations.

Advanced practice and rotating physiotherapist, both public hospital roles, reported satisfaction levels of 74% and 72% respectively.

Table 24: Job Satisfaction, by Employment Profile

	Top 2 Satisfaction		
	2023	2025	Change
Private Practice	75%	72%	-3
Public Hospital	74%	71%	-3
Private Hospital	63%	69%	+6
Aged Care	54%	54%	-
Education	82%	87%	+5
Employed	68%	68%	-
Self-employed	85%	80%	-5
Employed and Self-employed	74%	69%	-5
Locum/Contractor	75%	69%	-6
Sports and Exercise	78%	83%	+5
Pelvic Health	85%	80%	-5
Pain	73%	75%	+2
Cancer	95%	78%	-17
Advanced Practice	-	74%	-
Neurological	75%	73%	-2
Cardiorespiratory	70%	72%	+2
Rotating Physiotherapist	-	72%	-
Inpatient Hospital	68%	71%	+3
Orthopaedic	66%	71%	+5
Paediatric	79%	69%	-10
Musculoskeletal	73%	69%	-4
Generalist	68%	69%	+1
Occupational Health	61%	65%	+4
Gerontology	62%	63%	+1
Disability	63%	58%	-5

Drivers of Satisfaction

The strongest drivers of job satisfaction among physiotherapists in 2025 are grounded in both financial stability and personal fulfilment. An overwhelming 97% rated financial security and making a positive impact as critical, followed closely by salary (96%), work-life balance (95%) and working hours (95%).

High autonomy (95%) and recognition for skills and experience (95%) were also top-rated, reinforcing the fact that control over clinical decisions and professional acknowledgment are essential elements of a fulfilling career in physiotherapy.

Support, learning and relationships also matter. Many physiotherapists identified appreciation for their work (88%), access to learning and development (88%) and strong workplace relationships (87%) as meaningful contributors to satisfaction. Notably, 86% also highlighted the importance of having their values aligned with those of their employer.

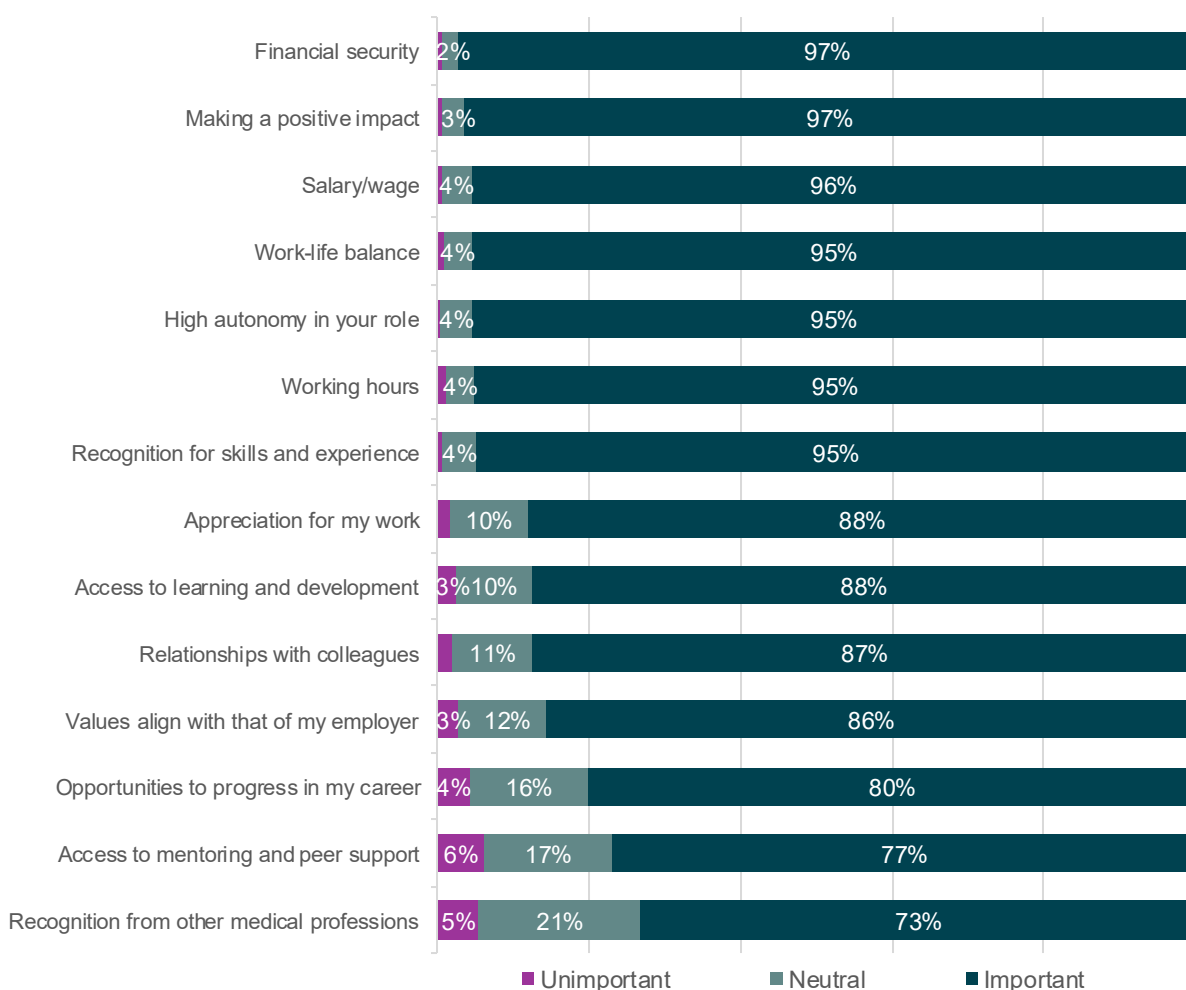
While still important, fewer physiotherapists rated opportunities for career progression (80%) and access to mentoring and peer support (77%) as top drivers. These elements remain highly valued, especially among early-career practitioners, but are somewhat less influential overall than financial, relational and autonomy-related factors.

Meanwhile, recognition from other medical professions was rated as less important (73%). This suggests that external validation may be less critical to job satisfaction than internal respect and meaningful connections within physiotherapy workplaces themselves.

Interestingly, while core fundamentals like salary, financial security and autonomy remain vital, there were falls in the stated importance of factors like appreciation, career progression, relational and developmental factors.

Table 25: Drivers of Job Satisfaction, 2023 and 2025

Figure 23: Drivers of Job Satisfaction, 2025



Top 2 Satisfaction		
2023	2025	Change
96%	97%	+1
98%	97%	-1
-	96%	-
97%	95%	-2
92%	95%	+3
94%	95%	+1
92%	95%	+3
93%	88%	-5
91%	88%	-3
92%	87%	-5
91%	86%	-5
84%	80%	-4
83%	77%	-6
76%	73%	-3

Q. How important are the following to your job satisfaction? n=2522 * Some totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

Satisfaction is also driven by demographic and employment factors.

Foundation-level physiotherapists were more likely to rate mentoring, learning and progression as highly important (e.g. 95% rated mentoring as a top factor, compared to just 55% of expert-level clinicians). Those in the intermediate stages of their career were more likely to rate working hours as highly important to their job satisfaction (96%), while those with highly developed skills are motivated by autonomy in their role.

Women were more likely than men to say their satisfaction was linked to being able to make a positive impact, being appreciated for their contribution, access to development and relationships with colleagues.

Differences also emerged across settings and specialisations. Opportunities for career progression were more highly rated as important to job satisfaction by those working in public hospitals (91%) compared to 76% in private practice.

Similarly, access to mentoring and peer support was a stronger driver for those in public hospitals (85%) than for those in private practice (75%).

Working hours were significantly more important for respondents working in private hospitals (99%), while salary (89%), financial security (92%) and work-life balance (87%) are less significant drivers for respondents working in the tertiary sector.

Those working in advanced practice (94%) or rotating physiotherapist (93%) roles placed more emphasis on recognition from other medical practitioners than other respondents. Specialist neurological or paediatric physiotherapists were significantly more likely to be driven by access to learning and development (96%) than those specialising in other clinical areas.

Full-time employees (88%) were more likely to say that opportunities to progress their career are important to their job satisfaction than part-time or casual physiotherapists.

Table 26: Drivers of Job Satisfaction, by Career Stage

Top 2 (% Important/Very Important)	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	2522	223	1085	998	216	1689	827
Financial security	97%	99%	97%	96%	95%	97%	97%
Making a positive impact	97%	98%	96%	97%	96%	98%	94%
Salary/wage	96%	96%	96%	94%	94%	95%	96%
Work-life balance	95%	98%	96%	94%	90%	97%	92%
High autonomy in your role	95%	87%	96%	97%	98%	95%	96%
Working hours	95%	95%	96%	95%	88%	97%	92%
Recognition for skills and experience	95%	92%	95%	96%	96%	96%	93%
Appreciation for my work	88%	89%	88%	88%	88%	90%	84%
Access to learning and development	88%	98%	88%	84%	74%	91%	81%
Relationships with colleagues	87%	91%	86%	88%	88%	91%	80%
Values align with that of my employer	86%	90%	85%	85%	85%	90%	78%
Opportunities to progress in my career	80%	92%	80%	77%	69%	80%	81%
Access to mentoring and peer support	77%	95%	79%	69%	55%	81%	69%
Recognition from other professionals	73%	65%	71%	78%	80%	74%	72%



Comparative Job Satisfaction

Implying that satisfaction builds with experience, more than half of respondents indicate they are more satisfied with their role now than when they graduated.

Over half of physiotherapists (54%) reported higher job satisfaction now than when they first graduated. This suggests that, although the early years in the profession can be challenging – as seen earlier, where many early-career professionals cited heavy workloads, poor remuneration and a lack of mentoring – the experience of physiotherapists tends to improve over time.

Overall, 28% said they are 'much more satisfied' and 26% 'slightly more satisfied'. In contrast, 28% reported being less satisfied now (12% 'much less' and 16% 'slightly less'), while 17% said their satisfaction remained about the same.

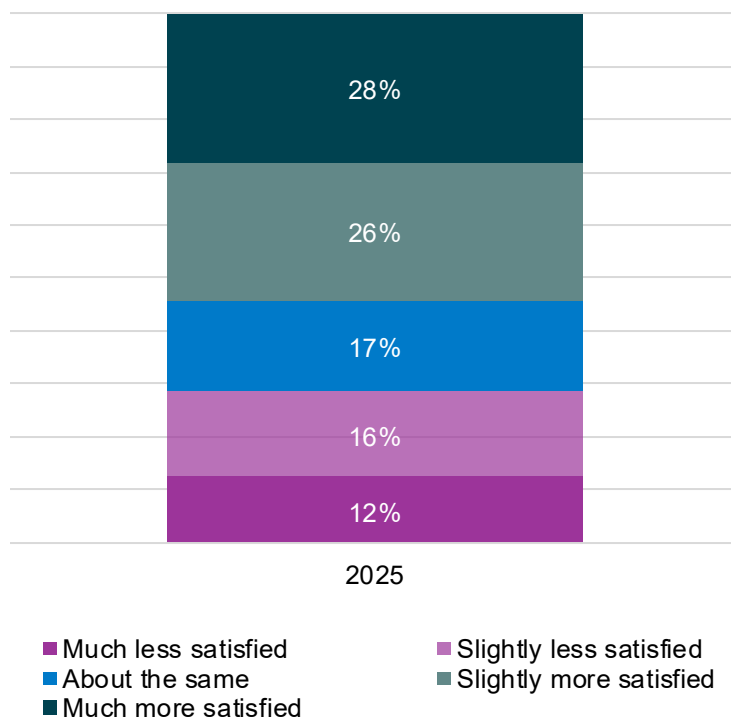
By career stage, 52% of intermediate-level practitioners are more satisfied now than at the beginning of their career, rising to 59% among expert practitioners. Women

and men reported similar levels of improved satisfaction (53% and 57% respectively).

Across practice settings, those working in private practice (56%) were most likely to feel more satisfied, with 31% saying they are 'much more satisfied' than when they graduated. By contrast, satisfaction gains were lower among those in public hospitals (47%), where 32% said they were less satisfied.

Overall, the data suggests that job satisfaction builds gradually and highlights the importance of long-term support, clear career pathways and realistic expectations during training and early practice.

Figure 24: Comparative Job Satisfaction



54%
more satisfied
than at graduation

Career Intentions

Most physiotherapists plan to remain in the profession long-term, but uncertainty has increased since 2023.

Down from 55% in 2023, a majority (52%) of physiotherapists indicated they intend to stay in the profession for more than 10 years. This long-term commitment was highest among male respondents (57%), compared to 49% of female respondents.

Among career stages, 62% of foundation-level practitioners plan to remain for over a decade, the highest of any group, while this proportion was slightly lower among intermediate (49%), highly developed (52%) and expert practitioners (49%). Notably, a higher proportion of expert-level practitioners (25%) indicated an intention to leave within five years, suggesting that later-career exit

may be more common.

The proportion of respondents intending to remain in the profession for less than five years remained consistent with 2023, at one in five.

Only a small proportion across all groups indicated they plan to leave in less than one year (2% to 4%), although a notable share (11%) were unsure of their future in the profession. The proportion who are uncertain is up from 6% two years ago.

Figure 25: Intention to Remain

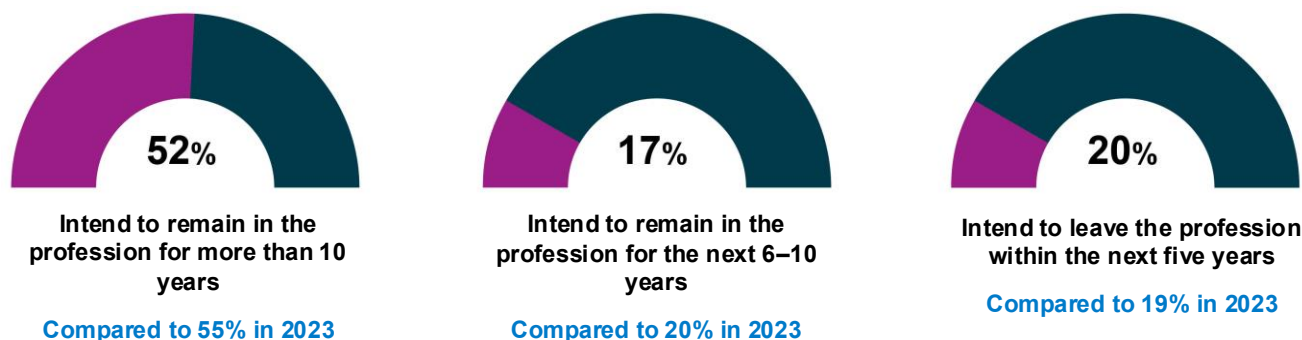


Table 27: Intention to Remain, by Career Stage, Gender and Region 2025

	Sample	Less than 1 year	1–2 years	3–5 years	6–10 years	More than 10 years	Unsure
Total	2521	3%	5%	12%	17%	52%	11%
Foundation	223	2%	3%	11%	10%	62%	12%
Intermediate	1084	4%	6%	11%	18%	49%	13%
Highly developed	998	2%	5%	13%	19%	52%	9%
Expert	216	2%	8%	15%	22%	49%	4%
Female	1689	3%	5%	12%	19%	49%	12%
Male	826	3%	5%	11%	13%	57%	10%
Metropolitan	1750	3%	5%	13%	17%	51%	11%
Regional	380	2%	6%	9%	21%	52%	10%
Rural and Remote	391	3%	4%	12%	15%	53%	12%

Q. How long do you intend to continue working within the physiotherapy profession? n=2521 / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Among physiotherapists who do not intend to remain in the profession beyond the next five years, a wide range of concerns were identified, most notably around pay, progression, wellbeing, and work sustainability.

Physiotherapists are increasingly disillusioned with the profession’s financial and structural foundations. Inadequate remuneration was cited by 60% of respondents in 2025, a sharp increase from 45% in 2023, and was especially prominent among early-career professionals.

Mental burnout is also a persistent and worsening concern, reported by 35% of respondents in 2025. This is up slightly from 32% in 2023 and is most acute among early-career practitioners and women, with many describing the compounding effects of emotional fatigue, high workloads and limited autonomy. This strain is further exacerbated by the administrative burdens of programs such as the NDIS, leaving many feeling unsupported and overwhelmed.

Alongside this, a growing number of respondents identified limited career progression (28%, up from 24%) and lack of recognition (19%, up from 10%) as contributing to their desire to exit the field. Men are more likely to be considering their future due to a lack of

opportunities for career progression (38% compared to 23% of women).

One in ten respondents also indicated they no longer find the work fulfilling or meaningful, most particularly intermediate-level physiotherapists, 14% of whom listed this as a reason for questioning their interest in the profession.

The physical intensity of physiotherapy work continues to impact practitioners across all career stages (10%). While less likely to be cited by expert-level practitioners, musculoskeletal injuries, chronic fatigue and age-related conditions were cited by some professionals as reasons for stepping back. Even younger physiotherapists expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of manual therapy roles.

These combined pressures are prompting many to reconsider their futures. Some are exploring roles in health policy, research, education or adjacent fields such as injury management or health technology. Others are leaving health altogether for corporate, academic or lifestyle-driven careers.

Notably, a growing cohort of respondents, particularly those in early and mid-career, expressed uncertainty about their next steps, torn between their passion for patient care and the professional challenges they face.

Table 28: Reasons for Considering Leaving Physiotherapy

	2023	2025	Foundation	Intermediate	Highly Developed	Expert	Female	Male
Sample	955	909	64	397	366	82	635	271
Inadequate remuneration	45%	60%	66%	65%	55%	24%	57%	65%
Mental burnout	32%	35%	44%	39%	28%	12%	40%	24%
Lack of career progression	24%	28%	35%	30%	27%	4%	23%	38%
Considering retirement	31%	23%	1%	16%	37%	62%	26%	16%
Lack of recognition	10%	19%	12%	22%	19%	6%	20%	18%
Poor work-life balance	17%	16%	25%	18%	13%	6%	17%	15%
Too physically demanding	12%	10%	14%	10%	10%	1%	13%	5%
Work not fulfilling/meaningful	11%	10%	4%	14%	7%	5%	8%	15%
No sense of achievement	7%	6%	10%	7%	3%	0%	6%	6%
Lack of career support and mentoring	7%	6%	12%	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%
Lack of job security	3%	5%	8%	6%	4%	2%	5%	7%
Not mentally stimulating	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%	6%
Other	9%	11%	15%	10%	9%	16%	10%	12%

Q. Can you tell us why you are unsure or considering leaving the physiotherapy profession within the next five years? n=909 / Q. Can you explain your response, including what career you are seeking. n=554 free text comments / Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups

Top Reasons for Considering a Career Change

1. Dissatisfaction with Pay and Conditions

Inadequate remuneration remains the most frequently cited reason for physiotherapists considering leaving the profession, mentioned by 60% of respondents in 2025, up sharply from 45% in 2023. This concern spans all career stages but is especially acute among foundation and intermediate practitioners, where two-thirds (66% and 65% respectively) identify it as a key issue.

Comments frequently reference the mismatch between the physical and emotional demands of physiotherapy and the low financial reward, with some noting that less skilled or regulated professions offer better compensation.

- *'My husband is a doctor; has 2 university degrees and 7 years of university and I have 4 degrees (2 bachelors, a DPT and a Master's), 8 years of university and I am APA titled and he earns double the amount of money I do.'* (Highly Developed, Other)
- *'As a physio with 47yrs + experience & post graduate Quals, we do not get equivalent remuneration as other non-health professionals get.'* (Highly Developed, Private Practice)

2. Burnout and Wellbeing

Mental burnout was the second most common reason for exiting the profession, with 35% identifying it in 2025, up slightly from 32% in 2023. It was particularly prevalent among women (40%) and early-career practitioners, affecting 44% of foundation and 39% of intermediate respondents.

Open-ended responses describe emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue and the psychological toll of heavy workloads, administrative burden and low recognition.

- *'I'm burnt out, it's a highly emotional job and I can work with less stress and more pay in many other jobs... I loved this profession but it's completely unsustainable.'* (Intermediate, Private Practice)
- *'Thought I would like private practice but I am exhausted, long hours and low pay with no progression. I am seeking something that is remunerated for the hours of work and study.'* (Foundation, Private Practice)

3. Limited Career Progression and Recognition

Lack of career progression (28% up from 24%) and lack of recognition (19% up from 10%) were also cited more frequently in 2025 than in 2023, reinforcing the narrative that structural limitations are discouraging career longevity.

Some respondents expressed frustration about hitting pay and responsibility ceilings early in their careers, particularly in private practice. Some noted that their clinical expertise was overlooked or undervalued, especially when compared to other allied health professionals. These issues were often linked with a desire to shift into non-clinical, managerial or policy roles that offer clearer advancement and more recognition.

- *'Specialist physiotherapists do not receive any financial recognition in public health.'* (Expert, Public Hospital)
- *'Poor public recognition of our skill, training, education level and expertise, poor remuneration compared to other professions with equivalent levels of formal training.'* (Highly Developed, Private Practice)

4. Retirement Driven by Age, Health and Disillusionment

As expected, retirement was most often cited by older and more experienced practitioners, with 62% of expert physiotherapists nominating it as their reason for leaving, compared to just 1% of foundation practitioners.

Many reflected positively on long and rewarding careers, yet others expressed disappointment that government policies, particularly NDIS pricing changes, had hastened their departure. Health concerns and the physical strain of physiotherapy were also common themes, with several respondents citing arthritis, injury or chronic fatigue as key factors influencing their decision to retire or reduce clinical hours.

- *'Retirement, high degree of burnout and latest NDIS cuts contributing.'* (Highly Developed, Private Practice)
- *'Retirement due to physical demands and poor remuneration for experience in private practice.'* (Intermediate, Private Practice)

Top Reasons for Considering a Career Change

5. Government Policy and NDIS Impacting Morale and Sustainability

Frustration with government policy, particularly the NDIS, featured prominently in the qualitative data. Respondents described the NDIS as overly bureaucratic, poorly remunerated and disrespectful to physiotherapists. Several indicated that changes to pricing and reporting requirements have made practice unsustainable, especially for sole traders and rural practitioners.

- *'Working with the NDIA is frustrating, degrading and not rewarding.'* (Expert, Private Practice)
- *'Becoming frustrated with being under valued by the Australian health Care system, particularly Medicare, DVA and NDIS. I don't agree with funneling everyone through a GP. Lack of ability to send for scans and refer direct to specialists.'* (Intermediate, Private Practice)

6. Physical Toll of Clinical Practice

The physical demands of physiotherapy remain a critical factor driving practitioners to reduce or leave clinical work. In 2025, 10% of respondents reported that the profession had become too physically taxing, only slightly below 2023 levels.

Respondents cited musculoskeletal issues such as chronic back, hand or joint pain as key reasons they could no longer sustain hands-on work, especially in roles requiring frequent manual therapy. This issue disproportionately affected intermediate and highly experienced practitioners and was cited by 14% at the foundation level of their career.

- *"I cannot physically continue. Looking at other options.'* (Highly Developed, Private Practice)
- *'Physio is very physically, mentally and emotionally demanding as a career. It provides very questionable remuneration for junior/intermediate practitioners.'* (Intermediate, Private Practice)

7. Desire for Non-Clinical or Managerial Roles

Respondents want to move away from hands-on clinical work into roles that offer clearer progression, better remuneration and improved work-life balance. Common destinations include management, health policy, workplace health and safety, public service, injury management, case management and health tech.

- *'Workplace health and safety. Hands off entirely – and far better remunerated with opportunities for career progression.'* (Intermediate, Private Practice)
- *'I have an MBA now, I am wanting to use this to get better pay in a more admin based, non-clinical role.'* (Highly Developed, Private Practice)

8. Transition to Other Healthcare or Related Fields

Some respondents indicated plans to transition from physiotherapy into other healthcare or adjacent fields. Many cited medicine, health technology, injury management, occupational health or public service as alternative paths offering better remuneration, respect and work-life balance.

Some expressed disillusionment with the profession's limited growth opportunities and undervaluation when compared to other health disciplines.

- *'I am considering non-clinical roles such as Injury Management Advisor or Rehab Coordinator, or considering returning to study Medicine.'* (Foundation, Public Hospital)
- *'I have changed to working in an allied health role with services Australia. I can use my qualifications with a much better stability for income, work life balance is improved, and I have received much better training and support than any physio role ...'* (Intermediate, Other)



High burnout, which is compounding with each year. Remuneration is not reflective of the amount we give, both physically and emotionally. Little career progression or change available. Private practice fees are making services less and less accessible.



Highly Developed Practitioner, Private Practice



07.

Public Sector
Physiotherapy



Public Sector Physiotherapy

Public sector physiotherapists are predominantly female (73%), with women making up a much larger share of the part-time workforce (85%) compared to full-time roles (66%). Men represent 27% overall but are more common in full-time positions (34%) than part-time (15%).

The workforce is relatively young, with two in five (41%) aged under 35, although this skews heavily toward full-time work. Part-time roles are more evenly distributed across ages, with higher proportions in the 35-44 (40%) and 45-54 (22%) brackets.

Educationally, bachelor's and clinical master's degrees are the dominant qualifications (each at 40% overall), though graduate certificates are more common among part-timers (14%) than full-timers (5%). Doctoral qualifications, while rare, are twice as common in part-time work (6% vs 3%).

Career stage varies significantly by employment type. Full-time public sector physiotherapists are more likely to be in the foundation stage (20%) or intermediate stage (37%), while part-timers are more concentrated at the highly developed stage (51%) and have a slightly higher proportion of experts (11% vs 7%). This suggests part-time work in the public sector may be more common among experienced practitioners.

Geographically, most public sector respondents work in metropolitan areas (63%), with similar representation across full-time (65%) and part-time (62%) roles. Nearly two in five public sector physiotherapists are based in regional towns (18%) or rural and remote areas (19%). Just over a third of respondents working in the public sector are willing to work regionally (34%).

In 2025, public sector physiotherapists reported an average annual salary of \$109,000, representing a 5.8% increase from 2023.

Median pay sits at \$110,000, with the middle 50% earning between \$90,000 and \$128,000. Salaries vary notably by career stage: foundation practitioners earn an average of \$82,000, rising to \$104,000 at the intermediate stage and \$119,000 for highly developed practitioners. Interestingly, expert-level practitioners reported a decline of 6% from 2023, averaging \$126,000 in 2025 compared to \$134,000 two years earlier, although this is based on a smaller sample size than other categories.

The gender pay gap persists across all career stages, with men earning more on average than women in public hospitals. Overall, male physiotherapists in the public sector earn \$120,000, 15% more than the female average of \$105,000. The gap is smallest at the foundation stage (\$1,863 difference) and largest at the highly developed stage, where men earn \$16,659 more on average. While the gap narrows, at the expert level the average male salary (\$127,943) remains higher than the average female salary (\$124,304).

Currently, a majority of public sector physiotherapists report strong overall job satisfaction, with 71% selecting 'agree' or 'strongly agree' when asked if they have high satisfaction in their current role.

Most public sector physiotherapists intend to remain in the profession for the long term, with over half (52%) expecting to work in the field for more than 10 years and a further 17% planning to stay for 6–10 years.

Table 29: Public Sector Physiotherapist Profile, 2025

	Total Public Hospital	Ful-Time	Part-Time
Foundation	14%	20%	4%
Intermediate	36%	37%	34%
Highly Developed	42%	36%	51%
Expert	8%	7%	11%
Female	73%	66%	85%
Male	27%	34%	15%
Under 25	5%	8%	0%
25–34	36%	46%	19%
35–44	33%	28%	40%
45–54	15%	11%	22%
55–64	9%	5%	15%
65 and over	3%	2%	3%
Graduate Certificate	8%	5%	14%
Graduate Diploma	5%	4%	6%
Bachelor's Degree	40%	42%	36%
Clinical Master's Degree	40%	42%	37%
Other Master's Degree	3%	4%	2%
Doctoral Degree	4%	3%	6%
Metro	63%	65%	62%
Regional Town	18%	20%	13%
Rural and Remote	19%	14%	25%
Prepared to Work Regionally	34%	37%	29%

Figure 26: Average Annual Public Sector Salaries by Gender and Career Stage

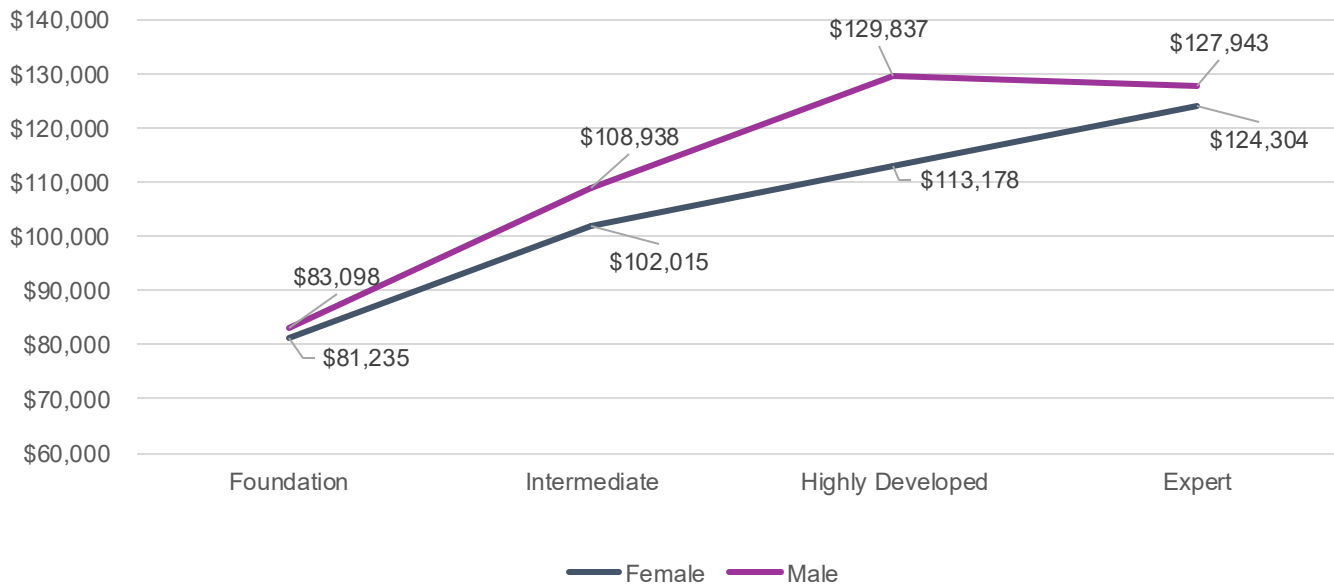


Table 30: Annual Public Sector Salaries, by Gender and Career Stage

Annual Salary, 000s	n	2023 Average	2025 Average	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Overall	289	\$103	\$109	5.8%	\$90	\$110	\$128
Female	216	\$100	\$105	5.0%	\$88	\$103	\$123
Male	73	\$113	\$120	6.2%	\$104	\$120	\$139
Foundation	22	\$77	\$82	6.5%	\$74	\$80	\$91
Intermediate	89	\$98	\$104	6.1%	\$89	\$104	\$120
Highly Developed	140	\$117	\$119	1.7%	\$102	\$120	\$140
Expert	38	\$134	\$126	-6.0%	\$118	\$129	\$140
ACT/NSW	68	\$104	\$110	5.8%	\$97	\$114	\$120
NT/SA	23	\$93	\$102	9.7%	\$100	\$103	\$111
QLD	65	\$117	\$125	6.8%	\$104	\$130	\$147
VIC/TAS	105	\$96	\$100	4.2%	\$80	\$94	\$118
WA	28	\$108	\$111	2.8%	\$93	\$120	\$127
Advanced Practice	35	-	\$130	-	\$120	\$130	\$150

Q. How much is your annual salary per annum (including commission if applicable), excluding superannuation and other benefits? n=289 | Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups | * Please note small samples can lead to fluctuations in results.



Area of Practice

Public sector physiotherapists work across a diverse mix of specialties, with clear differences emerging between full-time and part-time roles.

Rotating physiotherapists are by far the most common, but this is heavily skewed towards full-time staff. One in four full-timers works in a rotating role compared with just one in 20 part-timers.

Part-time physiotherapists are more likely to specialise in areas such as paediatrics. Conversely, acute-focused roles such as intensive care are far more common among full-time physiotherapists.

Other specialties such as musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory, neurological, rehabilitation,

orthopaedics and oncology are more evenly distributed between full- and part-time work, although each accounts for only a small share of the workforce.

Among the 10% working in advanced practice, 47% specialise in emergency department physiotherapy and 43% in musculoskeletal screening. The remaining 10% work in other areas, including vestibular ENT and cardiorespiratory.

A small group (5% overall) report not working clinically at all. This is slightly more common among full-time staff.



The majority of advanced practice physiotherapists work in the emergency department (47%) or musculoskeletal screening (43%).

Table 31: Area of Practice, Public Sector

	Total	Full-Time	Part-Time
Sample	331	174	150
Rotating physiotherapist	18%	25%	5%
Musculoskeletal	12%	13%	10%
Advanced practice	10%	8%	14%
Cardiorespiratory	6%	7%	6%
Gerontology	6%	4%	9%
Women's, Men's and Pelvic Health	6%	4%	9%
Acute medical	5%	6%	2%
Paediatric	5%	1%	11%
Neurological	5%	4%	6%
Rehabilitation	5%	3%	7%
Orthopaedic	3%	3%	3%
Intensive care	3%	4%	0%
Generalist	2%	3%	2%
Cancer/Oncology	2%	1%	2%
Pain	1%	1%	2%
Palliative care	1%	1%	0%
Other	4%	4%	5%
I do not work clinically	5%	6%	3%



08.

Private Practice
Physiotherapy



28%
of respondents own a
physiotherapy practice.

Private Practice Physiotherapy

Private practice physiotherapists are a diverse group in terms of career stage, with nearly half (49%) at the intermediate level and a further 31% at the highly developed level. Practice owners are more likely to be aged 35–44 (34%) or 45–54 (25%), while non-owners are more heavily represented in the younger 25–34 age group (58%).

Foundation-level practitioners make up 16% of the cohort, while only 4% are at the expert level. Practice owners tend to be more experienced, with a higher proportion in the highly developed (46%) and expert (9%) categories compared to non-owners, reflecting the greater experience typically required to run a practice.

Both owners and non-owners are majority female (60% and 64% respectively). While regional distribution patterns are similar, physiotherapists working in rural and remote areas are slightly more likely to be owners than non-owners (21% vs 13%) and physiotherapists working in metropolitan areas are more likely to be non-practice owners (72%) than owners (63%).

Salaries across private practice have increased by 4.4% since 2023, with the overall average now \$95,000.

In 2025, male physiotherapists in private practice earn an average salary of \$102,000, compared to \$91,000 for women, a gap of \$11,000 or 10.8%. This is a wider gap than in 2023, when the difference was \$5,000 (5.3%).

The gap starts early but becomes especially large at senior

levels. Among expert-level private practitioners, men earn 25% more than women or nearly \$42,000 more per year. Even at the 'highly developed' level, male physiotherapists earn nearly \$15,500 more than their female peers.

Pay growth has been most pronounced among experts, whose average salary rose by 19% to \$150,000, followed by highly developed practitioners, who now average \$111,000 after a 7.7% increase. Intermediate and foundation salaries have grown more modestly, to \$93,000 and \$78,000 respectively.

When comparing salaries between practice owners and non-owners, there is a clear gap in both pay levels and growth.

Practice owners earn substantially more, with the average increasing from \$110,000 in 2023 to \$117,000 in 2025, a 6.4% rise. In contrast, non-practice owners earn significantly less on average, at \$92,000 in 2025, following a 4.5% increase from \$88,000 in 2023. Median salaries reinforce this difference, with owners at \$110,000 compared to \$89,000 for non-owners, while owners' earnings at the 75th percentile (\$130,000) are 30% higher than the equivalent level for non-owners (\$100,000).

These figures suggest that ownership brings not only higher earnings but also a wider income range at the upper end of the scale, reflecting the additional financial rewards (and risks) of running a business.

Table 32: Practice Owner Profile, 2025

	Total Private Practice	Practice Owners	Non-Practice Owners
Foundation	16%	3%	24%
Intermediate	49%	42%	54%
Highly Developed	31%	46%	21%
Expert	4%	9%	1%
Female	63%	60%	64%
Male	37%	39%	35%
Under 25	5%	0%	9%
25–34	43%	22%	58%
35–44	26%	34%	20%
45–54	15%	25%	8%
55–64	8%	14%	5%
65+	3%	4%	1%
Graduate certificate	5%	6%	4%
Graduate diploma	4%	5%	2%
Bachelor's degree	50%	49%	51%
Master's degree	36%	35%	37%
Doctoral degree	4%	3%	5%
PhD	1%	2%	1%
Metropolitan	69%	63%	72%
Regional Town	15%	16%	14%
Rural and Remote	16%	21%	13%
Prepared to Work Regionally	29%	26%	31%
Full-Time	58%	48%	60%
Part-Time	36%	44%	35%

Figure 27: Average Annual Private Sector Salaries by Gender and Career Stage

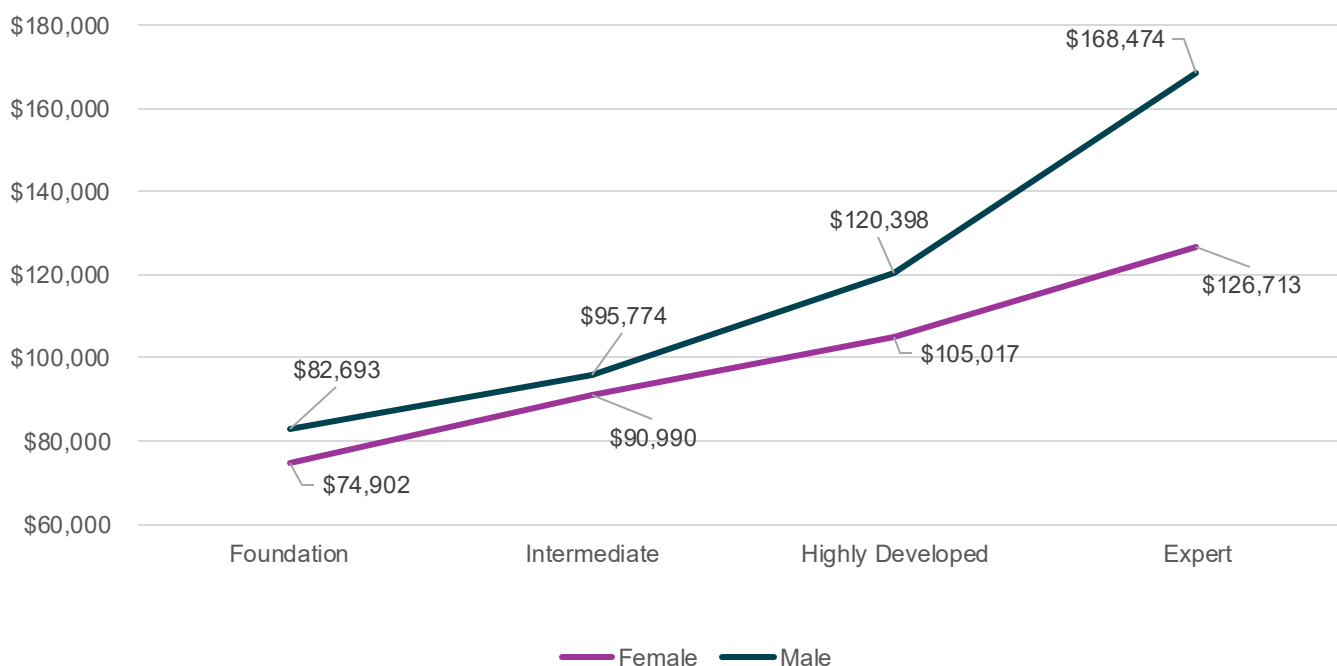


Table 33: Annual Private Practice Salaries, by Gender and Career Stage

Annual Salary, 000s	n	2023 Average	2025 Average	% Change	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Overall	741	\$91	\$95	4.4%	\$79	\$90	\$105
Female	454	\$89	\$91	2.2%	\$75	\$87	\$100
Male	284	\$94	\$102	8.5%	\$81	\$90	\$110
Foundation	128	\$76	\$78	2.6%	\$70	\$75	\$85
Intermediate	347	\$88	\$93	5.6%	\$80	\$90	\$100
Highly Developed	231	\$103	\$111	7.7%	\$91	\$110	\$130
Expert	35	\$126	\$150	19.0%	\$100	\$130	\$179
Practice Owners	126	\$110	\$117	6.4%	\$89	\$110	\$130
Non-Practice Owners	615	\$88	\$92	4.5%	\$76	\$89	\$100

Q. How much is your annual salary per annum (including commission if applicable), excluding superannuation and other benefits? n=741 | Result is significantly higher/lower than other groups | * Please note small samples can lead to fluctuations in results.

Clinical Areas

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy remains the dominant area of clinical focus in private practice, accounting for 56% of all practitioners (compared to 39% of all respondents). This proportion was highest among full-time physiotherapists (65%) and lowest among part-time workers (51%). There was also a clear gender divide: 67% of male physiotherapists reported working in musculoskeletal roles compared with 49% of women.

Female physiotherapists in private practice were notably more likely than men to work in areas such as paediatrics (12% vs 1%), women’s, men’s and pelvic health (8% vs 0%) and neurological physiotherapy (7% vs 3%). At 15%, casual practitioners working in private practice are also more likely to work in women’s, men’s and pelvic health.

Men had higher representation than women in sport and exercise physiotherapy (10% vs 4%).

Other areas such as occupational health, gerontology, orthopaedics, disability and pain management were reported by smaller numbers of physiotherapists overall. However, a higher proportion of female practitioners were

represented in the ‘other’ category, suggesting engagement in niche or mixed-scope practice areas.

These patterns highlight how gender and employment status intersect with clinical focus, with women more likely to specialise in care areas that support specific population groups and men more concentrated in musculoskeletal and generalist roles.

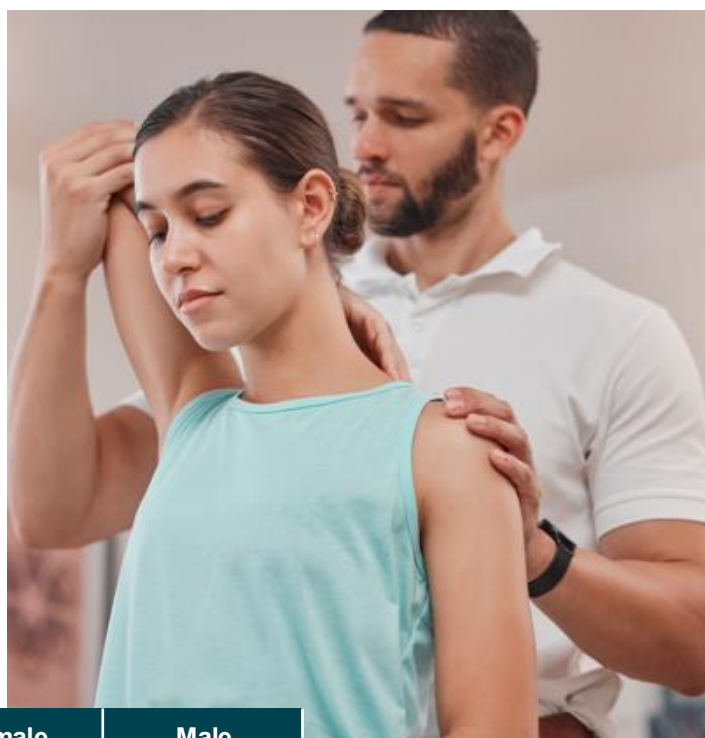


Table 34: Area of Practice, Private Practice

	Total	Female	Male
Sample	1592	1,009	578
Musculoskeletal	56%	49%	67%
Paediatric	8%	12%	1%
Generalist	7%	7%	8%
Sports and Exercise	6%	4%	10%
Women’s, Men’s and Pelvic Health	5%	8%	0%
Neurological	5%	7%	3%
Disability	3%	4%	1%
Occupational Health	2%	2%	2%
Gerontology	2%	2%	2%
Orthopaedic	2%	1%	2%
Pain	1%	1%	1%
Other	2%	3%	1%
I do not work clinically	1%	1%	1%

Key Revenue Sources

Private physiotherapy practices in 2025 continue to draw revenue from a wide range of funding sources.

The most common income streams are private health insurance (23%) and direct patient payments (23%) which remain the backbone of most practices' funding. While still dominant, private health insurance is down from 26% in 2023.

Notably, revenue from the NDIS grew substantially, from 15% in 2023 to 22% in 2025, making it the fastest growing source of funding. Smaller increases were also seen in income from Medicare Benefits Schedule/CDM Care Plans (10%), state compensable schemes (9%) and in-home aged care (5%). Other sources such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs (3%), residential aged care (1%), private hospital contracts (1%) and sporting team contracts (1%) remained stable but represent minor revenue streams.

Analysis of income sources by clinical practice area reveals distinct patterns in physiotherapy revenue models, highlighting how different specialisations rely on varied funding streams:

- Practitioners in musculoskeletal (33%) sports and exercise (30%) and women's, men's and pelvic health (31%) specialisations are significantly more reliant on private health insurance.

- Patient payments represent a major revenue source for those in sports and exercise (39%), pelvic health (37%), and musculoskeletal (27%) areas.
- In contrast, physiotherapists working in disability (85%) and paediatrics (78%) derive the majority of their income from the NDIS Neurological (51%) and generalist (20%) physiotherapists also report meaningful income from this funding source.
- Medicare Benefits Schedule contributions are modest overall (10%) but particularly important for generalists (15%), musculoskeletal (13%) and pelvic health (19%) practitioners.
- State compensable schemes (e.g. workers' compensation and injury management) contribute most to income for pain (36%), occupational health (26%) and neurological (18%) clinicians.
- Aged care funding plays a critical role in gerontology, with in-home aged care contributing 52% of income and residential aged care a further 7%.
- In occupational health, 39% of income comes from 'other' sources, possibly reflecting corporate or employment-related contracts.

Table 35: Proportion of Average Annual Income Attributable to Different Income Streams

	2025	Musculoskeletal	Generalist	Paediatric	Sports and Exercise	Disability	Neurological	Pelvic Health
Sample	916	395	86	65	64	54	53	47
Private Health Insurance	23%	33%	19%	7%	30%	2%	7%	31%
Patient Payments	23%	27%	16%	9%	39%	2%	9%	37%
NDIS	22%	6%	20%	78%	4%	85%	51%	7%
Medicare Benefits	10%	13%	15%	5%	9%	2%	4%	19%
State Compensable Schemes	9%	12%	6%	1%	7%	3%	18%	3%
In-home Aged Care	5%	2%	12%	0%	0%	3%	6%	1%
Department of Veterans' Affairs	3%	4%	4%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Residential aged care	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Private Hospital contract/fees	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Sporting Team contract/fees	1%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	1%	4%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%

The Challenges Facing Physiotherapy Practice

Between 2023 and 2025, concerns about broader workforce and economic factors impacting business viability shifted significantly.

Most notably, the proportion of physiotherapy practice owners who cited health system reforms as a threat to business viability more than doubled between 2023 and 2025, rising from 17% to 37%. This substantial increase likely reflects growing concern about sector-wide reforms, particularly those related to funding models and service access.

Concerns about regulatory and funding complexity also grew, with 34% now nominating this as a key issue, up from 22% in 2023. Similarly, competition from emerging or adjacent disciplines increased from 28% to 32%, reflecting the pressure on physiotherapists to differentiate their services in a diversifying health landscape.

Meanwhile, fewer practice owners identified workforce supply (21%) and retention issues (13%) as major threats compared to 2023. This may suggest some easing in workforce pressures or simply a reprioritisation in light of more systemic reforms and policy uncertainty.

1. Impact of Health System Reform

Among the 37% of respondents who identified health system reforms as the biggest threat to their business viability, the NDIS emerged as the most significant area of concern, increasing from 30% in 2023 to 60% in 2025.

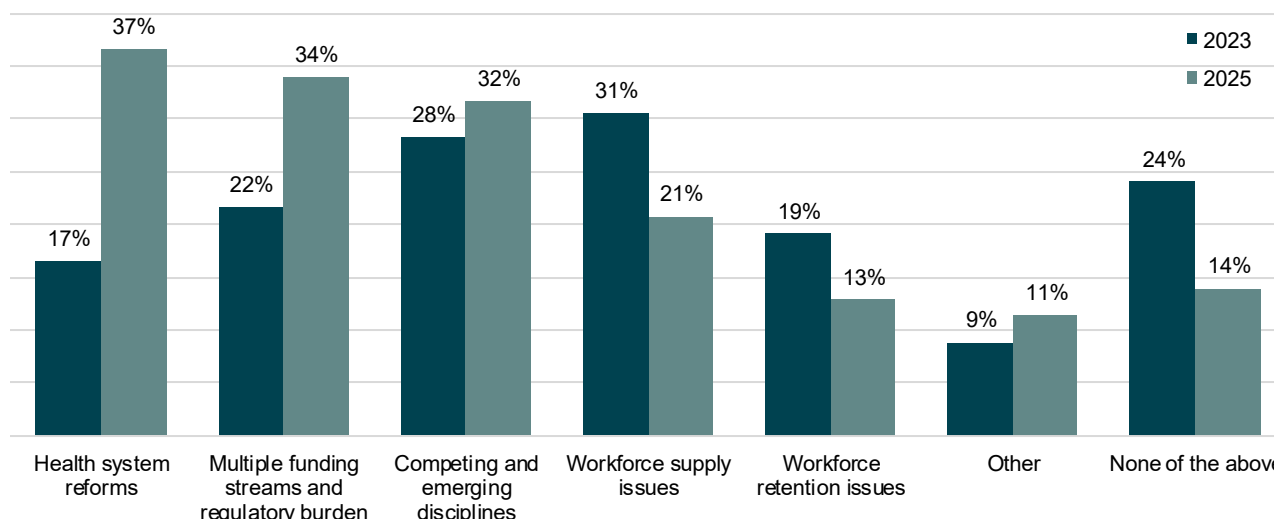
This sharp increase may reflect growing pressures around pricing, service caps, administrative complexity or policy uncertainty linked to ongoing reviews of the scheme.

In contrast, concerns about private health insurance and Medicare have declined. The proportion of physiotherapists who saw private health insurance as the greatest risk to their business fell from 55% to 36%, while concern about Medicare reforms dropped from 47% to 31%. Smaller portions of the profession identified issues related to aged care funding, DVA funding and Primary Health Network (PHN) changes.

While health system reforms are a major concern for physiotherapists across the various clinical areas, the specific reforms vary depending on the patient cohort and funding model:

- Concern about the NDIS is particularly high among those working in paediatrics, neurology and disability where 100% of respondents identified it as the most impactful.
- Concerns about private health insurance were dominant in musculoskeletal (60%) and sports and exercise (87%) physiotherapy, reflecting their greater reliance on private funding and rebate structures.
- Medicare reforms were also highly concerning for sports and exercise (60%) and musculoskeletal (44%) physiotherapists, suggesting reliance on the Chronic Condition Management program.
- Other parts of the system also emerged as pain points for more niche or generalist practices. For instance, aged care funding was a significant concern for generalists (42%) and those working in gerontology (75%). Occupational health clinicians stood out in their concern about Primary Health Network funding, with 42% identifying it as a critical issue, far above the 4% average.

Figure 28: Factors Impacting Business Viability



Q. Which, if any, of the following broader workforce and external economic factors are impacting on your business viability? 2025 n=916

Table 36: Impacts of Various Health System Reforms

	2023	2025	Change
Sample	158	306	
The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	30%	60%	+30
Private Health Insurance	55%	36%	-19
Medicare Reforms Such as Changes to Item Numbers	47%	31%	-16
Aged Care Funding	14%	16%	+2
Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Funding	16%	10%	-6
Changes in Primary Health Network (PHN) Funding	7%	4%	-3
The Workforce Incentive Program (WIP)	1%	2%	+1
Other	1%	3%	+2

2. Specific Pressures Behind Multiple Funding Streams

Beyond general health system reform, 34% of respondents rated the pressures of multiple funding streams as one of the biggest issues impacting their business viability.

In 2025, 80% of respondents who nominated the regulatory burden of multiple funding streams as a top concern said inadequate funding from payment schemes was affecting their business (up from 64% in 2023).

Administrative burdens also remained consistently high, with 54% of these respondents identifying red tape and compliance requirements across schemes such as the NDIS, Medicare and state compensable systems.

These concerns are especially relevant for practices navigating complex case loads or working across several funding systems simultaneously. The financial and operational strain of this compliance load may be contributing to broader concerns about sustainability and professional burnout.

Table 37: Multiple Funding Stream Issues

	2023	2025	Change
Sample	213	285	
Inadequate funding from payment schemes	64%	80%	+16
Red tape and administrative burden to comply with multiple funding streams	55%	54%	-1
Financial burden in maintaining compliance with multiple schemes	26%	21%	-5
Lack of consistency in income due to multiple payment schemes	22%	20%	-2
Other	2%	2%	-

3. Competitive Pressures from Other Disciplines

Nearly a third of respondents (32%) cited competition from other disciplines as one of the biggest external factors impacting their business viability.

Among these respondents, increased competition from exercise physiologists remains the most widespread threat, with 77% of respondents in 2025 identifying them as the discipline posing the greatest risk to viability. This concern is particularly acute among generalist physiotherapists, 96% of whom identified exercise physiologists as a threat to their business.

However, the competitive threat is not uniform; respondents working in paediatrics (77%) and disability (75%) also highlighted occupational therapy as a

significant competitor (26% overall), suggesting overlap in service provision and scope.

Other disciplines, while less frequently cited overall, still present concerns within specific contexts. Fitness instructors were considered a threat by 17% of respondents, rising to 47% for pelvic health and 21% for sports and exercise. Allied health assistants (6%) and care and support workers (4%) were seen as emerging competitors, especially in disability settings (22% and 7% respectively).

These findings suggest that physiotherapists are under pressure not only from funding constraints and workforce shortages, but also from the expanding roles of adjacent disciplines that may encroach on traditional physiotherapy scope of practice.

Table 38: Competing Disciplines

	2023	2025	Change
Sample	158	296	
Exercise Physiology	78%	77%	-1
Occupational Therapy	16%	26%	+10
Fitness Instructors	21%	17%	-4
Allied Health Assistants	4%	6%	+2
Care and Support Workers	4%	4%	-
Podiatry	3%	2%	-1
Other	26%	29%	+3

32%
of private practice owners say that competing disciplines pose a threat to the ongoing viability of their business..



4. Workforce Pressures

Fewer practice owners identified workforce supply (21%) and retention (13%) issues as major threats compared to 2023.

While recruitment of experienced clinicians remains the top supply issue in both years (65% in 2025), concern about recruiting new graduates fell sharply, from 33% to 19%, suggesting that recent graduate supply may be stabilising. However, concerns about the readiness of graduates continue to rise, particularly in relation to clinical skills (up from 29% to 35%) and soft skills (from 8% to 12%).

While difficulty recruiting experienced clinicians was the top issue across all settings, regional variation reveals distinct pressures in different areas. In metro areas, this concern peaked at 68%, followed closely by concerns about graduate readiness and inadequate clinical skills (39%).

Regional areas echoed these concerns but also showed elevated concern about recruiting clinicians with an advanced skill set (30%). In contrast, rural and remote areas were most affected by the difficulty of recruiting new graduates (40%, double the national average), indicating a critical pipeline issue in these locations.

Rural and remote practices also reported greater reliance on skilled migration (10%), reflecting the more complex workforce dynamics outside metropolitan areas.

While retention issues have also eased, experienced clinicians remain the most difficult to retain. In 2025, 72% of respondents who cited retention as one of the biggest threats to their business identified difficulty retaining experienced clinicians as a major issue (up from 64% in 2023).

Practices also reported challenges in retaining clinicians with advanced skill sets (35%) and new graduates (40%).

Table 39: Workforce Supply Issues

	2023	2025	Change
Sample	301	196	
Difficulty recruiting experienced clinicians	64%	65%	+1
Graduate readiness – low standard of clinical skills and competencies	29%	35%	+6
Difficulty recruiting clinicians with an advanced skill set	25%	23%	-2
Difficulty recruiting new graduates	33%	19%	-14
Optimal skill mix to support practice case load	11%	15%	+4
Graduate readiness – lack of soft skills	8%	12%	+4
Graduate readiness – lack of business acumen	10%	8%	-2
Difficulty recruiting skilled migrants	3%	3%	-
Other	4%	4%	-

Table 40: Workforce Retention Issues

	2023	2025	Change
Sample	191	122	
Difficulty retaining experienced clinicians	64%	72%	+8
Difficulty retaining new graduates	44%	40%	-4
Difficulty retaining clinicians with an advanced skill set	32%	35%	+3
Difficulty retaining skilled migrants	2%	0%	-2
Other	8%	7%	-1



09.

Appendix

Methodology

The Physiotherapy Workforce Census (Census) was conducted using an online survey of membership of the APA. The Census was open for approximately three weeks, from 9 July to 5 August 2025.

<p>Background</p>	<p>The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is the peak body for physiotherapists in Australia. The APA works to support physiotherapists at all stages of their career, providing professional development to enable them to remain registered with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia as well as offering other tools and resources to assist physiotherapists to provide the best outcomes for their patients.</p> <p>In 2025, the APA commissioned independent research agency and association experts Survey Matters to undertake a census of the physiotherapy workforce in Australia to help inform policy and advocacy efforts.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p><u>The key objectives of the research were to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the workforce composition; • Measure physiotherapy employment conditions and remuneration; • Determine future intentions to stay within the profession or to leave; • Understand potential reasons for leaving; • Identify business priorities and challenges; and • Understand physiotherapy students and their issues and challenges.
<p>Survey Instrument</p>	<p>The survey was conducted using a quantitative, online instrument. A total of 52 questions were included and respondents took an average of 10 minutes to complete the survey.</p> <p><u>The Census contained the following key areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic variables, such as career stage and intentions, practice location and setting, and qualifications and role; • Employment profile, including employment status and income; • Job satisfaction of both practising physiotherapists and students; • Practice variability and challenges for physiotherapy businesses; and • Skill acquisition, training pathways and career plans.
<p>Data Collection and Sample</p>	<p>The survey was distributed on 9 July 2025 and remained open until 5 August 2025.</p> <p>33,503 APA members were invited to participate in the Census. A total of 2,778 respondents completed the survey, resulting in an 8% response rate. This provides a 95% confidence that the actual results are within a +/- 1.78% confidence interval to those presented in this report.</p> <p>Respondents included a mix of members who were employed (including self-employed), retired, not currently working or student members.</p>

Analysis and Data Weighting	<p>Survey data was analysed in Q Research Software, DisplayR and Microsoft Excel for in-depth analysis.</p> <p>Responses to the survey were compared against those from the Australian Government 2021 Publication Physiotherapists Labour Market Insights¹.</p> <p>Results showed that while the Census data collected was representative of all physiotherapists with respect to gender and working location, there was a skew towards older workers. As such, the Census data has been weighted to match the age distribution in the Physiotherapists Labour Market Insights¹ report.</p>
Report	<p>In order to better understand the preferences and satisfaction of physiotherapists, responses have been segmented and analysed based on gender, age, employment type, specialisation and experience.</p> <p>While segmented results are provided throughout this report, please note that due to the overall sample size some of the results for subgroups may contain small samples. As such they do not aim to be a representative sample of the different segments but rather to provide directional feedback on the thoughts and opinions of these members. Small sample sizes are noted throughout the report.</p> <p>Results are provided at an aggregate level only and no individual responses are identified. This ensures the confidentiality of respondent opinions and encourages honest and objective feedback.</p>
Salary Data	<p>In relation to salary data provided, please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries are in 000s • All salaries have been rounded to the nearest thousand • Salaries include commission, where applicable • Salaries exclude superannuation, bonuses and other benefits • Salaries only reflect employed (and not self-employed) positions • Salaries are based on an FTE salary. Where provided, part-time rates and contract amounts have been calculated out to their FTE equivalent <p>Three figures have been presented; the average, median and typical range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average has been calculated for all salaries provided for each segment • The median is the midpoint for all salaries when sorted from smallest to largest • The typical range is based on the 25th and 75th percentile <p>While all data has been used in the analysis, the salary range has been provided to remove outlying data points that could potentially skew the results and to provide a more accurate representation of the range within which salaries for each segment typically fall. The overall average range for all salaries may be different from individual segments as it accounts for all salaries provided across all segments.</p>



About Survey Matters.

Survey Matters work exclusively in the association and for purpose sector. Specialising in providing strategic research led services to membership and not-for-profit organisations, we have helped a wide range of organisations understand their value proposition. We also work with the sector to generate and build industry data and knowledge to support advocacy, promotion, industry development and marketing activities.

Experts in all aspects of the research process, we use sophisticated software and keep up to date with the latest research trends from around the world, to bring practical information that informs strategy and advocacy.

If you would like to know more about this report or the work we do, please get in touch.

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