

Who is the Australian Osteopathic Association?

The Australian Osteopathic Association (AOA) is the national professional body representing osteopaths across Australia. Our core work is liaising with state and federal governments, regulatory or other statutory bodies and key stakeholders, such as Universities.

Osteopathy in Australia

- About 1600 registered osteopaths in Australia;
- The osteopathic profession is the fastest growing allied health profession in Australia —the number of osteopaths almost doubled between 1996 and 2001 (from a small base) and again between 2001 and 2006;
- The high calibre of graduates (5 years masters) has significantly contributed to that growth;
- 3 universities currently offer an osteopathy courses; however, more are needed and currently no course is offered in Sydney;
- Around 70% of osteopaths are under 40 years of age and over 60% are female;
- Private practice the usual mode for service delivery in osteopathy or multi-modality clinics;
- Treatment focus is musculoskeletal treatment;
- It is estimated that in 2007-08 Australians spent around \$200 million on osteopathic services; and
- Osteopathy is one of the health professions under the National Health Practitioner Registration Scheme.

What is osteopathy?

Osteopathy is a form of manual medicine which recognises the important link between the structure of the body and the way it functions. Osteopaths focus on how the skeleton, joints, muscles, nerves, circulation, connective tissue and internal organs function as a holistic unit.

Using skilled evaluation, diagnosis and a wide range of hands-on techniques, osteopaths can identify important types of dysfunction in your body.

Osteopathic treatment uses techniques such as stretching and massage for general treatment of the soft tissues (muscles, tendons and ligaments) along with mobilisation of specific joints and soft tissues.

What training does an osteopath have?

In Australia, osteopaths are government registered practitioners who complete a minimum of five years' university training in anatomy, physiology, pathology, general medical diagnosis and osteopathic techniques. Osteopaths are primary healthcare practitioners and are trained to recognise conditions which require medical referral. They are also trained to perform standard medical examinations of the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory and nervous systems.

Osteopathy Charges and Rebates

Osteopathy is covered by most private health funds and the Medicare Enhanced Primary Care scheme. Osteopaths are registered providers for workers' compensation schemes, motor accident insurers and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

We would like to see reform on these issues

- Clinical Training opportunities for Osteopathy
- Access in hospitals and other public health services
- How allied health practitioners, like osteopaths, can help relieve the burden on waiting lists or access to GP
- Commonwealth policies holding us back
 - Access to diagnostic imaging
 - Patients' access to Medicare
 - Direct referral rights.