

Empowering the Orthotic & Prosthetic team

Overcoming workforce challenges

Sarah Wilson¹, Adam Govier², Emma Vo², Chris King²

¹ Director Orthotics & Prosthetics, Central Adelaide Local Health Network, Adelaide, SA, 5000
Emma.Vo@sa.gov.au

² Allied Health, Central Adelaide Local Health Network, Adelaide, SA, 5000

Background

- Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) is South Australia's largest health network, covering 30% of the population and employing over 1300 allied health and scientific professionals across over 20 professions.
- CALHN Orthotics Prosthetic (O&P) workforce services acute and sub-acute services across 4 sites across Adelaide. Specialising in Vascular, Orthopaedic, Neuromuscular, Spinal, trauma and Amputation.
- Post covid19, there was a critical workforce shortage with opening of borders and opportunities in the private sector. Loss of senior experience, a rapid and solution-focused approach was required to rebuild and grow this essential workforce.
- Workforce comprises of Allied Health Professionals (AHP), Allied Health Assistants (AHA), Technical Officers (TGO) and Administrative Officers (ASO).
- There is no university or vocational education programs within the state that develops home grown clinical or technical staff.

Actions

Implementation of targeted workforce attraction and recruitment, planning, and development commenced in 2023.

Attraction and Recruitment

- International recruitment campaign
- National recruitment campaign
- Local recruitment campaign for technical and AHA roles
- Career expos
- Promotional videos

Governance

- Developed a strong leadership team
- Ensured there was clear governance and operational procedures in place
- Formed connections with internal and external stakeholders
- Developed an understanding of the market profile and the consumer profile to focus on the needs of the business and consumers

Workforce Development

- Reviewed the scope of practice and role descriptions to ensure the team were working at top of scope
- Reviewed staffing profile across sites and services
- Developed competencies for both clinical and technical staff to ensure skill profile met the needs of the business
- Focused on in-service training and education to upskill less experienced staff and encourage a culture of collaboration and accountability
- Optimised use of senior clinicians to support the service.

Evidence-Based Practice & Research

- Embedded quality improvement projects, audit and reflection into practice
- Collaborated with research partners and universities

Wellbeing & Culture

- Encouraged staff to be involved in the rebuild of the service through planning days, staff surveys and working groups
- Encouraged partnerships with internal and external stakeholders
- Gave back to charities
- Created opportunities for staff to develop interests and make use of their individual skills and talents with quality improvement projects
- Supported staff to focus on meaningful, high value work

Outcomes

Awards

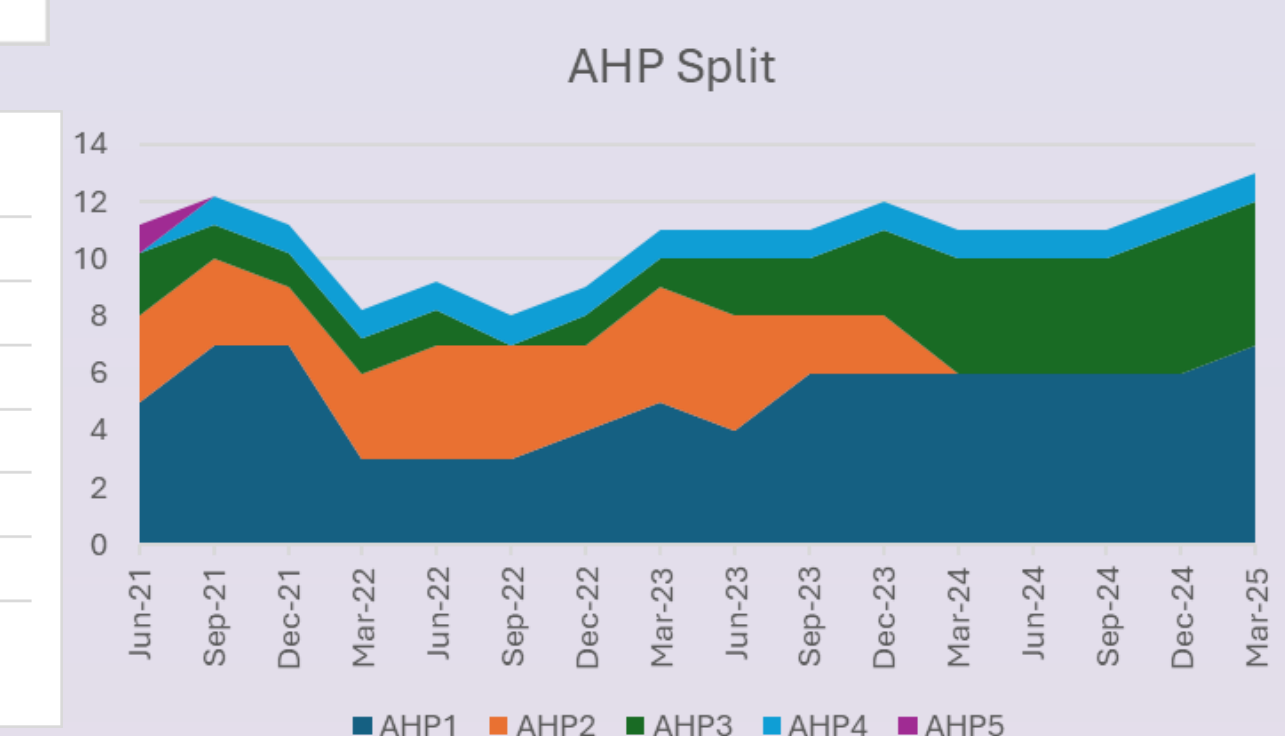
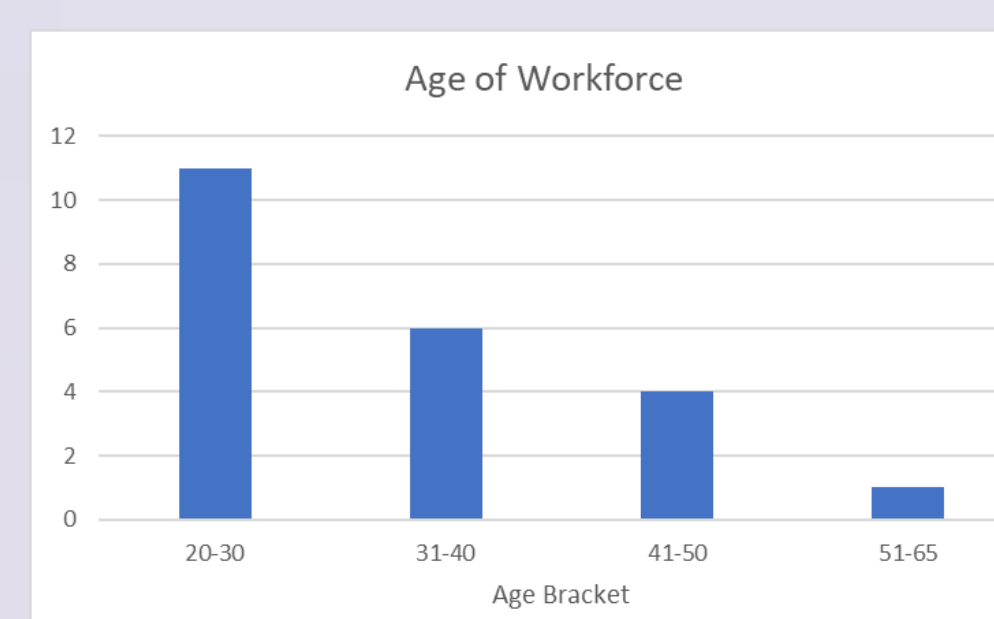
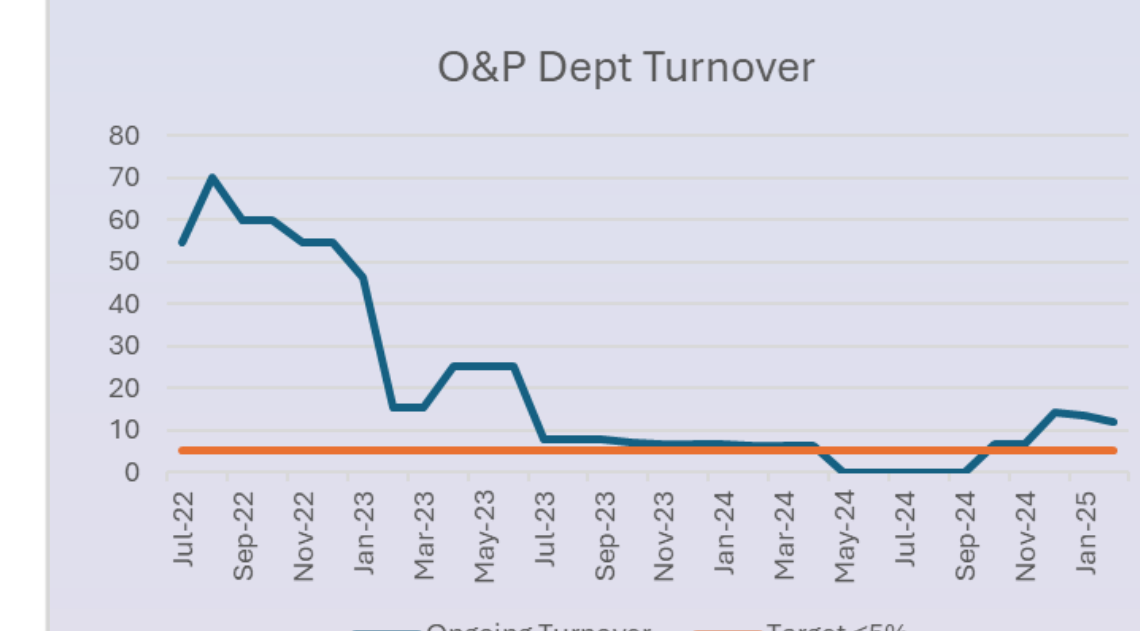
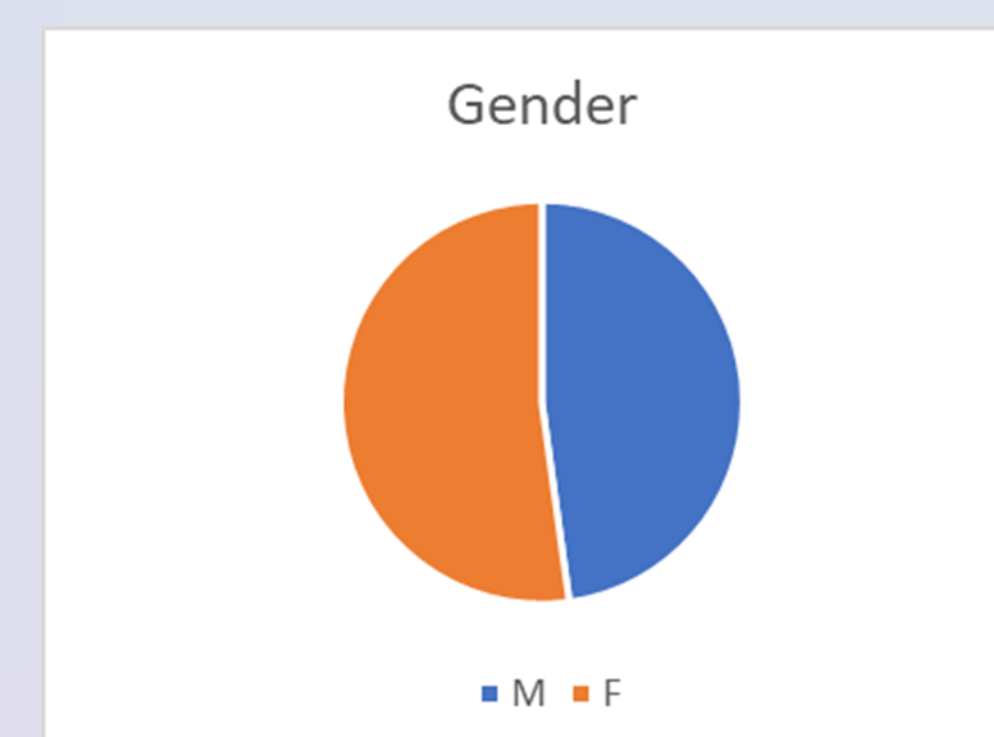
- CALHN Values award winners,
- 2024 Allied Health and Scientific Profession Excellence Awards, winners and nominees.
- CALHN Allied Health and Scientific Discovery Tour Scholarship winner 2024

Teaching & Presentations

- Presentations at multiple national conferences
- Teaching at internal and external events to O&P and non-O&Ps

Workforce

- Vacancy rate reduced to target level.
- Improved skill mix and diversity of staff profile to provide a more sustainable service.
- Re-established student placements at record numbers across sites
- Embedded teamwork and an environment for growth
- Developed a clear mission statement and goals with staff to provide direction into the future



Lessons Learned

- Ongoing reflection is important
- Use challenges, as opportunities for change and creative solutions
- Being honest with your team around expectation of them and of you
- Provide a space and a platform for the staff to shine, and take responsibility
- Let the workforce come up with the solutions
- Celebrate the successes and learn from the errors

Future Directions

- Strengthening training and education across the classifications and roles
- Encourage staff to take on research
- Explore advance and extended scope opportunities with Orthotics & Prosthetics
- Build interstate partnerships
- Build the student pipeline

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the valued contributions of orthotics & prosthetic department and senior allied health professionals and leaders, human resources, data and recruitment teams at Central Adelaide.