

DENTISTS¹

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Dentists were one of the first formally trained health practitioners.
- 1.2 Dentists in Australia have a proud tradition of voluntarily supporting Australian Dental Schools and dental research.
- 1.3 Dentists in Australia have a strong culture of cooperation by sharing experiences and knowledge.
- 1.4 Dentists have a strong culture of philanthropy.
- 1.5 A dentist is the only oral health practitioner entitled to use the title "dentist" and may also be known as a dental surgeon, surgeon dentist or dental practitioner, or by a specialist dentist title.
- 1.6 Dentist training involves five to seven years training at university and so Boards and governments have recognised dentists as the principal dental care provider.
- 1.7 **Definitions**
 - 1.7.1 BOARD is a Federal, State or Territory dental registration board.
 - 1.7.2 A DENTIST is an appropriately qualified dental care provider, registered by Boards to practise all areas of dentistry.
 - 1.7.3 DENTAL CARE PROVIDER is a person registered by a Board to provide dental care.
 - 1.7.4 DENTISTRY is the science and art of preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases, injuries, developmental and acquired defects of the teeth, jaw joints, oral cavity and associated structures within the context of general health.

2 Principles

- 2.1 Dentists being the most completely and highly trained dental care provider should be central to the delivery of dental treatment.
- 2.2 All Australians should have access to modern, comprehensive oral health care.
- 2.3 Dental care providers should only perform those duties for which they are formally trained.
- 2.4 Dentists perform invasive and irreversible procedures and should be registered.

¹ This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 2.1 *Dental Workforce*, 2.3 *Allied Dental Personnel*, 2.4 *Specialisation in Dentistry*, 2.8 *Overseas Trained Dentists*, 2.9 *Recency of Practice*, 2.10 *Clinical Practice Placements*, 2.12 *Benefits of Defined Health Professions*, 3.1 *Continuing Professional Development* & 4.7 *Regulatory Authorities*

3 **Policy**

- 3.1 Education and training of dentists must be to degree level in a programme conducted by a tertiary institution in the higher education sector and accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC).
- 3.2 Selection for entrance into such a programme should not be based solely on academic performance and may include:
- communication skills, including competence in the English language;
 - state of health, including being blood borne virus free;
 - good character; and
 - physiological suitability to be a health practitioner.
- 3.3 A one-year clinical placement year is supported.
- 3.4 Overseas trained dentists must satisfactorily fulfil ADC and Board requirements before practising in Australia.
- 3.5 The dentist must be responsible for diagnosis, treatment planning, delivery of dental procedures and continuing evaluation of the oral health of the patient. The dentist is also responsible for the support, direction and supervision of allied dental personnel working directly with them.
- 3.6 Dentists providing dental care within clinical practice must maintain an appropriate level of professional indemnity cover.
- 3.7 Dentists should conduct themselves in accordance with the Australian Dental Association's Principles of Ethical Dental Practice and their Branch Code of Ethics.
- 3.8 Dentists have an ethical obligation to engage in continuing professional development throughout their practising careers.

Policy Statement 2.2

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