

21 July 2022

Ms Silvia Munoz
Head of Research
Skills IQ
Suite 2.01/Level 2
117 York Street
Sydney NSW 2000

By email: enquiries@skillsiq.com.au

Dear Ms Munoz

Re: Dental Industry Reference Committee Industry Summary

Thank you for offering the Australian Dental Association (ADA) an opportunity to comment on the Dental Industry Reference Committee (IRC) draft Industry Summary (the Summary).

The ADA is the peak representative body for dentists in Australia. Our 17,000 members include dentists who work across both the public and private sector, across 14 specialty areas of practice, in education and research roles, and dentist students currently completing their entry-to-practice qualification.

Our members operate in excess of 7,500 dental practices and are the employers of more than 85% of all dental assistants. The education and training of these critical employees is therefore of great interest to the ADA and is further reflected in our participation in the Industry Skills Group and the Technical Advisory Groups when reviews of the training packages are underway.

The information presented in the Summary appears well researched, referenced, and presented. The ADA concurs with the noted workforce challenges pertaining to COVID-19, associated restrictions and requirements, and skills shortages and staff recruitment. According to our consultations and research, dental assistant roles appear to be the roles most notably affected by recent disruptions.

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee reports that dental assistant employment levels fell from 34,400 in 2019 to 22,400 in 2021 – a 35 per cent decline over two years. It projects employment levels for dental assistants to grow from to 36,400 in 2025 – a 63 per cent forecast increase over four years.

Our research indicates substantial current demand for dental assistant roles and suggests that difficulty in recruiting and retention is not limited to regional and rural communities, as emphasised in the Summary, but is experienced in metropolitan areas as well.

We also agree it will be important the VET sector continue to engage cross-sectoral work between dental and aged services training products to address the high demand across the aged care sector.

The ADA is happy to expand on any or all the comments provided. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, on 02 8815 3333 or eithne.irving@ada.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eithne M Irving".

Eithne M Irving
Deputy CEO
General Manager Advocacy, Media & Professional Services