



NEW SOUTH WALES
DENTAL TECHNICIANS REGISTRATION BOARD
NEWSLETTER
November 2006

THE BOARD

Charter

The Board is established under the provisions of the Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975 to exercise the powers, authorities, duties and functions imposed on it by the Act.

Aims and Objectives

The Board's aims and objectives are as follows.

- To maintain a register of qualified dental technicians and an index of qualified dental prosthetists entitled to practice in New South Wales.
- To arrange or approve examinations and determine the standards to be achieved in those examinations for eligibility to practise as dental technicians or dental prosthetists.
- To promote the establishment of courses of training for persons wishing to become dental technicians or dental prosthetists in New South Wales.
- To inquire into the competence of registered dental technicians and dental prosthetists to practise, and suspend or cancel registration or practising certificates, where appropriate.

ACCESS

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Board is prescribed under section 6 of the Act and comprises nine members, as follows.

- An officer of the Department of Health nominated by the Minister for Health:
Meredith Kay (Chairperson)
- A dentist nominated by the Dental Board of NSW:
Sybille Lechner
- A dentist nominated by Sydney Dental Hospital:
Alicja Smiech
- A dental technician nominated by the Dental Technicians Association of NSW:
Reginald Scott OAM
- A dental technician nominated by the Australian Commercial Dental Laboratories Association of NSW:
Derek Tracey
- A dental technician nominated by the Minister for Health:
Robert Boshier
- A dental technician nominated by the Minister for Health:
Graham Key
- A dental technician nominated by the Health Services Union:
Ewa Bury
- A barrister-at-law admitted by, or a solicitor of, the Supreme Court, nominated by the Minister for Health:
Michael Miceli

The Board was appointed on 6th September 2006 for a three-year term.

Ken Iles stood down from the Board after serving as the representative of the Health Services Union for almost 12 years. Ken made a significant contribution to the Board's activities over that time and his characteristic wit and wisdom will be missed by his colleagues on the Board. The Board wishes Ken success and fulfilment in his future endeavours.

STAFF

Secretary: Michael Jaques

Asst Secretary: Christine Gursen

IS HE/SHE REGISTERED?

Have you checked whether the staff members you employ or are about to employ actually hold current registration? The following names were removed from the Register of dental technicians on 1 July 2006:

Bazzi, Fady
Burton, Paul Anthony
Chandler, Gary Douglas
Chien, William Shanliang
Diek, Averil Maree
Dolbel, Mark Andrew
Fragomeni, Massimo
Greguric, Vjekoslava
Hills, Bradley Thomas
Houghton, Philip Brent
Lucas, Andrew James
Malki, Lena
Mohajjel Rezae Asl, Nader
Nguyen, Tuan Duc
Peters, Elizabeth Jane
Price, Keill Fraser
Shakerian, Abbas
Taylor, Desi Jaye
Todd, David Andrew
Tran, Howard Hoa

The following names were removed from the Index of dental prosthetists on 1 July 2006:

Fitzgerald, Wendy
Host, Edward
Makse, Silvester
Myers, William Edward
Neville, Harold John
Pattison, Craig Douglas
Stanfield, Geoffrey Christopher

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

ANNUAL ROLL FEE

All registered practitioners are required, on or before 31 March each year, to pay an annual roll fee. If a registered practitioner does not pay the fee on or before 30 June each year, the Act directs the Board to remove the person's name from the Register. Practising unregistered is a breach of the Act and is a serious offence. It is every registrant's obligation to renew his or her registration by the due date. Persons removed from the Register must apply to the Board for re-registration.

INFECTIOIN CONTROL

Occupational Health and Safety Guide for Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists

The Board has endorsed the document entitled "Occupational Health and Safety Guide for Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists", published jointly by the Australian Commercial Dental Laboratories Association, the Australian Dental Prosthetists Association and Australian Capital Territory WorkCover [2002 Edition], and has despatched it to each registered dental technician and dental prosthetist in New South Wales for their information and future reference.

The Board commends the document as a useful reference.

It should be noted the Dental Technicians Registration Regulation 2003 includes infection control standards for dental prosthetists [Schedule 2] and dental technicians [Schedule 3]. The Act and the Regulation may be accessed via the Board's web-site. The Occupational Health and Safety Guide is not intended to replace or supersede the requirements of the Regulation, and where any conflict may exist between the guide and the Regulation, the Regulation will take precedence.

It is the responsibility of each registered dental technician and dental prosthetist to ensure they adhere to the relevant infection control requirements in the Regulation.

BOARD POLICIES

TOOTH WHITENING AND BLEACHING

Bleaching or whitening involves the application of a chemical to alter tooth enamel.

The Board has adopted the Crown Solicitor's advice that the process of tooth whitening or bleaching on human teeth is the performance of an operation within the meaning of Section IOAF(4)(a) of the Public Health Act 1991. As such, only registered dentists, medical practitioners or registered dental students undertaking clinical studies may carry out this procedure. Thus dental prosthetists **MUST NOT** undertake this treatment.

MOUTHGUARDS

It is an offence under the Dental Technicians Registration Act, for Dental Technicians to attend upon persons for the purpose of taking impressions and fitting mouthguards.

TAKING OF IMPRESSIONS FOR IMPLANTS

Dental prosthetists with appropriate training and/or experience may be involved in the planning and construction of implant retained over-dentures in co-operation with a dentist and may deal directly with the public to take impressions and construct such dentures, once healing of implant/abutment sites is complete.

He/she may not:

- o deal directly with the public while implant/abutment sites are healing; or
- o place, remove or replace implant or abutment components; or
- o deal directly with the public for any aspect of any other dental implant retained prosthesis; or
- o deal directly with the public where precision attachments, attached to a natural tooth/tooth root, form part of the prosthetic structure or where the prosthesis is part of an obturator; or
- o deal directly with the public where the prosthetist has not completed an appropriate course of training concerning the implant supported prosthesis to be constructed.

DENTAL APPLIANCE THERAPY FOR THE TREATMENT OF SLEEP DISORDERS

Dental appliances for the treatment of sleep disorders may only be provided and fitted by dentists following assessment by a medical practitioner who specialises in sleep disorders (ideally a respiratory physician). Taking impressions for anti snoring devices is outside the scope of practice of dental prosthetists; thus dental prosthetists **MUST NOT** undertake any of the clinical procedures involved in the provision or adjustment of these oral appliances.

Dental Technicians may fabricate such appliances on the order of a dentist, but should reject a prescription from a dental prosthetist.

WORK EXPERIENCE POLICIES

1. A school student undertaking one week's work experience:

>>>>The laboratory manager should ensure that the student provides an introductory letter from the school

2. A prospective candidate for the Diploma of Dental Technology:

>>>>Board approval is not required as the assessment of such an individual is usually made within two or three days, and the individual is not permitted to work on commercial models

3. A first year TAFE student, prior to the commencement of term 1:

>>>>The laboratory manager should ensure that the student provides a letter of acceptance into the course from TAFE and is to remunerate the student in accordance with or above the award rate

4. An overseas trained dental technician wishing to hone their skills prior to undertaking the Board's examination for registration:

>>>>The laboratory manager should obtain an approval letter from the Board and ensure that the individual does not work on commercial models

5. A person employed in a dental laboratory as support staff or as an assistant to a technician:

>>>>Such persons must not undertake technical work* as defined under section 5 of the Act.

6. A student who has completed the approved Diploma of Dental Technology course, and who is accumulating their 3,500 supervised hours of paid employment in a dental laboratory:

>>>>Such persons must make application for registration within two years of completing the Diploma, otherwise the Board will deem the person to longer be a student in training and he/she will be unable to continue to undertake technical work.

* **Technical work** is defined at Section 5 of the Dental Technicians Registration Act as: the mechanical construction or the renewal or repair of artificial dentures or restorative dental appliances.

USE OF "SPECIALIST" TITLES

Registrants are reminded they are not permitted to use the descriptions "Denture Specialist", "Master Technician" or "Specialising In" in connection with their practice.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Board has approved the following courses under section 15(1)(a) of the Act, subject to successful completion by applicants of 3500 hours supervised practice and the Board's examination for registration.

- Diploma of Dental Technology, Sydney Institute of TAFE, Sydney, New South Wales
- Diploma of Dental Health Work (Dental Technology), Southbank Institute of TAFE, Brisbane, Queensland, 2002 onwards
- Diploma of Dental Technology, Torrens Valley TAFE, Adelaide, South Australia, 2002 onwards
- Diploma of Dental Technology, RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 2002 onwards
- Diploma of Dental Technology, Central TAFE, Perth, Western Australia, 2002 onwards

Employers are reminded that a student in training must make an application for registration within two years after completion of an approved course. Otherwise, the Board will consider that the applicant is no longer a student in training and is therefore unable to perform technical work.

Students completing the NSW Diploma in Dental Technology (course no. 3051), will have fulfilled the Board's examination requirements. Graduates of the former NSW Diploma course 4399, and its predecessors, will still be required to pass the Board's three-day examination.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications of the Board, which are available to the public, include the Annual Report, the Board's application forms and associated information sheets, newsletter and policy and procedure statements.

NATIONAL DENTAL LABOUR FORCE DATA COLLECTION

The Dental Statistics and Research Unit (DSRU) was formed in 1988 to establish and maintain data sets on the dental labour force. The Board encourages dental prosthetists to participate in the Unit's data collection exercises, as the information gained through that source provides statistical and demographic detail that is vital to forward planning. The DSRU is conducting another national workforce survey of dental prosthetists this year.

TAFE QUALIFICATIONS

Holders of the following NSW TAFE qualifications may use the appropriate descriptions after their name in connection with their practice:

- Associate Diploma in Dental Technology
AssDipDT (Syd)
- Diploma in Dental Technology
DipDT (Syd)
- Advanced Diploma in Dental Prosthetics
AdvDipDP(Syd)

Possession of the above qualifications does not entitle a person to practise as a dental technician or dental prosthetist until the registration requirements have been met and registration granted by the Board. Applicants are required to provide a photocopy of their qualification, certified by a Justice of the Peace, solicitor or notary public as being a true copy of the original.

RECOGNITION OF ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Board has determined that a dental technician or dental prosthetist may apply for approval for the use of symbols and letters to describe qualifications in connection with their practice as a dental technician or dental prosthetist, provided the qualifications relate to the practice of dental technology or to the practice of dental prosthetics.

FEES

The Board's fee structure is:

	\$	
	DT	DP
Registration	120	240
Re-registration	120	240
Annual Roll Fee	80	160
Inspection of Register	10	
Inspection of Index		10

INSPECTIONS OF DENTAL LABORATORIES

Inspectors appointed by the Board undertake random inspections of dental laboratories to assess the compliance of practitioners with the provisions of the Dental Technicians Registration Act and Regulation.

These random inspections have become a regular part of the Board's Compliance Strategy.

Members of the Board do not know in advance where the inspectors will visit, making the process truly unbiased.

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Year ended 30 June 2006

REGISTRATION

Registered dental technicians	
As at 1 July 2005	723
As at 30 June 2006	756
Registered dental prosthetists	
As at 1 July 2005	419
As at 30 June 2006	439
New registrations	
Dental Technicians	75
Section 15(1)(a)	20
Section 15(1)(c)	2
Mutual Recognition	53
Dental Prosthetists	26
Section 18B(1)(a)	10
Mutual Recognition	16
Re-registrations	23
Dental Technicians	17
Dental Prosthetists	6
Deletions	70
Dental Technicians	53
Dental Prosthetists	17

During the past twelve months, the Board conducted two examinations at the Sydney Dental Hospital with a total of eight candidates participating. Of the eight individuals who sat for the full examination, two were successful.

REVIEW OF THE ACT

On 19 May 2006, the Minister for Health announced that the Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975 will be opened for review. The Board has been pressing for such a review for a number of years and acknowledges that at the end of the exercise, there will be significant changes to the legislation. The Board has lodged a submission to the Department of Health and awaits further developments.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The Health Care Complaints Act 1993 requires the Board and the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) to advise each other about complaints received and to consult concerning their resolution. A complaint made to the Board is deemed to be made to the HCCC, and vice-versa.

A Complaints Screening Committee has been established to assist in the Board's consideration of complaints. The Board has delegated to the Committee the authority to make decisions relating to complaints.

Complaints received concerning the provision of services by registered practitioners were referred to the Complaints Screening Committee for consideration.

Complaints received concerning alleged breaches of the Dental Technicians Registration Act and Regulation were considered by the Board.

During the year 2005-06, the Board considered 23 new complaints, in addition to 10 matters that had been carried over from the previous period. The nature of the complaints and outcome of investigations were as follows:

Dissatisfaction with Dental Appliance or Commercial Dispute:		25
Unable to resolve:	5	
Assisted resolution:	11	
Referral to other body:	5	
Direct resolution:	0	
Ongoing:	2	
Unsubstantiated:	2	
Unsatisfactory Professional Conduct:		8
Ongoing:	1	
Unsubstantiated:	3	
Referral to another body:	3	
To Board of Inquiry:	1	

COUNCIL OF REGULATING AUTHORITIES FOR DENTAL TECHNICIANS AND DENTAL PROSTHETISTS (CORA 2006).

The 2006 Council of Regulating Authorities (CORA) meeting for Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists was held on the Gold Coast in Aug/Sept. Progress continues to be made on CORA's planned objective of running a Trans-Tasman examination for all overseas trained technicians.

THE USE OF X-RAYS

The Board encourages dental prosthetists to attend courses on interpreting radiographs. X-Rays cannot be used for diagnostic purposes, but having the skills and knowledge to interpret radiographic images is a useful tool in determining if a mouth is healthy or for referral purposes.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION

On 14 July 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish by July 2008, a single national registration scheme for health professions that are registered in each state and a single national accreditation scheme for health education and training.

Dental Prosthetists are registered in each state and are included in the national scheme. Dental Technicians are not registered nationally and their future status is unclear, particularly having regard to the abovementioned review of the NSW Dental Technicians Registration Act.

CONSULTATIVE FORUMS

The Board recently held a productive workshop involving representatives from the ADPA, the ACDLA and TAFE at which the impending review of the Diploma of Dental Technology was discussed.

TAFE announced that it intends inviting industry representatives and current and prospective employers of students to SIT Randwick one evening in February 2007, to participate in an information sharing forum. Items for discussion will include TAFE's expectations of employers of students and the responsibilities of employers to provide a supportive environment for their students.

ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the Board's Annual Report are available from the Board's office and on the web-site.

OVERSEAS TRAINING - RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Board conducts practical examinations for applicants for registration as a dental technician or dental prosthetist in New South Wales who have trained interstate or overseas. The Board requires overseas trained applicants who studied in a language other than English, to provide evidence of having achieved a minimum band score of 6 at the academic level in each of the four modules of an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test. Following successful completion of the examination and subject to statutory good character requirements registration is granted.

This method of registration could be replaced by the CORA proposal to have a national examination.

ETHNIC AFFAIRS PRIORITIES STATEMENT

This Board is one of nine administered by the Health Professionals Registration Boards (HPRB) on behalf of the Health Administration Corporation. The Board in conjunction with the HPRB undertakes a number of initiatives to support our culturally diverse population under the key areas of social justice, economic and cultural opportunities.

These initiatives include to:

- (i) promote the recognition and registration of overseas trained health professionals
- (ii) assist overseas trained applicants to register
- (iii) increase the number and range of bilingual staff employed by HPRB
- (iv) ensure ethnic media is used in any information languages sponsored by the Board
- (v) ensure the Board receives advice on matters relating to people of culturally diverse backgrounds
- (vi) promote use of culturally diverse workforce
- (vii) ensure the Board is aware of the Government's commitment to implementing the principles of multiculturalism as set out in section 3 of the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000.