

## Fact Sheet 4 – Dental workforce oversupply wastes public funds and talented people

*Each year, the number of new dentists entering the workforce is almost double the number we need. This oversupply has caused a dental workforce crisis: new graduates struggle to earn a living and pay off their education debts. Critical resources are wasted in providing education and clinical training to people who then cannot use their skills.*

*Recommendation: That the Federal Government be urged to address dental workforce oversupply through:*

- *Increasing public dental care funding, to increase the utilisation of available dentists*
- *Decreasing the number of students enrolling in dentistry courses in Australia*
- *Decreasing the number of overseas qualified dentists moving to Australia to work, by the removal of dentists from the Skilled Occupation List<sup>1</sup>*

### **Did you know?**

- Australia's dental workforce is in heavy oversupply
- About 930 new dentists enter the workforce every year, which is almost double the 510 that we actually need
- The oversupply comes from two sources – migration of overseas qualified dentists and graduates from Australian Universities

For more information on dental workforce oversupply see:

<http://www.ada.org.au/dentalProfessionals/default.aspx>

### **How does this affect Victorians?**

- Government and individual resources are invested in the education and clinical training of new dentists. It is therefore important that these resources are efficiently utilised
- Victorian dentists continue to have difficulty finding work, especially new grads
- Many dentists, although employed, must string together multiple part-time jobs to earn a living
- Overseas-trained dentists are encouraged to come to Australia, only to find that instead of a shortage of dentists, there is a shortage of jobs

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<sup>1</sup> The Skilled Occupation List (SOL) is a Commonwealth Government agency list of skilled occupations, which are currently acceptable for migration to Australia. In spite of strong evidence of workforce oversupply 'Dentist' will remain on the SOL for 2014-2015, which will allow overseas-qualified dentists to continue to migrate to Australia to work.

### **What is ADAVB doing?**

ADAVB is lobbying State politicians:

- we are asking them to seek removal of the occupation of 'Dentist' from the Commonwealth Skilled Occupation List
- we are also urging the introduction of caps on University places in dental schools, so that the number of new dentists graduating reflects the demand for dental services

### **What can you do?**

Contact your local politicians, the State Minister for Health and the State Shadow Health Minister and tell them how important it is that the dental workforce supply is in balance with the demand for dental care. Ask them to lobby the Commonwealth Government for:

- the occupation of 'Dentist' be removed from the Commonwealth Skilled Occupation List, and
- the introduction of caps on University places in dental schools, so that the number of new dentists graduating reflects the demand for dental services

**Click here to send an email to Victorian politicians about the importance of addressing dental workforce oversupply:** <http://www.adavb.net/?TabId=1395#ADAVB-the-voice-of-dentistry-in-Victoria-0110110100000011>

**Electoral comment:** see <http://electoralcomment.adavb.org>