



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL and ORAL HEALTH THERAPISTS' ASSOC Inc.

28 February 2017

Fair Work Australia
11 Exhibition St
Melbourne Vic 3000
Email: amod@fwc.gov.au

Re: AM2014/204 - MA000027 - Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2010 – Schedule B List of Common Health Professions

The Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association Inc. (ADOHTA) is the peak national representative body for dental and oral health therapists, providing leadership, collaboration and advocacy to enhance the profession and achieve positive oral health outcomes for the community. Dental and oral health therapists work in multidisciplinary teams with a range of different providers in all sectors of healthcare. They provide education and information, prevention and restorative dental care cost-effectively.

It has been brought to our attention that the Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2010 currently does not include 'Oral Health Therapist' (OHT) in the Appendix B List of Common Health Professions. We believe that this may be as a result of the profession being relatively recently recognised.

Background

Oral health therapists have been a recognised profession since 2000 after the University of Queensland developed the Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) course. An upgrade course was offered and supported by Queensland Health for Dental Therapists to extend their skills and practice as OHT's. Since then all tertiary education for Dental Therapists has been integrated within the Oral Health Therapy courses across Australia, including New Zealand, with their graduates recognised as oral health therapists.

The New South Wales Dental Board recognised oral health therapists as a separate division in 2008. At the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in 2010, oral health therapists were only registered by one State Dental Board and so were not automatically transitioned by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) as a stand-alone profession. The title 'Oral Health Therapist' is now a protected title from June 2010 and a process was agreed to allow oral health therapist graduates and those with equivalent qualifications to register in the division of 'Oral Health Therapist'. This occurred after the approval of the Health Professionals Support Award 2010 hence why they were left off of the list of Common Health Professions. OHT's now constitute approximately 24% of the non-dentist DBA registrants. This will increase in future years as the graduates from the 10 Universities in Australia and New Zealand enter the workplace.

OHT's are employed in the public sector, education and research as well as in private practice. In all areas other than private practice, they are covered by relevant awards and in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria the OHT category is specifically named.

The Issue

Increasingly our members have indicated problems they have experienced directly as a result of the profession not being covered by an award for private practice employment and have requested that we ask for the inclusion of 'Oral Health Therapist' in the List of Common Health Professions.

We note there has been some discussion during the submissions to the review surrounding whether the list should be 'Indicative' or 'Exhaustive'. The lack of clarity around this issue creates industrial relations uncertainty for OHT's as employers argue that since their profession is not listed, they are not covered by the award. Our request to include the profession of OHT in the List of Common Health Professions will affirm clarity for OHT's regardless of the outcome of the ruling in this matter.

We appreciate your consideration brought forward to the Fair Work Commission.

Yours sincerely



Tan Nguyen

President

Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association

Mobile: 0432 715 420

E-mail: president@adohta.net.au

Admin: 0498 664 943

Admin: admin@adohta.net.au

Supporting Documents

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