

Tasmania Health Organisations

>> Allied health professional fact sheet

What is Oral Health Therapy?

Dental Therapists were trained within their states to provide treatments for children and adolescents. More recently, the Bachelor of Oral Health degree was established to combine the skills of both dental therapists and dental hygienists.

Dental Therapy/Oral Health Therapy is the diagnosis and clinical treatment of oral diseases which can occur in the teeth and supporting structures in children and adolescents. This can include examination, diagnosis, taking radiographs (x-rays), cleaning and scaling, restorative dentistry (filling cavities) administering local anaesthesia, extraction of deciduous (baby) teeth, fissure sealants, fluoride therapy, mouth guard impressions and treating gum disease. Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists also undertake preventive programs and health promotion within the community.

Oral Health Therapists treat gum conditions for all ages, take x-rays of teeth and jaws, apply sealants and remineralising therapies.

Where do Dental and Oral Health Therapists work in Tasmania?

Dental and Oral Health Therapists may practice publicly and privately.

Privately, Dental and Oral Health Therapists may work in general or specialised dental practices. They have the right to independent private practice in Tasmania provided there is an established referral pathway with a practising dentist.

Public practice is through Oral Health Services Tasmania clinics. Oral Health Services Tasmania has traditionally employed Dental Therapists and more recently, Oral Health Therapists.

How do Dental and Oral Health Therapists work in Oral Health Services Tasmania?

Dental and Oral Health Therapists provide treatment within the scope of practice of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* and Oral Health Services Tasmania policies and guidelines. Conditions which require treatment beyond the scope of Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists are referred to a dental officer or relevant specialist.

What qualifications are required to practice?

Dental and Oral Health Therapists must have a Bachelor of Oral Health or equivalent and must be registered to practice with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) www.ahpra.gov.au and the Dental Board of Australia www.dentalboard.gov.au. A person may apply to AHPRA to be registered as a dental therapist/oral health therapist if the person has a qualification as a dental therapist or oral health therapist that is approved by, or gained from, an accredited tertiary institution.

For more information on employment opportunities with Oral Health Services Tasmania visit the Tasmanian Government Jobs website <http://www.jobs.tas.gov.au/> or contact the General Manager, Oral Health Services Tasmania: email ohst.admin@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Useful links

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/>

Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapist Association www.adohta.net.au

Dental Board of Australia www.dentalboard.gov.au/