



President's Message – Annual Report 2022/23

A joint annual report for the year 2022/23 has been presented on behalf of the 15 health professional Councils and can be viewed [here](#).

The Dental Council of NSW's (Council) principal role is to protect the health and safety of the public. It achieves this through its management of complaints about the conduct, performance and health of registered dental practitioners and students in NSW.

For the third consecutive year, the Council has seen a decrease in complaints received about dental practitioners. The highest proportion of complaints relate to clinical care; and patients continue to be the main complainants.

The Council will take regulatory action where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the public. Regulatory action taken by the Council is not intended to be punitive; everyone has the right to complain and this can be personally challenging. The Council simply has to consider all complaints and address them.

During this last year, the majority of complaints were discontinued or did not result in regulatory action being taken. As in previous years, the majority of complaints relate to treatment/clinical care. The Council recognises the value of professional associations in their support for all members before complaints are made and for individuals who have had a complaint made against them.

The Council has seen an increase in the number of practitioners who have entered its health program. This program is aimed at supporting practitioners who have a physical or mental impairment that detrimentally affects, or is likely to detrimentally affect, their capacity to practise the profession. The Council is committed to supporting registered practitioners to continue working, with caveats, wherever possible.

The length of time a practitioner remains in the program, depends on the specific nature of the impairment, and the medical advice the Council receives regarding the individual.

The Council continues to undertake random infection control inspections. It is pleasing to report that the majority of practitioners, who have been the subject of an inspection, are adhering to these standards and are meeting their obligations. However, the Council continues to receive complaints about infection control and, where necessary, takes regulatory action.

Stakeholder engagement continued throughout the year, including with the Dental Board of Australia; our co-regulators; professional associations, and NSW Ministry.

On 20 July 2022, Mrs Amita Kant joined the Council.

On 30 April 2023, Clinical Associate Professor F. Shane Fryer OAM ended his maximum term of nine years on the Council. The Council extends its gratitude to Clinical Associate Professor Fryer for his leadership, service to the Council and for his contribution to public safety.

The Council continues to support education and research by offering to fund activities that promote better understanding of professional standards and compliance, issues that lead to complaints and how complaints are managed.



Many valued individuals contribute to our important work, and this enables the Council to ensure that it meets its mandate relating to public protection. This includes Council members, Professional Officers, Authorised Persons, panel and hearing members, performance and health assessors, and members of our Assessment Committee.

Throughout the year the Council has been supported by the Health Professional Councils Authority (HPCA) and its dedicated staff. The Council acknowledges and appreciates the professionalism demonstrated by the staff and the level of support provided, in particular by the members of the Dental Council team.

I would like to extend my personal gratitude and thanks to everyone involved in the important work of the Council during the year.

Conjoint Professor Deborah Cockrell AM
President
Dental Council of NSW