



**Dental
Council
of NSW**

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President's Message – Annual Report 2021/22

A joint annual report for the year 2021/22 has been presented on behalf of the 15 health professional Councils and can be viewed [here](#).

The Dental Council of NSW continues to fulfil its mandate of protecting the public in NSW through its management of complaints about the conduct, performance and health of registered dental practitioners and students in NSW.

It is pleasing to report that the Council has seen a further decrease in the number of complaints received during the year. The majority of complaints continue to relate to clinical care and patients remain the main source for complaints.

Although numbers remain small, the Council is concerned by the increase in complaints relating to boundary violations and offences, which include criminal charges. A noticeable decrease in National Law breaches and National Law offences was evident during the year.

As in previous years, the majority of complaints continue to be discontinued or did not result in regulatory action being taken. Any regulatory action taken by the Council was to protect the public, and was not punitive in nature.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge all of us and our profession. Dental practitioners again demonstrated their ability to adapt their practice to ensure their patients received appropriate care and treatment in a COVID-safe environment. The risk to patient safety was greatly reduced through practitioners' adherence to Public Health Orders, restrictions and continuing to maintain high infection control standards.

Compliance with infection control standards is also evidenced through the Council's ongoing random infection control inspections program. This has confirmed that the majority of practitioners are meeting their obligations and adhering to these standards. Although the Council is seeing a continued decrease in complaints relating to infection control, a number of complaints are still received each year, which are addressed.

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

On 1 July 2021, Dr Peter Duckmanton, Associate Professor Melanie Hayes, Dr Vaishnavi Parimalanathan and Ms Dianne Sales joined the Council.

On 30 June 2022, Ms Rosemary MacDougal ended her maximum term of nine years on the Council. The Council extends its gratitude to Ms MacDougal for her service to the Council and for her contribution to public safety.

The Council has continued 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.

To ensure its success, particularly in relation to its mandate of public protection, the Council relies on the contribution of many people. This includes Council members, Professional Officers, Authorised Persons, panel and hearing members, performance and health assessors, and members of our Assessment Committee.

The Council also acknowledges the support of the Health Professional Councils Authority (HPCA) and its dedicated staff. In particular, the Dental Council team. The staff ensure that we continue to fulfil our regulatory functions and obligations, and they provide an excellent level of professional support.

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

Clinical Associate Professor F. Shane Fryer OAM
President
Dental Council of NSW