



Australian Society
of Orthodontists

20 July 2015

Mr Jonathan Coppel
Presiding Commissioner
Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement
Productivity Commission Australian Government
Level 12, 530 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Coppel

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Society of Orthodontists regarding an existing anomaly within the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement concerning dentists, and the flow on effect in terms of protection of the public.

The agreement provides for mutual recognition of qualifications and provision of the ability to practice. The anomaly relates to those in New Zealand who have obtained qualifications from outside New Zealand, and had that person applied for recognition of the qualifications within Australia based on merit, registration would not be granted without further examination (and education as appropriate).

That a loophole exists has already been recognised and medical practitioners who reside in New Zealand but gained qualifications outside New Zealand are not given automatic registration. In our view this is a sensible and fair approach and provides a level of protection to the Australian public that registered practitioners meet the minimum standard. Those who obtained their qualifications in New Zealand would still be covered by the agreement.

We are advocating that dental practitioners, who are also required to be registered by AHPRA in order to practice, should be subject to the same regulations applying to medical practitioners with regard to the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

Australia has a number of dental practitioners that obtained their qualifications overseas, and have successfully obtained registration in Australia after appropriate examination. There are some who have been unsuccessful, or had difficulty in meeting the minimum standards due to the inadequacy of their overseas training program. Unfortunately, there is a large disparity between programs, with some overseas courses simply failing to invest in the proper training, supervision and competency assurance of their students. We have an interest in ensuring the high standards in Australia continue so as to protect the public.

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Details have been provided by the Australian Dental Association regarding the workforce requirements. Australia currently has an oversupply of dentists, with the target for 2020 having been reached in 2013. Dentists and dental specialists (including orthodontists) have now been removed from the immigration skilled occupation list for preferential status.

We are happy to provide further information as required.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Collett
President