



## **Consultation on the age limit for restorative activities in the oral health therapy scope of practice**

### **Submission from the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Otago**

The Faculty of Dentistry agrees with the proposal to remove the 18-year age limit for restorative activities from the oral health therapy scope of practice. Previously oral health graduates, registered in both the dental therapy and dental hygiene scopes, would have been able to register in the 'scope of practice for adult care in dental therapy practice' (after completing a Dental Council-accredited course). Because they can no longer do this (being now registered in the 'oral health therapy scope of practice'), removing the age restriction will provide consistency between the dental therapy and oral health therapy scopes of practice. Of particular note is that, unlike dental therapists, oral health therapists already use some of their skills and knowledge to provide care to adults; therefore, it is appropriate that they have a pathway to be able to also provide restorative care within their scope of practice.

The Faculty agrees with the recommendation that oral health therapists will need to complete a 'Dental Council (New Zealand) accredited adult restorative programme', in order to have the exclusion on 'restorative treatment for patients 18-years and older' removed from their scope of practice. The current undergraduate Oral Health programme does not include clinical experience in providing restorative care for adults, and more in-depth theoretical knowledge and clinical experience is required to enable graduates of the Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) programme to provide restorative care for adults.

Professor Karl Lyons  
Acting Dean