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Page 2: Your demographics

**Q1** Your details

Name **Michaela Beadle**

City/town [Redacted]

Email [Redacted]

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**Q2** Your submission is in the capacity as

Other (please specify):  
Student Oral Health Therapist

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Page 3: The proposal

**Q3** Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the 18-year age limit for restorative activities from the OHT scope of practice including: accredited, gazetted programmes allowing oral health therapists to perform restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older an exclusion, such as "Restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older", being placed on oral health therapists' scopes of practice until they complete an accredited adult restorative programme which will allow them to apply to have the exclusion removed (noting that the activities registered oral health therapists can currently perform within their scope of practice remain unchanged).

**Strongly agree**

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Page 4: Your support

**Q4** Please describe why you support the proposal

By removing the restriction that is placed on Oral Health Therapists, we as health professionals will be able to increase the public's access to affordable dental healthcare. Thus, aligning us with the fundamental values of the Ottawa Charter's Health Promotion Model by reorienting health services. New Zealanders would strongly benefit from this move, by having a more affordable route of accessing basic dental care. As it stands, many New Zealanders are avoiding going to the dentist purely due to cost. Therefore a patient who starts by having dental caries in the 26, may end up with needing root canal treatment or even an extraction, because they couldn't afford to see a dentist to get the caries remedied. If an Oral Health Therapist was able to see the patient and treat the lesion, the patient would still have a sound tooth. It's about putting the ambulance at the bottom of the hill and treating problems while they are still treatable.

There's also another way how this policy would increase access to dental services. I have found in many small towns in Northland the access to be able to see a dentist is reduced. The waitlists are months long where there are dentists, and where there aren't the patient is looking at at least a 30 minute drive to the nearest one. For households with no transport this can be extremely challenging (there is no public transport available). As an Oral Health Therapist I would like to be able to change this by being able to treat adults and children in their home town. We as Oral Health Therapists would be able to bring accessibility to the most remote towns via the dental caravan and be able to treat adults not only children.

Thirdly, it would be appropriate for New Zealand to align itself with countries like Australia and the United Kingdom. In this aspect I believe New Zealand is behind in the education and ability it offers to Oral Health Therapists. As students we should have more opportunities to study at a postgraduate level. Currently the only option we have in New Zealand is to study Public Health. Whereas, in Australia an OHT can study at a postgraduate level and increase their abilities to be able to treat more patients and once more increase their accessibility to healthcare. It is not about being a dentist, it is about being a confident OHT who is able to ease the access of healthcare at a more affordable cost to the public. I believe both the University of Otago and Auckland University of Technology have the ability to offer such courses, and I believe New Zealand OHT's would greatly benefit from this extra knowledge. Lastly, I would like to point out that New Zealand already has practising Dental Therapists with an adult scope. Therefore, the concept is possible and we are merely looking at aligning that scope with the new coming OHT scope.

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Page 5: Your concerns

**Q5** Please describe your specific concern/s with the proposal

Respondent skipped this question

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Page 6: Details about OHT scope, qualifications and competencies

**Q6** Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed amendments to the OHT scope of practice, prescribed qualifications or competencies as set out in appendices 1 & 2? **No**

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Page 7: Specific comments on the proposal

**Q7** Please provide us specific comments related to the OHT scope, qualifications and competencies.

Respondent skipped this question

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Page 8: Anything else

**Q8** Do you have any further comments on the proposal?

No

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Page 10: Last thoughts

**Q9** Please provide us your feedback

**Respondent skipped this question**

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