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Page 2: Your demographics

**Q1** Your details

Name	<b>Bethany Walker</b>
Company/organisation	[Redacted]
City/town	[Redacted]
Email	[Redacted]

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**Q2** Your submission is in the capacity as Other (please specify):  
Bachelor of Oral Health student

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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

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

### Q4 Please describe why you support the proposal

Dental therapists from the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Australia can provide restorative treatment with no patient age restriction, I believe New Zealand should also implement this. There seems to be a lack of awareness that an 'adult care in dental therapy practice' scope is already available to New Zealand dental therapists, with nine people currently practicing under this qualification. However, since Oral Health Therapists (OHTs) no longer register under individual dental therapy and hygiene scopes this is not available to practicing OHTs, even if they complete further training. If such education is available to dental therapists then this should also be made available to OHTs.

Currently, OHTs can provide restorative care to children up to the age of 18 on both primary and permanent dentition. Under this age restriction OHTs can complete restorative work on permanent dentition when a patient is 17 years 364 days old, but would not be allowed to complete the same treatment a day later once the patient turned 18. Where is the evidence to suggest a biological difference in a permanent tooth once a person turns 18 and therefore, why is the patient age restriction on OHTs therapy skills 18 years old? From reading a number of submissions against this proposed change, many dentists and dental specialists seem concerned that OHTs lack the education and experience needed to treat adults. However, Bachelor of Oral Health students, already treat adults under their dental hygiene skills with many of these patients having complex medical histories, polypharmacy and management needs, all of which we are educated (including pharmacology as part of the curriculum) and equipped to deal with.

It is saddening to see in a workforce that should be supportive of other professions and build consultative relationships between dentists and OHTs, that some responses to this change address individual financial and status issues rather than the need to improve the dental health of the New Zealand population and make dental care accessible to those who need it most. I believe more interprofessional education needs to be implemented between all oral health professionals to provide the best care for patients and work in a collaborative approach to improve the oral health of all New Zealanders.

It is thought that removing the age restriction for OHTs will distract attention away from addressing the dental needs of children. However, I believe it will increase access to dental care and encourage families to prioritise their oral health. OHTs will be able to address the needs of the whole family and work together with children and parents to make changes in a holistic approach.

I can see many advantages to the age restriction being removed for OHTs; it will make dental care more accessible to those most in need, not just low socioeconomic status families but the elderly, rural communities and young adults who become somewhat lost in the system after their free dental care ends. I believe that this change will help to improve the oral health of New Zealanders and encourage a collaborative approach by all to address the challenges New Zealanders face in accessing affordable dental care.

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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

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

**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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