

**Question on Notice
No. 1008
Asked on 7 June 2006**

DR FLEGG asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to articles and comment such as in *The Courier-Mail* on Wednesday, 28 December 2005, and its reference to ... some patients waiting up to five years for a basic checkup (dental checkup) —

- (1) Will he detail the number of patients on dental waiting lists with average wait times for each of the past three years (reported separately)?
- (2) How many dental technicians and dentists have been employed for each of the last three years (reported separately)?
- (3) How many dentists and dental technicians have resigned in each of the last three years (reported separately for dentists and technicians)?

ANSWER:

- (1) Queensland continues to provide the most comprehensive public dental service in Australia for adults and school aged children, despite the cessation of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program in December 1996. Queensland was the only state to provide full and ongoing supplementation (\$20 million) of the cancelled Commonwealth Dental Health Program.

In the 2006-2007 financial year, the State Government will spend \$137.7 million to provide free public dental services for Queenslanders. This is an increase on the \$132.4 million spent during the 2005-2006 financial year.

During the 2005-2006 financial year, the following occasions of service were provided:

- approximately 555,000 occasions of service to adult dental patients at a cost of \$90.5 million (budget for 2006-2007 financial year is \$94.1 million); and
- approximately 640,000 occasions of service to children through school oral health services at a cost of \$41.9 million (budget for 2006-2007 financial year is \$43.6 million).

This is a good result in an environment of oral health workforce shortages in Queensland and Australia.

The table below provides average figures for clients that have been waiting for treatment on the general waiting list with no specific dental concern.

Year	Total people on list	Average waiting time (weeks)
2003-2004	115,875	153
2004-2005	136,590	143
2005-2006	161,405	138

Note: 2005-06 wait list figures are current as of 04/07/2006

- (2) The table below indicates the number of Dentist and Dental Technician Fulltime Equivalent (FTE) and persons employed in the past three years.

Year	Total FTE Positions	
	Dentist	Dental Technician
2003-2004	301	152
2004-2005	301	152
2005-1/6/2006	287	150

Year	Total Head Count	
	Dentist	Dental Technician
2003-2004	348	169
2004-2005	348	169
2005-4/6/2006	346	170

Head count figures only include active/paid staff and exclude those staff on extended leave. Source of data is HR Informatics.

- (3) The table below indicates the number of Dentist and Dental Technician FTE and persons that have resigned during the past three years. The consistency in head counts over the years indicates that recruitment is similar to separation.

Year	Separations	
	Dentist	Dental Technician
2003-2004	96	14
2004-2005	110	14
2005-4/6/2006	113	11