From: [redacted]
To: dentalboardconsultation
Subject: Scope of practice registration standard
Date: Wednesday, 22 May 2013 6:39:45 PM

To the Dental Board of Australia,

My name is Nicole Cockburn and I am currently studying a Bachelor of Oral Health at the University of Queensland. I am writing to you in response to the draft scope of practice change. This draft was brought to my attention when one of my lecturers at university spoke about the change. I don't believe my lecturer was aware that oral health students were in his lecture but he continued to speak his opinion on the change of scope. This dentist urged all of the dental students to email the board to stop this potential change 'as it will put dentist's jobs at risk.' Thinking that lack of job security was not a strong enough argument to stop the changes, the lecturer recommended us to argue that the public's safety would be put at risk. I believe this is a very biased view. My career in dental therapy and hygiene is not aimed at stealing work away from dentists but to enhance my patients care and support the team approach to dentistry. Biased views on this change of scope could potentially dilute appropriate and fair outcomes.

I believe changing the scope of practice for therapists and prosthesis will only enhance dentistry. Removing the age restriction on therapists will imporve patient care and also build overall awareness and repour with patients. Allowing therapists to do small restorations on adults can build trust regarding the clinician's abilities and not be thought of as a dental assistant (which can occur from time to time). The need for direct supervision is not essential but I strongly believe that a therapist and hygienist should always be working with a dentist.

An exam question I once had was 'What is the role of an Oral Health Therapist?' The answer to this question can vary considerably and can be very unclear. These new standards can eliminate any uncertainty and remove the 'grey areas'. If an objective and fair view is taken towards these changes I believe they can benefit the entire dental industry.

I look forward to seeing positive changes within our workforce.

Kind regards,

Nicole Cockburn
Yr2 BOH UQ
[redacted]