

# Roadmap

Towards Better Oral Health for New Zealand

## Summary

# Future-proofing New Zealand's Oral Health Workforce

- The dental workforce is spread unevenly around New Zealand. Some regions, particularly rural areas, have minimal numbers of dentists, and Māori and Pacific peoples make up only a small number within the general dental workforce.
- Declining numbers of dental therapists, changing scopes of practice for oral health therapists and workforce shortages in publicly-funded dental care are impacting access to dental care for children.
- NZDA calls for an increased number of Government-funded dental student positions, to improve representation of Māori and Pacific people in the dentist and dental specialist workforces, improve the regional distribution, and to improve low baseline levels of access to dental care.
- The *Roadmap* also recommends actions to improve wellness within the workforce, to establish appropriate sector leadership within Health NZ and the Ministry of Health, and it wants oral health to be considered central to policy development in the health sector and across Government.
- The NZDA also recommends more use of data and digital services to create system efficiencies, to improve the connection of oral health systems to wider health information, to enhance patient care outcomes and to improve population oral health monitoring.

### Queries and Comments

For queries and comments please contact:

**Dr Robin Whyman**  
Director (Dental Policy)  
NZDA

Roadmap@nzda.org.nz  
or visit: [roadmap.nzda.org.nz](https://roadmap.nzda.org.nz)



**New Zealand  
Dental Assoc.**

For the common  
good since 1905.  
[NZDA.org.nz](https://nzda.org.nz)