

Position Summary

The environmental impact of dental care delivery should be minimised without adversely affecting the safety and quality of dental treatment. The Australian Dental Association supports and promotes environmentally responsible behaviours.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) and its member dentists have a long-standing commitment to ethical and *professional* standards and practice.
- 1.2. Climate change, Environmental concerns and sustainability are important issues in Australia and are recognised as aspects of a wider commitment to socially responsible behaviour.
- 1.3. The environment directly affects health.
- 1.4. Sustainability in dentistry is multifaceted and involves many stakeholders including manufacturers, distributors, dental equipment technicians, dentists and staff, patients, waste collectors and processors. The ADA works with other stakeholders to improve the sustainability of dental care delivery.
- 1.5. The practice of dentistry in Australia requires maintenance of high levels of quality and safety which includes:
 - infection control, including utilisation of single-use materials where indicated;
 - energy consumption;
 - a complex set of waste management arrangements; and
 - the management of chemicals which may constitute a hazard in the delivery, application or waste management in dentistry.
- 1.6. Most dental equipment and materials are manufactured outside Australia and so incur significant carbon emissions related to transportation.
- 1.7. The Minamata Convention on Mercury (a multilateral environmental agreement that addresses the adverse environmental effects of mercury) was signed by the Australian Government on 10 October 2013.

Definitions

- 1.8. SUSTAINABILITY is maintaining or improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-systems.

2. Position

- 2.1. The environmental impact of dental care delivery should be minimised.
- 2.2. Sustainability measures must not adversely affect the safety and quality of dental treatment.
- 2.3. The ADA and its Branches should ensure their facilities and activities are environmentally responsible.
- 2.4. Dental practices should be supported to be environmentally responsible.

¹ This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 5.6 Dental Industry, 6.1 Infection Control, 6.11 Amalgam Waste Management & 6.20 Social Responsibility

-
- 2.5. Environmental regulation must have demonstrably clear benefits, be evidence-based and cost-effective.

Policy Statement 6.21

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, April 14/15, 2011.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, November 13/14, 2014.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 6/7, 2017.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, August 21, 2020

Amended by ADA Federal Council, March 24, 2022