

DENTAL ASSISTANTS — RECOGNITION AS PROFESSIONALS

1530. Mr A.P. O'Gorman to the Minister for Health

- (1) When will Dental Assistants be recognised as professional people?
- (2) What progress has been made for Dental Assistants to increase from Level 1 to Level 2?
- (3) When will all dental therapy clinics receive updated office equipment such as computers, answering machines, emails, fax etc?
- (4) When will the antiquated cardex system be replaced?
- (5) What will replace the antiquated cardex system?
- (6) Will a computer program be developed as a patient management system?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (1) Dental Clinic Assistants are not registered health professionals in Australia. If such a move were to be made, the timing is unknown. Notwithstanding the above, Dental Assistants are a highly valued members of the dental treatment team.
- (2) Dental Assistants are classified as Level 1 Government Officers. This classification attracts a base salary range of \$36,879 to \$45,653 per annum. The current actual base salary range for Dental Assistants (including a \$3,000 per annum Attraction & Retention Benefit) is \$39,879 to \$48,653 per annum. The base salary for Level 2 Government Officers is from \$47,082 to \$51,126. There are no plans to reclassify Dental Assistants from Level 1 to Level 2 Government Officers.
- (3)-(4) A business case for the implementation of Clinical Information Systems Infrastructure in the School Dental Service (Dental Therapy Clinics) was prepared in June 2009 and is under consideration by the North Metropolitan Area Health Service (NMAHS) for funding approval. Development of the electronic patient management system is continuing in anticipation of funding approval.
- (5) The implementation of the Clinical Systems Infrastructure in the School Dental Service will enable the electronic patient management system to replace the current cardex system in use.
- (6) Yes.