

Australian Society of Forensic Odontology Inc.



Dr Murray Thomas
Chairperson
Dental Board of Australia
C/O Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency G.P.O. Box 9958
Melbourne VIC 3001

13th January 2020

Via email: dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

Dear Dr Thomas,

The Australian Society of Forensic Odontology (AuSFO) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Dental Records Guidelines.

On a day to day basis members of this Society rely on dental records to identify individuals for the Coroner. These are cases where visual methods are not possible, or DNA and fingerprint records are not available. Dental records continue to play a significant role in Disaster Victim Identification, often identifying the majority of victims in a timely and accurate manner.

As a result, members of our Society regularly see a wide cross section of dental records of greatly varying quality.

1. Are the Guidelines necessary?

Our Society strongly believes that provision of Dental Records guidelines is in the interest of both dental patients and practitioners. The proposal to replace the current guidelines with a fact sheet, referenced via the Code of Conduct, we feel, is a poor substitute for the Guidelines.

2. Do you agree that the Board retire the current guidelines?

We do not agree. The current guidelines should be reviewed and maintained.

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AuSFO sees no problem with practitioners using the Guidelines as a checklist. Indeed, this will help practitioners ensure that their records are complete and comprehensive as the Code of Conduct recommends. Checklists are used in many professions to ensure that nothing is missed.

The Society is happy to provide advice and assistance to the Dental Board on the matter of dental records. Many of our members are tasked with teaching this topic to undergraduates and have significant experience in assessing and using dental records within the legal system.

Yours sincerely



Dr Denice Higgins
Vice President
Australian Society of Forensic Odontology