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## **PREAMBLE**

### **Introduction**

1. The Dental Practice Board of Victoria (the Board) is committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy and to handling personal and health information in a responsible manner, having regard to this right.
2. In handling personal and health information the Board and its staff act in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Health Records Act 2001*. Our information management practices are guided by the privacy principles set out in that legislation. Those principles should be read in conjunction with this policy.
3. We also act in accordance with the provisions of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005* and associated regulations. This legislation sets out what personal information must be collected by the Board in order to register health practitioners and students of health professions in Victoria. The legislation also prescribes how and to whom that information may be disclosed and details the processes for handling notifications (or complaints) about the professional conduct of registered health practitioners and students.

### **Scope**

4. This policy is concerned with how the Board collects, uses, stores, discloses and provides access to personal and health information.

### **Review**

5. This policy will be reviewed regularly (and at the very least within three years) to ensure it conforms with current legislation and reflects enhancements that have been made to business processes.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **What is personal and health information?**

6. Personal information can be summarized as: *recorded information or opinion, whether true or not, about an identifiable individual.*
7. Health information can be summarized as: *identifying information about the health or disability of an individual.*
8. The information can be recorded in a variety of formats e.g. written, audio, photographic, hardcopy, electronic. (More detailed definitions can be found in the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*).

### **What information does this policy apply to?**

9. This policy applies to all personal and health information held by the Board.
10. This information may relate to persons registered with the Board, employed by the Board or those who communicate with the Board for any reason.

### **What information does the Board collect?**

11. The Board only collects personal and/or health information that is needed to fulfil our functions.
12. In collecting this information we endeavour to ensure that you are aware of your rights under the law e.g. we will tell you what information you must supply and what is optional, what the consequences are if you do not provide the information, why we are collecting the information, to whom we may disclose the information and how you can get access to it. If it is not necessary to collect personal information in our dealings with you, we will not do so.
13. The Board collects personal information about practitioners and dental students in order to maintain the register. This information is collected and recorded in accordance with the provisions of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005* and associated regulations. In

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administering this public register, we apply the principles of the *Information Privacy Act 2000* wherever this is reasonably practicable.

14. As part of the registration and renewal of registration process we may request information from third parties about you e.g. interstate or New Zealand dental registration boards or educational institutions. This exchange of information is in accordance with mutual recognition arrangements. If we seek information from you that is not prescribed by law or if we collect information on behalf of another organization, we will inform you, explain why we want to collect the information and advise you that providing the information is voluntary. The Board may for instance co-operate with research bodies in collecting information from you.
15. The Board uses its own unique identifier to assist us in carrying out our functions, as prescribed by law. We do not adopt unique identifiers from other organizations unless required to do so under law.
16. In our role of investigating the professional conduct, professional performance or ability to practise of registered dental health practitioners and the suitability of dental students to undertake clinical training, the Board and its staff may have access to personal, health and other delicate information.
17. While the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005* and legal procedures and precedents govern the way in which the Board is to act in these circumstances, wherever it is practicable to do so, we will apply the privacy principles in handling that information.

#### **When does the Board use and disclose the information it collects?**

18. Unless we are authorized by law, the Board uses and discloses personal information only for the purpose it was collected.
19. Registration information is made available in accordance with the provisions of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*. The register of dental health practitioners is available for public inspection and can be searched via our website ([www.dentprac.vic.gov.au](http://www.dentprac.vic.gov.au)). The details of any practitioner whose registration is currently cancelled or suspended will also be maintained and published on the website. Any person may request a copy of, or an extract from the public register, which will be supplied on payment of a fee, if the Board is satisfied that it is in the public interest to do so.
20. The Board may provide information about practitioners or dental students to a third party, where this is prescribed by law. For instance, under the terms of mutual recognition legislation, information about the registered status of practitioners may be exchanged, including the terms of any cancellation or suspension of registration.
21. The Board is required to provide the Minister for Health with any information it keeps that the Minister requires for planning the health practitioners workforce in Victoria. This information however will not identify any individual practitioner.

#### **How does the Board ensure the quality and security of the information it collects or handles?**

22. The Board makes every effort to ensure that any personal information it holds is kept accurate, complete and up to date. If you believe that the information the Board holds about you is not accurate, you can contact us and we will investigate this and where necessary correct the information or provide you with reasons why we do not believe it should be corrected. Registered practitioners and dental students have a legal responsibility to advise the Board when their practice address or address on the register changes.
23. The Board takes care to ensure the physical security of both electronic and hardcopy materials it handles and to protect them from misuse, loss and unauthorized access, modification or disclosure. Information is kept securely (whether this is in lockable storage or on password-protected computers and databases) and its access is restricted only to those staff who need the information to carry out their jobs. Service providers who may

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have access to information held by the Board are bound by the same information management principles as the Board and its staff.

### **How can you access your information or make a complaint about the way your information is being handled by the Board?**

24. Any queries or complaints you have about how we handle your personal and/or health information and any requests for access to the information the Board holds about you, should be directed to:

**The Privacy Officer:**

Email: [privacy@dentprac.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@dentprac.vic.gov.au)

Postal Address: PO Box 7050  
St Kilda Road  
Melbourne VIC 8004

Fax: +61 3 9699 4711

25. Access to, or correction of personal information held by the Board will be handled under our existing Freedom of Information processes. Where necessary, we will require verification of the identity of the person requesting the information before releasing it.

### **Further information about privacy**

26. Further information about how an individual's privacy is being protected can be obtained from:

- the Victorian Privacy Commissioner [www.privacy.vic.gov.au](http://www.privacy.vic.gov.au)
- the Federal Privacy Commissioner [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)
- the Health Services Commissioner [www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/)