

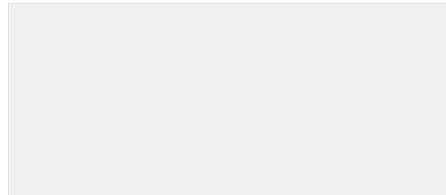
**Question No :** 229

**Question :** Dental Health Services

**Question Date :** 17/11/92

**Member :** Mr BAILEY

**To :** MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES



1. How many dentists are employed by the Department of Health and Community Services.
2. Where are the dentists based.
3. Are any dentist positions vacant; if so, how many vacancies are there and for how long have they been vacant.
4. What services are now conducted in schools following the adoption of the Estimates Review Committee's recommendations.
5. Does the Department of Health and Community Services keep statistics detailing the services provided to schools; if so, what were the 1991 calendar year figures for the following -
  - (a) number of school enrolments;
  - (b) percentage of service cover;
  - (c) number of patient visits;
  - (d) number of second examinations; and
  - (e) number of completed treatments.
6. If the answer to question 5 is yes, what are the 1992 calendar year to date figures for the following -
  - (a) number of school enrolments;
  - (b) percentage of service cover;
  - (c) number of patient visits;
  - (d) number of second examinations; and

- (e) number of completed treatments.
7. What monitoring system is in place to check whether the Department of Health and Community Services' goals in the dental health area will be achieved and whether a reintroduction of the school service at increased levels needs to be set in place.
  8. What monitoring process will take place on the effect of the closure of the Casuarina Dental Clinic.
  9. What indicators would the Northern Territory government require to consider reopening the Casuarina Dental Clinic.

#### ANSWER

1. There are currently 19 full-time dentist positions.
2. There are 10 positions in Darwin, 5 in Alice Springs, 2 in Katherine and 2 in East Arnhem. In Tennant Creek the private practitioner is on contract to provide services to the department.
3. There are 3 positions currently vacant, 1 in Nhulunbuy and 2 in the Darwin Rural Services. The vacancy in Nhulunbuy has been filled intermittently by locums for 12 months, as has 1 Darwin position. The other Darwin position has been vacant for 3 months.
4. The ERC decision was not to wind back services in schools. Based on sound scientific evidence and following best practices elsewhere, it was decided to assess each child's risk status for dental disease and provide an individually appropriate recall period. Exactly the same services are available as previously. Each child who enrolls in the Children's Dental Service is examined and all necessary general dental treatment is offered. Following parental consent, all necessary general treatment is provided.
5. The Department of Health and Community Services keeps statistics detailing the services provided to school children. These statistics are printed in the Annual Report (p130 1991-92 report attached).
6. See attached.
7. At dental examination, a routine epidemiological record of the disease status is prepared. This provides disease trends for all ages throughout the Territory. These trends are monitored annually at a local and Territory-wide level and are reported in the Annual Report.
8. Oral health throughout Australia is surveyed at intervals and disease trends can be monitored.

9. Casuarina Dental Clinic has been closed for over 15 months now. It could not be reopened without additional resources or displacing other services.

PROGRAM: DENTAL HEALTH

TABLE 17:1 GENERAL SERVICES, URBAN AND RURAL

PATIENTS VISITS			
	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Male	12 346	13 256	14 037
Female	14 314	15 115	15 871
TOTAL	26 660	28 371	29 908
Aboriginal	7 341	6 746	7 233
Non-Aboriginal	19 319	21 625	22 675
TOTAL	26 660	28 371	29 908

TABLE 17:2 PATIENTS VISITS BY AGE GROUPS

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
0-4	632	990	461
5-9	2 711	3 308	2 639
10-14	5 402	4 750	5 325
15-19	3 022	2 309	3 217
20-44	8 237	9 578	12 022
45-64	3 567	4 341	4 297
65+	3 089	3 095	1 947
TOTAL	26 660	28 371	29 908

TABLE 17:3 CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICES

	1989	1990	1991	1992
			1/2 Year	
Total School Enrol*	24 700	24 912	25 253	25 740
CDS Schools covered by Therapists#	18 183	18 901	19 113	19 320
No. Patients Visits	38 363	37 716	40 020	19 018
1st Exam		16 778	17 584	18 265
2nd Exam	1 867	1 890	2 275	25
No. Complete	16 796	17 533	19 101	8 744
% Complete	90	90	93	82
Fills/100 patients	56.8	47.4	46.4	35.9
Exo/100 patients	3.2	2.3	2.6	2.1
Fiss seal/100 patients	47.2	38.3	42.1	30.2

\* Department of Education figures, March each year.  
 # Many rural schools are treated by dentists.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICE

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
			1/2 year		
Total school enrol*	24 700	24 912	25 253	25 740	26 138
CDS schools covered by therapists#	18 183	18 901	19 113	19 320	19 567
No. patient visits	38 363	37 716	40 020	38 350	17 795
1st Exam	16 778	17 584	18 265	18 884	9 584
2nd Exam	1 867	1 890	2 275	1 119	36
No. complete	16 796	17 533	19 101	18 194	8 264

\* School enrolments provided by the Department of Education  
 # Many rural schools are treated by dentists, not therapists