



Consultation - review of the Registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation

November 2025

Contents

Executive summary	3
About this consultation.....	4
Review of the registration standard	5
Options for review	7
Proposed changes to registration standard	8
Questions for feedback	9
Glossary.....	11
Appendix 1. Rationale for proposed changes to registration standard	12
Appendix 2. Statement of assessment against Ahpra’s Procedures for the development of registration standards, codes and guidelines	15
Appendix 3. National Boards Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Statement.....	21
Attachment 1. Draft registration standard	24
Attachment 2. Draft supporting resources	26

Executive summary

Sedation for dentistry is the use of medicines to help patients feel more relaxed during dental treatment. The Dental Board of Australia (the Dental Board) sets limits on how sedation is provided to ensure patients are safe and receive good care.

The consultation

The Dental Board is consulting on a revised registration standard for sedation in dentistry. This document regulates sedation to ensure it is provided safely and effectively by dentists and dental specialists.

The Dental Board believes its regulation of sedation would be improved with a revised standard and by publishing supporting resources for dental practitioners and members of the community.

The purpose of the consultation is to hear from people before it finalises its review.

We are seeking feedback on the Dental Board's proposal. We want people to tell us if the changes would affect them, or other groups, in a positive or negative way.

The consultation paper provides more detail on how and why the Dental Board is proposing to update the registration standard.

The Dental Board's proposal

The Dental Board is proposing updates to the registration standard for sedation in dentistry to improve clarity, align with accepted terminology and practices, and support safe practice by dentists and dental specialists.

The main changes

- shorter and simpler registration standard that applies to all dental sedation practice.
- use of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) definitions for depths of sedation.
- renaming the endorsement to *sedation in dentistry*.
- clarifying the sedation non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can provide.
- removing some requirements, including:
 - two years of general dentistry experience to apply for endorsement.
 - Dental Board approval of refresher courses.
 - specific staffing/assistant requirements.
- publishing supporting resources to inform and empower patients and help practitioners meet professional obligations.

What isn't changing

- practice requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
- minimal, if any, practical change for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
- practice requirements will continue to ensure safe sedation practices, including limits on depth of sedation, number of medicines, and how sedation is administered.

Have your say

The Board is seeking feedback on its preferred approach of a revised registration standard supported with resources for patients and dental practitioners.

You can provide your feedback using the response template and emailing us at:
dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

The questions we are asking are on page 9 of this document.

The consultation will be open until 11 February 2026.

About this consultation

Purpose of the consultation

The Board is currently reviewing its [Registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation](#). This document sets requirements for dentists and dental specialists who provide sedation for dental treatment. This review is part of the Board's regular process to ensure standards remain current, clear, and effective.

The Board believes its regulation of sedation would be improved with a revised standard and by publishing supporting resources for dental practitioners and members of the community.

The purpose of the consultation is to hear from people before it finalises its review.

We want your feedback

We are seeking feedback on the Board's proposal. We want people to tell us if the changes would affect them, or other groups, in a positive or negative way.

There are two choices for you to give your feedback:

1. General feedback – 2 broad questions on how the Dental Board's proposal would affect you or others
2. Detailed feedback – 11 questions on specific changes and how the Dental Board's proposal would affect you or others.

How to have your say

The consultation is open until 11 February 2026.

The questions we are asking can be found on page 9 of this document. There is a response template on our website.

You can provide your feedback using the response template and emailing us at: dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au.

Publishing submissions

We publish submissions at our discretion. We generally [publish submissions to our website](#) to encourage discussion and inform the community and stakeholders about consultation responses. Please let us know if you **do not** want your submission published.

We will not place on our website, or make available to the public, submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments or which are outside the scope of the subject of the consultation. Before publication, we may remove personally identifying information from submissions, including contact details.

We can accept submissions made in confidence. These submissions will not be published on the website or elsewhere. Submissions may be confidential because they include personal experiences or other sensitive information.

A request for access to a confidential submission will be determined in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)*, which has provisions designed to protect personal information and information given in confidence. Please let us know if you do not want us to publish your submission or if you want us to treat all or part of it as confidential.

Please note - published submissions will include the names of the individuals and/or organisations that made the submission unless confidentiality is expressly requested.

Next steps

The Dental Board will consider all feedback from the consultation before finalising its review of the registration standard.

Review of the registration standard

The Dental Board of Australia (the Dental Board) protects public safety by ensuring dental practitioners are appropriately trained, qualified, and safe to practise. One of its key roles is setting registration standards that practitioners must meet.

Some dentists and dental specialists have extra qualifications and experience providing sedation. The Dental Board grants these dentists and dental specialists an endorsement of their registration. This endorsement means they can safely provide deeper levels of sedation.

The Board is currently reviewing its [Registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation](#) (the standard). This document sets requirements for dentists and dental specialists who provide sedation for dental procedures. This review is part of the Board's regular process to ensure standards remain current, clear, and effective.

Why this matters

Sedation helps patients feel more comfortable during dental procedures. While all dentists and dental specialists can use light sedation techniques (such as oral or inhaled drugs), only those with a specific endorsement of their registration can provide moderate sedation. Ensuring the standard is up-to-date helps protect public safety and supports good care.

Need for the review

The standard was last updated in 2015. It is sensible to regularly review registration standards to test their workability, clarity, and continued relevance.

In December 2023, the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists ([ANZCA](#)) updated their Guideline on procedural sedation (ANZCA PG09). The Board's current registration standard refers to the previous version of the ANZCA guideline. Because the ANZCA guideline is widely used in Australian healthcare, the Dental Board needs to update its standard to keep it current.

Key considerations

The Dental Board has considered many factors as part of its review. Some of the most important considerations include the standard's clarity and usability, its ability to adapt to change, and how it affects:

- patient safety
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- groups at increased risk of poor oral health.

Key points from the review

The main points from the Board's review process are summarised below.

1. Current rules

The current rules allow:

- non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists to provide minimal sedation using a single oral or inhaled drug.
- endorsed dentists and dental specialists to provide minimal and moderate sedation using multiple drugs via any method.

Key point: An expert panel reviewed the risks for sedation in dentistry and advised that the current rules remain appropriate to protect public safety.

2. Sedation by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists

The standard currently focuses on endorsed practitioners and does not clearly state what type of sedation non-endorsed practitioners can provide. Regulatory data shows that sedation by non-endorsed practitioners has occasionally led to serious patient safety risks.

Key point: Clarity and regulatory effectiveness would be improved by clearly stating the type of sedation non-endorsed practitioners can provide.

3. Changes in the regulatory environment

Since the standard was introduced in 2015, the Board has updated and developed other regulatory tools that apply to sedation in dentistry. These tools support safe and ethical practice and reduce the need for detailed clinical requirements in the registration standard.

Key point: A simpler standard, with fewer clinical requirements would be better aligned with the Dental Board's current regulatory approach.

4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Dental Board looked carefully at potential impacts of the revised registration standard on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Key point: The Dental Board doesn't believe there will be any negative effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from the revised standard.

Review of the [competencies for sedation](#) is a separate but related project. That review will carefully consider how the competencies for sedation in dentistry support culturally safe care, free of racism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

5. Groups at increased risk of poor oral health

The Dental Board looked carefully at how the current standard supports access to sedation services for patients at increased risk of poor oral health, including those with phobias, disabilities, or trauma histories.

Key point: Access to care is influenced by many factors, which are generally outside the Board's control. The Board does not believe the revised standard will have a negative effect on access to sedation for these patients.

Review of the [competencies for sedation](#) is a separate but related project. That review will carefully consider how the competencies support safe and effective sedation for groups at increased risk of poor oral health.

6. Clarity and usability

Feedback from stakeholders highlighted that the standard could be:

- shorter and easier to understand
- improved with clearer definitions
- more efficient with distinct requirements for endorsed and non-endorsed practitioners

Key point: a simpler standard with revised definitions would make it clearer and more usable.

7. Agility

There are increasing expectations for the Dental Board to respond rapidly to emerging regulatory issues. Supporting resources outside the registration standard can be used to quickly respond to emerging regulatory concerns. They can also address complex issues with more nuance than is possible in a registration standard. This aligns with the Dental Board's approach to regulation which emphasises resources that support practitioners to practise safely and effectively.

Key point: Supporting resources would enhance the Board's regulatory agility and support practitioners to practise safely and effectively.

Options for review

The Dental Board has considered two options as part of its review of the registration standard for sedation in dentistry:

Option 1 – keep the current standard

This option would retain the existing registration standard, which has been in place since 2015. However, it would not address the Board's key considerations and the areas for improvement.

Option 2 – revise the standard and publish supporting resources

This option proposes a revised registration standard that:

- simplifies and clarifies the Board's approach to regulating sedation in dentistry
- aligns terminology and practice with the 2023 ANZCA guideline on procedural sedation
- clearly defines the type of sedation non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can provide
- maintains existing requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

Additionally, the Board would publish supporting resources to:

- help practitioners understand and meet their professional obligations
- help the public understand how sedation in dentistry is regulated.

Preferred option

The Board prefers **Option 2**, as it improves clarity, supports safe practice, and aligns with contemporary regulatory approaches.

Preferred option in detail

The Dental Board regulates in the public interest, with its primary focus on patient safety. Sedation in dentistry carries risks that are different from general dental treatment. Bad outcomes from sedation are very rare, but they can cause serious harm to patients. This level of risk justifies regulatory oversight, consistent with the approach in other countries.

The Dental Board's current approach of regulating sedation through endorsement of registration and practice requirements is appropriate. However, the existing standard does not clearly outline what non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can do. The proposed changes clarify these requirements without significantly altering current practice.

Sedation can help reduce barriers to dental care, especially for patients who are anxious, have disabilities, or are at increased risk of poor oral health. The Dental Board's proposal balances safety with access to care by setting clear and appropriate limits.

A simpler standard with supporting resources

The registration standard is part of a broader regulatory framework that includes:

- the code of conduct
- continuing professional development (CPD) standard
- recency of practice standard
- scope of practice standard.

In this context, the revised registration standard would:

- set practice requirements for sedation
- define eligibility for the endorsement.

A draft registration standard is available as [Attachment 1](#).

To compliment this, the Board proposes publishing supporting resources that:

- help practitioners understand and meet their professional obligations
- help the public understand how sedation in dentistry is regulated.

These resources can be updated easily, allowing the Board to respond quickly to changes in the regulatory environment.

Draft supporting resources are available as [Attachment 2](#).

Proposed changes to registration standard

The major changes in the revised registration standard are:

1. The term 'conscious sedation' is no longer used.
2. The standard applies to the practice of sedation in dentistry, not just endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
3. ANZCA PG09 guideline definitions for depth of sedation are used.
4. There are specific practice requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists that align with the lowest risk scenario for procedural sedation from 2023 ANZCA PG09 guideline.
5. The eligibility requirement for endorsement of 2 years general dentistry experience is removed.
6. The Board no longer approves refresher courses for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
7. The name of the endorsement has been changed to 'Endorsed for sedation in dentistry'.
8. Requirements already established by the National Law are removed.
9. The requirement to be 'up to date' with relevant documents e.g. ANZCA PG09 guideline is removed.
10. Practice requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists relating to training in intravenous sedation, resuscitation and assistants (taken from 2014 ANZCA PG09 guideline) are rationalised.
11. Requirements for medical emergency equipment, protocols, procedures in manuals etc are rationalised.

For the Dental Board's detailed rationale for these changes, please see [Appendix 1](#).

Questions for feedback

You are invited to provide feedback on the revised registration standard and supporting resources.

You can provide your feedback using the response template on our [website](#) and emailing us at: dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

There are two choices for you to provide feedback:

CHOICE 1 – General feedback

1. Do you support the Dental Board's revised registration standard and supporting resources?

If there are any parts you don't support, please let us know why.

2. Would the Dental Board's proposal have a negative effect on you, other people or groups?

If so, please let us know why.

CHOICE 2 – Detailed feedback

The registration standard

1. Do you support or oppose any of the following?

- The practice requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
- The practice requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
- Adopting ANZCA PG09 2023 definitions of minimal, moderate and deep sedation and general anaesthesia.
- Removal of the requirement for 2 years of general dentistry experience before applying for endorsement.
- Removal of Board approval of refresher courses.
- Requirement for endorsed dentists and dental specialists to complete mandatory CPD including:
 - response to medical emergencies, airway management skills, non-technical skills and use simulation training.
- Re-naming the endorsement to 'sedation in dentistry'.
- Removal of requirements for equipment, staffing, assistance, procedural manuals etc.

2. Are the content, language and structure of the revised registration standard clear, relevant and workable?

Why or why not?

3. Is there any content that needs to be changed, added or removed in the revised registration standard?

If so, please provide details.

4. Do you have any other comments on the revised registration standard?

The supporting resources

5. Do you support publication of supporting resources to assist dentists and dental specialists to comply with their professional obligations for sedation?

6. Do you support publication of supporting resources to help members of the public understand sedation and the regulation of sedation in dentistry?

7. Is there any content missing from the supporting resources?

Overall impact

8. If the changes are introduced, how do you think patients will be affected, including their ability to access care?

9. Would the revised standard result in any potential negative or unintended effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

If yes, please describe these.

10. Can you identify any other costs or effects on patients that the Board should be aware of from this proposal?

11. Do you have any other feedback on the revised standard or other matters outlined in the consultation paper?

Next steps

The Dental Board and Ahpra will review and consider all feedback from this consultation before finalising the review of the registration standard.

Glossary

Anxiolysis

A reduction in anxiety (for this paper it is assumed that this is achieved through the administration of drugs).

ANZCA

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists

ANZCA PG09

ANZCA's guideline on procedural sedation, updated in 2023.

Conscious sedation

A drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients are able to respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation (DBA registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation, 2015)

Endorsement

An endorsement of registration recognises that a person has an extended scope of practice in a particular area because they have an additional qualification that is approved by the National Board.

The Dental Board of Australia has approved an area of practice endorsement in conscious sedation.

Minimal sedation

A drug-induced state of diminished anxiety, during which patients are conscious and respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation. (ANZCA PG09, 2023)

Moderate sedation

A drug-induced state of depressed consciousness during which patients retain the ability to respond purposefully to verbal commands and tactile stimulation. (ANZCA PG09, 2023)

Procedural sedation

A state of drug-induced relief of anxiety or tolerance of uncomfortable diagnostic or interventional medical, dental, or surgical procedures. (ANZCA PG09, 2023)

Sedation in dentistry

The administration of drugs to relieve anxiety or improve tolerance to uncomfortable dental or oral surgery procedures. This does not include local or regional anaesthesia. (modified from: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA)

Appendix 1. Rationale for proposed changes to registration standard

1. The term 'conscious sedation' is no longer used

- 2023 ANZCA guideline PG09 is widely used in Australian healthcare and acknowledged as setting the clinical practice standards for procedural sedation. It is best for the Dental Board to align with the acknowledged authority in this area.
- PG09 does not use the term 'conscious sedation'. PG09 defines minimal, moderate and deep sedation plus general anaesthesia.
- In terms of depth of sedation, 'moderate sedation' as defined in PG09 is equivalent to 'conscious sedation'.
- The revised registration standard aligns with PG09 by removing the term 'conscious sedation'.

2. Registration standard applies to all dental practitioners, not just endorsed dentists and dental specialists

- Ahpra regulatory intelligence shows that non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists performing sedation have occasionally caused risks to patient safety.
- Although infrequent, there have been serious risks to patient safety from sedation performed by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.
- The revised standard applies to the practice of sedation in dentistry. It covers endorsed and non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists who practise sedation.
- This revision addresses regulatory feedback that the current standard does not set clear thresholds for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists who practise sedation.

3. ANZCA definitions for depth of sedation are used

- 2023 ANZCA PG09 is widely used in Australian healthcare and acknowledged as setting the clinical practice standards for procedural sedation. It is best for the Dental Board to align with the acknowledged authority in this area.
- The revised standard regulates based on depth of sedation so precise and widely accepted definitions for this are needed.
- It is appropriate for the Dental Board to adopt the definitions of minimal, moderate and deep sedation plus general anaesthesia from the 2023 ANZCA PG09.

4. Specific practice requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists

- The Dental Board received feedback from several sources that the current registration standard does not clearly state the type of sedation that non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can provide. This lack of clarity could be confusing for practitioners and does not maximise regulatory efficiency.
- Specific descriptions of what is permitted for oral and inhalational sedation would be helpful for all stakeholders. This would be particularly beneficial for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. Clear descriptions of what is permitted for minimal sedation would support non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists to practise within the requirements of the standard. This would promote safe and effective care, benefitting patients and non-endorsed practitioners.
- The proposed practice requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists align with ANZCA PG09 for the lowest risk scenario for procedural sedation: a single dose of oral anxiolytic or an inhaled sedative drug as sole agent for sedation.
- The term 'anxiolysis' in the current standard has been replaced with 'minimal sedation' using the 2023 ANZCA PG09 definition. These terms mean the same thing – a state of diminished anxiety during which patients remain conscious and can respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation.
- The Dental Board's current regulatory setting permits non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists to use a single dose of an oral anxiolytic to achieve minimal sedation. The Dental Board is proposing to maintain this setting.

- Although the revised standard includes practice requirements specifically for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists there is very little change to the type of sedation that can be practised by non-endorsed practitioners.

5. Removal of eligibility requirement for endorsement of 2 years general dentistry experience

- The Dental Board is proposing to remove this eligibility requirement from the standard because it believes that education providers are best placed to determine entry requirements for an approved qualification.
- The National Law requires an individual to hold an approved qualification to be eligible for the endorsement. The Dental Board has accreditation standards and competencies that apply to approved qualifications. These ensure that graduates with an approved qualification are appropriately qualified for the endorsement.
- The current requirement to have 2 years of experience does not address a risk to public safety, however, it does introduce a barrier to those seeking endorsement. Furthermore, because this requirement is in the registration standard, it does not allow discretion in its application.
- The Dental Board believes this requirement can be removed without detriment to public safety and would reduce barriers for those seeking endorsement.
- The Dental Board has heard concerns that education providers may have a conflict of interest regarding entry requirements. The [approved accreditation standards](#) address admission requirements and processes (criterion 4.2), requiring that these be fair and transparent.

6. The Dental Board no longer approves refresher courses for endorsed dentists and dental specialists

- The National Law requires the Dental Board to accredit programs of study leading to registration or endorsement. The Dental Board does not accredit CPD activity such as refresher courses. Furthermore, it does not approve CPD in any other area of practice.
- The requirements to maintain professional competence established by the code of conduct and CPD registration standard apply to dentists and dental specialists practising sedation.
- The revised standard still requires endorsed dentists and dental specialists to complete mandatory CPD activity every 12 months. The revised requirements for mandatory CPD align closely with the current content of refresher courses.
- The proposed change means that endorsed dentists and dental specialists will be free to select CPD activities to meet these requirements; they will not have to complete a Dental Board-approved refresher course.
- The Dental Board believes this change will promote innovation and updates to CPD offerings by removing the requirement for its approval.

7. Name of the endorsement changed to ‘Endorsed for sedation in dentistry’

- The revised standard aligns with ANZCA PG09 and does not use the term ‘conscious sedation’. The name of the endorsement therefore should not use ‘conscious sedation’.
- An alternative version, ‘Endorsed for dental sedation’ was considered. This version is not proposed as ‘dental’ means relating to teeth and sedation is not done to teeth, it is a technique applied to a patient’s central nervous system. The more precise ‘Endorsed for sedation in dentistry’ is the Dental Board’s preferred version.

8. Removal of requirements established by the National Law

- This change keeps the standard simpler and shorter.
- For example, the revised standard does not state that applicants for endorsement must complete an approved qualification. This exists regardless of the registration standard because it is in the National Law.

9. Removal of requirement to be ‘up to date’ with relevant documents e.g. ANZCA PG09

- The code of conduct establishes a requirement for dentists and dental specialists to maintain their professional competence and provide safe and effective care.
- ANZCA PG09 is identified as an important source of clinical practice standards in the supporting resources, however, dentists and dental specialists must determine which standards are relevant to their practice of sedation.
- This revision gives the registration standard longevity by moving references to external sources to the supporting resources where they can be updated in a timely way.

10. Rationalisation of practice requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists relating to training in intravenous sedation and resuscitation (drawn from 2014 ANZCA guideline)

- The Dental Board's broader regulatory framework relating to safe practice and approved qualifications assures patient safety. This means that specific requirements such as these in a registration standard tend to duplicate other regulatory documents. Additionally, accepted practice tends to change over time making it difficult to keep such requirements in a registration standard up to date.
- The code of conduct and scope of practice registration standard establish requirements for practitioners to provide safe and effective care and only do what they are educated, trained and competent in.
- An approved, or substantially equivalent, qualification leading to endorsement will include training in intravenous sedation and resuscitation techniques. This means a practice restriction on intravenous sedation by endorsed dentists and dental specialists is not needed because it duplicates the Dental Board's regulation of approved qualifications for endorsement.
- The 2023 ANZCA PG09 guidance on assistance for the sedationist is presented as recommendations which state that clinical decisions must be informed by the health status of the patient. This implies the recommendations may not be sufficient in all circumstances. The ANZCA recommendations are therefore better identified in the supporting resources rather than as practice requirements in the registration standard.

11. Rationalisation of requirements for assistants, medical emergency equipment, protocols, procedures in manuals etc.

- As noted above, the Dental Board's broader regulatory framework assures patient safety. The code of conduct establishes an obligation for practitioners to provide safe and effective care, this includes consideration of assistants, medical emergency equipment, protocols and procedures.
- The registration standard can be simplified by relying on the code of conduct to establish an obligation for safe and effective care. The supporting resources can help practitioners consider important aspects of their practice to achieve this.
- Accepted practice tends to change over time making it difficult to keep such requirements in a registration standard up to date. This change would improve the longevity of the registration standard.

Appendix 2. Statement of assessment against Ahpra's Procedures for the development of registration standards, codes and guidelines

Introduction

Section 25 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) requires the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to establish procedures for the purpose of ensuring that the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) operates in accordance with good regulatory practice.

The Ahpra *Procedures for the development of registration standards, codes and guidelines* (2023) is available at on the [Ahpra Resources webpage](#).

Context

Sedation in dentistry is the administration of drugs to relieve a patient's anxiety or help them relax during uncomfortable dental procedures. The Board regulates sedation in dentistry through the endorsement of registration. This is known as an 'endorsement for conscious sedation'.

Dentists and dental specialists who do not hold an endorsement may only provide a light level of sedation using an oral or inhaled drug. Dentists and dental specialists who have an endorsement can provide deeper sedation using more advanced techniques.

There are around 90 dentists and dental specialists with an endorsement for conscious sedation. The number of non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists who practise sedation is not known, although it is likely to be significantly greater than the number of endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The review

The Dental Board of Australia (the Board) is reviewing its [Registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation](#) (the standard). It is good regulatory practice to review registration standards on a planned, regular basis to test their workability, clarity, and continued relevance. The standard has been in effect since 2015 and is therefore due for review.

The Board conducted a review of risks and regulatory controls for sedation in dentistry using its conscious sedation advisory panel. Based on advice from the panel, the Board believes the current core regulatory settings of the standard remain appropriate. However, the Board has identified some issues and areas for improvement in the standard.

The current standard embeds definitions and recommendations from 2014 guidelines published by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA). Because ANZCA has updated its guideline, the Board needs to review its standard to ensure it aligns with widely accepted standards and terminology for procedural sedation.

The Board has received feedback that the standard could be clearer in terms of the sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. This feedback also suggested that the standard could be shorter, simpler and use clearer definitions.

The regulatory context for the standard has changed significantly. In the past 10 years the Board has introduced and/or updated its code of conduct, scope of practice registration standard and CPD registration standard. The sedation standard could be better aligned with the Board's contemporary approach to regulation. There are opportunities to rationalise the clinical practice detail in the standard and review the eligibility and CPD requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The Board's proposal

The Board is proposing a streamlined registration standard that maintains the core regulatory settings for all dentists and dental specialists who practise sedation. There would be no change to practice requirements in terms of depth of sedation, number of drugs that can be used and routes of administration. Delineation between requirements for endorsed and non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists would be based on the widely accepted definitions for depth of sedation from the ANZCA guideline.

To address the clarity issue noted earlier, the proposed standard states, in positive terms, the type of sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. The Board is proposing to align requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists with the lowest risk scenario for procedural sedation from the ANZCA guideline. The Board believes this will result in very little, if any, practical change for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The proposed standard uses terminology and definitions from the current ANZCA guideline. The ANZCA guideline is widely used in Australian healthcare and is acknowledged as setting the clinical practice standards for procedural sedation.

The proposed standard no longer embeds clinical practice recommendations from the ANZCA guideline. This simplifies the standard and is consistent with the Board's contemporary risk-based regulatory approach established by its code of conduct, and aligned with the [Regulatory Principles for the National Scheme](#). The code of conduct requires practitioners to provide safe and effective care. Practitioners are responsible for determining how they achieve that in their practice.

The Board is proposing to remove the eligibility requirement for endorsement of 2 years general dentistry experience. The Board believes education providers are best placed to determine entry requirements for approved qualifications. Removal of this requirement would reduce barriers for dentists and dental specialists seeking endorsement of their registration.

The Board is proposing to remove approval of refresher courses for endorsed dentists and dental specialists. This would give endorsed dentists and dental specialists more freedom to manage their own CPD activity. The Board does not approve any other CPD activity, so this change aligns with the Board's approach in other areas.

The Board is proposing to publish supporting resources relating to sedation in dentistry. The supporting resources would:

- help practitioners understand and comply with their professional obligations for sedation in dentistry, and
- help members of the public understand sedation in dentistry and its regulation.

Assessment

Below is the Board's assessment of the proposal taking account of the Ahpra procedures.

1. Describe how the proposal

- 1.1 takes into account the paramount principle, objectives and guiding principles in the National Law¹
- 1.2 draws on available evidence, including regulatory approaches by health practitioner regulators in countries with comparable health systems

The Board's proposal takes into account the National Scheme's paramount principle of protecting the public and maintaining public confidence in the safety of services provided by dental practitioners.

The risks of sedation are different from those in dental treatment. Serious harm can occur from sedation and there have been preventable deaths overseas of children and adults receiving dental treatment under sedation.

Because of this level of risk, most comparable health jurisdictions regulate sedation in dentistry. The Board reviewed other jurisdictions and noted a range of approaches. Some jurisdictions rely on detailed clinical practice requirements, other use complex, multi-tiered permit systems to regulate clinical practice and facilities.

Ahpra's regulatory intelligence does not suggest that the Board's current core requirements are inadequate. The Board also conducted a review of risks and regulatory controls for sedation in dentistry

¹ See section 3 and section 3A of the National Law

using its conscious sedation advisory panel. Based on these sources of information, the Board believes its approach of endorsement of registration remains appropriate to protect the public and maintain their confidence in dental services.

The risks associated with sedation increase as the depth of sedation increases. To ensure public safety, the Board is proposing to maintain the endorsement of registration. The endorsement means only dentists and dental specialists with additional qualifications and training can provide deeper levels of sedation using more advanced techniques.

Based on the advice of its conscious sedation advisory panel, the Board believes the current core regulatory settings for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists remain appropriate to protect the public. However, the standard could be clearer in relation to the sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The Board is proposing to align its requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists with the lowest risk scenario from the ANZCA guideline. The Board has taken into account the National Scheme objective to facilitate access to health services in the public interest in formulating this proposal. The Board has used advice from its conscious sedation advisory panel so that its proposal ensures safe practice without unreasonably restricting access to care.

The Board believes alignment with the ANZCA guideline would result in very little, if any, practical change for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. However, it would address the clarity issues noted earlier. The Board's proposal is to state, in positive terms, the type of sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. This would help all stakeholders better understand the requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The proposal also supports the National Scheme to operate in a transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way by shortening and simplifying the standard. The proposal revises the eligibility and CPD requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists, which the Board believes will improve regulatory efficiency without compromising public safety.

2. Outline steps that been taken to:

- achieve greater consistency within the National Scheme (for example, by adopting any available template, guidance or good practice approaches used by National Scheme bodies)
- meet the wide-ranging consultation requirements of the National Law

The proposed standard has been drafted to minimise overlap with multi-profession regulatory instruments such as the shared code of conduct and the Board's CPD registration standard which will promote consistency across the National Scheme.

The National Law requires wide-ranging consultation on proposed standards, codes and guidelines. The National Law also requires National Boards to consult each other on matters of shared interest.

The Board completed an 8-week preliminary consultation as the first step in the consultation process. This allowed the Board to test its proposal with key stakeholders, including other National Boards. Generally, the Board's proposal was viewed favourably by stakeholders. The Board has considered the feedback it received through the preliminary consultation and has made some modest changes to its proposal for public consultation. The Board is now undertaking wide-ranging public consultation over a 12-week period and will consider all feedback received.

3. Address the following principles:

- a. whether the proposal is the best option for achieving the proposal's stated purpose and protection of the public

The Board's options are:

1. continue with the current standard, or
2. propose a revised standard

The Board considers a revised standard is the best option because the current standard is out of date and embeds an obsolete version of the ANZCA guideline. The Board has also received feedback that the standard could be clearer and easier to use. Maintaining the status quo would not address these issues and is not considered to be a viable option.

The Board's proposal would contemporise the standard, bringing it into alignment with current definitions for procedural sedation. It would also provide clarity about the type of sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The Board has identified changes to the standard that could reduce regulatory burden and improve usability. Maintaining the status quo would forgo the opportunity to make these improvements.

b. whether the proposal results in an unnecessary restriction of competition among health practitioners

The current and proposed standard only allows non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists to provide a light level of sedation. This means dentists and dental specialists who do not hold the endorsement cannot provide the same level of sedation as dentists and dental specialists who hold the endorsement.

The Board believes this is in the public interest due to the potential for serious harm from deeper levels of sedation. The endorsement of registration ensures that dentists and dental specialists providing deeper sedation have additional qualifications and training to manage the increased risk.

The current and proposed standard do not apply to deep sedation or general anaesthesia. This prevents dentists and dental specialists, regardless of endorsement, from providing these levels of sedation.

The Board believes this is in the public interest due to the risk of serious harm associated with deep sedation and general anaesthesia. These levels of sedation require specialised skills beyond the level required for the endorsement. Deep sedation and general anaesthesia are provided by medical practitioners, often specialist anaesthetists.

The proposal is unlikely to restrict competition among dentists and dental specialists who provide the same level of sedation. The Board is not proposing to change the core practice requirements, and these would apply equally to all dentists and dental specialists who provide the same level of sedation.

c. whether the proposal results in an unnecessary restriction of consumer choice

The current and proposed standard only allows non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists to provide a light level of sedation. This means consumers needing a deeper level of sedation (but not deep sedation or general anaesthesia) must engage an endorsed dentist or dental specialist.

The Board believes this is in the public interest due to the potential for serious harm from deeper levels of sedation. The endorsement of registration ensures that dentists and dental specialists providing deeper sedation have additional qualifications and training to manage the increased risk.

The current and proposed standard do not apply to deep sedation or general anaesthesia. This prevents dentists and dental specialists, regardless of endorsement, from providing these levels of sedation. Consumers who need deep sedation or general anaesthesia must engage with medical practitioners for these services.

The Board believes this is in the public interest due to the risk of serious harm associated with deep sedation and general anaesthesia. These levels of sedation require specialised skills beyond the level required for the endorsement. Deep sedation and general anaesthesia are provided by medical practitioners, often specialist anaesthetists.

The Board is proposing to remove the eligibility requirement for endorsement of 2 years general dentistry experience. Removal of this requirement could reduce barriers for dentists and dental specialists seeking endorsement of their registration. This could result in a small improvement for consumer choice by increasing the number of dentists and dental specialists who hold the endorsement. This effect would probably be small and take place slowly as there are only around 90 dentists and dental specialists with the endorsement.

- d. whether the overall costs of the proposal to members of the public and/or registrants and/or governments are reasonable in relation to the benefits to be achieved

Following preliminary consultation, the Board has considered the likely overall costs of the proposal to members of the public, health practitioners and governments. The Board considers that the costs are likely to be minimal and anticipates a would be offset by the benefits of a streamlined standard that aligns with accepted standards and terminology.

The Board's proposal would result in very little practical change for practitioners. This means the regulatory burden on practitioners and costs to patients is likely to stay the same.

Name of the endorsement

The Board's proposal includes changing the name of the endorsement because the term 'conscious sedation' is no longer in ANZCA guideline. If the name of the endorsement was changed, there would be minimal costs to update Ahpra's systems and the public register. The Board received advice from Ahpra on likely costs noting the scale of change is small with around 90 dentists and dental specialists being directly affected.

Non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists

The proposed standard states, in positive terms, the type of sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. This is to provide clarity to all stakeholders regarding the type of sedation that non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can provide. The Board believes this will result in very little, if any, practical change for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

The proposed practice requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists align with the ANZCA guideline for the lowest risk scenario for procedural sedation.

Endorsed dentists and dental specialists

The Board's proposal does not change the practice requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists. There should be no increased costs for endorsed dentists and dental specialists in relation to their clinical practice.

The Board is proposing to specify the nature of CPD that must be completed rather than require endorsed dentists and dental specialists to complete Board-approved refresher courses. The proposed CPD requirements reflect the current content of Board-approved refresher courses and focus on the ability to safely manage medical emergencies.

The ability of endorsed dentists and dental specialists to respond appropriately in a medical emergency can make a significant difference to patient outcomes. As the burden on practitioners would be little different from the current settings, the Board believes this proposal is in the public interest. Any potential burden on some endorsed dentists and dental specialists could be less than the current settings because they could choose how they meet their CPD requirements, rather than completing a Board-approved refresher course.

The Board's proposal includes changing the name of the endorsement because the term 'conscious sedation' is no longer in the ANZCA guideline. Endorsed dentists and dental specialists may incur costs to update their public-facing information, such as their websites. This would be a one-off and minimal cost for the around 90 endorsed dentists and dental specialists impacted. The Board believes this is reasonable to align the name of the endorsement with terminology that is widely accepted in the Australian healthcare system.

- e. whether the proposal's requirements are clearly stated using 'plain language' to reduce uncertainty, enable the public to understand the requirements, and enable understanding and compliance by registrants, and

The Board is committed to a plain English approach that will help practitioners, and the public understand the requirements for sedation in dentistry.

The proposal aims to streamline and simplify the registration standard, and the proposed standard is written in plain English. The Board expects this approach will help all stakeholders better understand the requirements for sedation in dentistry.

The proposed standard states, in positive terms, the type of sedation that can be provided by non-endorsed and endorsed dentists and dental specialists. This is to provide clarity to all stakeholders regarding the type of sedation that non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can provide.

The Board would publish supporting resources to help dentists and dental specialists understand and meet their professional obligations for sedation in dentistry. The resources would also help members of the public understand sedation in dentistry and its regulation.

The Board is proposing to change the name of the endorsement and update the terminology in all its documents. The term 'conscious sedation' is no longer preferred and would be replaced in the revised standard and supporting resources with 'moderate sedation' as used in the ANZCA guideline. The Board is proposing to change the endorsement to 'Endorsed for sedation in dentistry' but will seek feedback on this.

The use of 'conscious sedation' may create an inaccurate perception in members of the public about the nature of deeper levels of sedation. The techniques practised by endorsed dentists and dental specialists depress a patient's consciousness, which is why the term 'moderate sedation' is now preferred. The Board believes this change would help members of the public better understand the nature of sedation in dentistry.

- f. whether the Board has procedures in place to ensure that the proposed standard remains relevant and effective over time.

The Board has procedures in place to support review of the proposed sedation registration standard at least every five years as it is good regulatory practice to do so. The Board may choose to review the sedation registration standard earlier (if approved), in response to issues which arise, or new evidence which emerges, to ensure its continued relevance and regulatory effectiveness

4. Closing statement

Feedback on any regulatory impacts identified during the consultation process in relation to the revised registration standard will be provided to the Board and/or Ministerial Council to inform decision-making. The Board has completed a **patient health and safety impact statement** for consultation and will provide a patient health and safety impact assessment (if the proposal is approved).

Appendix 3. National Boards Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Statement

Statement purpose

The National Boards Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Statement (Statement)² explains the potential impacts of a proposed registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of the public, particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community which includes those subject to stigma or discrimination in health care, and/or experiencing health disadvantage and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The four key components considered in the Statement are:

1. The potential impact of the proposed revisions to the registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of patients and consumers particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community including approaches to mitigate any potential negative or unintended effects.
2. The potential impact of the proposed revisions to the registration standard, code or guideline on the health and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples including approaches to mitigate any potential negative or unintended effects.
3. Engagement with patients and consumers particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community about the proposal.
4. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about the proposal.

The National Boards Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Statement aligns with the [National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#), [National Scheme engagement strategy 2020-2025](#), [the National Scheme Strategy 2020-25](#) and reflects key aspects of the Ahpra [Procedures for the development of registration standards, codes, guidelines and accreditation standards](#).

Below is the Dental Board of Australia's (the Board's) initial assessment of the potential impact of proposed revisions to the [Registration standard: endorsement for conscious sedation](#) on the health and safety of patients and consumers particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This statement will be updated after consultation feedback.

1. How will this proposal impact on patient and consumer health and safety, particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community? Will the impact be different for people vulnerable to harm in the community compared to the general public?

The Board has carefully considered the impacts revising the registration standard could have on patient and consumer health and safety, particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community to put forward what we think is the best option for consultation.

The proposed option is based on Ahpra's regulatory intelligence and expert advice from practitioners with experience in private practice and publicly funded services. Our engagement through consultation will help us to better understand possible outcomes and meet our responsibilities to protect patient safety and healthcare quality.

The revised standard clarifies the requirements for non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists. The Board expects this will promote safe and effective sedation practice. Sedation by non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists can remove barriers to care for patients who experience anxiety because of dental treatment.

² This statement has been developed by Ahpra and the National Boards in accordance with section 25(c) and 35(c) of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). Section 25(c) requires Ahpra to establish procedures for ensuring that the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) operates in accordance with good regulatory practice. Section 35(c) assigns the National Boards functions to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the health profession including the development of registration standards for approval by the Ministerial Council and that provide guidance to health practitioners registered in the profession. Section 40 of the National Law requires National Boards to ensure that there is wide-ranging consultation during the development of a registration standard, code or guideline.

Sedation provided by endorsed dentists and dental specialists can remove barriers to dental treatment for some patient groups at increased risk of poor oral health. The Board has considered if the current regulatory settings for endorsed dentists and dental specialists is creating a barrier for these patients to access care. The Board does not believe the settings are doing this and is not proposing to change requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

2. How will National Boards engage with patients and consumers particularly those vulnerable to harm in the community during consultation?

In line with our [consultation processes](#), the Board will undertake wide-ranging consultation on its proposal. The Board will engage with patients and consumers, peak bodies, communities and other relevant organisations to get input and views from vulnerable members of the community.

Consultation questions specifically ask if there will be any impacts on patients and their ability to access sedation services from dentists and dental specialists. The Board will also ask if the proposed changes would have unintended and/or negative effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Responses will help the Board better understand possible outcomes and address them.

3. What might be the unintended impacts for patients and consumers particularly people vulnerable to harm in the community? How will these be addressed?

The Board has carefully considered what the unintended impacts of the revised registration standard might be, as the consultation paper explains. The Board believes the revisions will provide clarity for all dentists and dental specialists regarding sedation in dentistry. Furthermore, the practice requirements are in the public interest because they will ensure appropriate margins of safety without unreasonably restricting practice.

Consulting with relevant organisations and those vulnerable to harm in the community will help us to identify any other potential impacts. We will fully consider and take actions to address any potential negative impacts for patients and consumers that may be raised during consultation particularly for people vulnerable to harm in the community.

4. How will this proposal impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples? How will the impact be different for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

The Board has carefully considered any potential impact of the revised registration standard on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and how the impact compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples might be different to put forward the proposed option for feedback as outlined in the consultation paper. Our engagement through consultation will help us to identify any other potential impacts and meet our responsibilities to protect safety and healthcare quality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The Board does not believe there will be any negative effects on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from the proposal.

5. How will consultation about this proposal engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

The Board is committed to the National scheme's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#) which focuses on achieving patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the norm, and the inextricably linked elements of clinical and cultural safety.

Cultural safety definition:

Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.

Culturally safe practice is the ongoing critical reflection of health practitioner knowledge, skills, attitudes, practising behaviours and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible and responsive healthcare free of racism.

National Law amendments

In 2022, a new objective and guiding principle were added to the National Law to acknowledge the National scheme's role in ensuring the development of a culturally safe and respectful health workforce that is responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their health and that contributes to the elimination of racism in the provision of health services.

Board consultation process

As part of our consultation process, the Board will engage with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and stakeholders to ensure there are no unintended consequences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Board also works closely with Ahpra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit to ensure the impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are carefully considered and appropriately addressed.

6. What might be the unintended impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples? How will these be addressed?

The Board has considered and has not identified any unintended effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the revised registration standard. However, continuing to engage with relevant organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples will help the Board identify any unintended consequences. The Board will consider and take actions to address any potential negative effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples that may be raised during consultation.

7 How will the impact of this proposal be actively monitored and evaluated?

Part of Board's work in keeping the public safe is ensuring that all standards, codes and guidelines are regularly reviewed. Good regulatory practice includes being responsive to changing needs by undertaking wide-ranging consultation. The Board will monitor and regularly review its registration standard for sedation in dentistry to ensure it is working as intended.

The Board may review the standard earlier, to ensure its continued relevance, practicality and maintenance of public safety. In particular, the Board will review the standard earlier if unintended consequences for the health and safety of the public, vulnerable members of the community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples arise.

Attachment 1. Draft registration standard

Registration standard: sedation in dentistry - DRAFT

This registration standard sets out the minimum standards of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) for sedation in dentistry.

Who does this standard apply to?

This registration standard applies to all registered dental practitioners except those with student or non-practising registration.

Only dentists, dental specialists, endorsed dentists and endorsed dental specialists may practise sedation in dentistry.

What activities does this standard apply to?

This standard applies to **sedation in dentistry*** by dentists, dental specialists, endorsed dentists and endorsed dental specialists.

This standard does not apply to local or regional anaesthesia.

This standard does not apply to **deep sedation*** or **general anaesthesia***.

Practice requirements

Dentists and dental specialists may practise sedation in dentistry:

1. where the level of sedation does not exceed **minimal sedation***, and
2. using **either** a single dose of an oral anti-anxiety drug, **or** a single inhaled drug.

[Sequential doses of an oral anti-anxiety drug cannot be administered]

[Minimal sedation achieved through an oral or inhaled drug maybe combined with local anaesthetic.]

Endorsed dentists and dental specialists may practise sedation in dentistry:

1. where the level of sedation does not exceed **moderate sedation***, and
2. using one or more drugs, and
3. the drugs are administered by any route.

Endorsement of registration

Sedation in dentistry is an approved area of practice for which the Board may endorse a dentist or dental specialist's registration.

The National Law establishes requirements for an endorsement for an approved area of practice.

To be eligible for endorsement for sedation in dentistry, you must meet the National Law requirements and:

1. be a registered dentist or dental specialist, and
2. complete competency-based training relevant to sedation in dentistry every 12 months. The training must include response to medical emergencies, airway management skills, non-technical skills and use simulation training.

Entry on the public register

The following wording will appear on the public register for dentists and dental specialists whose registration is endorsed for sedation in dentistry:

Endorsed for sedation in dentistry

Definitions

sedation in dentistry:

the administration of drugs to relieve anxiety or improve tolerance to uncomfortable dental or oral surgery procedures. This does not include local or regional anaesthesia.

modified from: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA

minimal sedation:

a drug-induced state of diminished anxiety, during which patients are conscious and respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation.

Features of minimal sedation include maintenance of airway patency and reflexes, as well as ventilatory and cardiovascular function, although there may be some reduction in cognition and physical dexterity.

source: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA

moderate sedation:

a drug-induced state of depressed consciousness during which patients retain the ability to respond purposefully to verbal commands and tactile stimulation.

Features of moderate sedation include maintenance of airway patency and reflexes, as well as ventilation and cardiovascular function. However, minimal interventions to maintain airway patency, spontaneous ventilation or cardiovascular function may be required. Moderate sedation offers a margin of safety that is wide enough to render loss of consciousness unlikely.

source: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA

deep sedation:

A drug-induced state of depressed consciousness during which patients are not easily roused and may respond only to noxious stimulation.

Features of deep sedation may be difficult to distinguish from general anaesthesia and include impaired ability to maintain an airway, inadequate spontaneous ventilation and/or impaired cardiovascular function. Deep sedation can readily and rapidly progress to general anaesthesia with onset of unconsciousness and inability to maintain an airway.

source: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA

general anaesthesia:

A drug-induced state of unconsciousness characterised by absence of purposeful response to any stimulus, loss of protective airway reflexes, depression of ventilation and disturbance of circulatory reflexes.

source: PG09(G) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023, ANZCA

Attachment 2. Draft supporting resources

Regulation of sedation in dentistry

Non-endorsed dentists and dental specialists: what is allowed

May practise minimal sedation. (definition hover-over)

Must ensure sedation does not exceed minimal sedation. (definition hover-over)

May only use one sedative drug, this could be an oral anti-anxiety drug OR an inhaled sedative drug.

Using an oral anti-anxiety drug

Must not exceed minimal sedation. (definition hover-over)

May only use one anti-anxiety drug, and no other sedative drugs.

May only use a single dose of one oral anti-anxiety drug. The registration standard does not allow sequential doses of an oral anti-anxiety drug.

Minimal sedation using an oral anti-anxiety drug is typically achieved with a benzodiazepine.

The following sources may provide clinical guidance on the use of oral anti-anxiety drugs:

- [Australian Medicines Handbook](#)
- [MIMS Australia](#)
- [NPS MedicineWise](#)
- [Therapeutic Guidelines](#).

Using an inhaled sedative

Must ensure sedation does not exceed minimal sedation. (definition hover-over)

May only use one inhaled sedative drug, and no other sedative drugs.

The Dental Board is aware that methoxyflurane is used 'off-label' in dental practice for its sedative effects, even though its approved use in Australia is as an analgesic.

Methoxyflurane is recognised as an analgesic with sedative properties. Because it can cause depression of consciousness, the use of methoxyflurane is regulated by the Dental Board's sedation standard.

Local anaesthesia with sedation

The standard does not apply to local anaesthesia or regional anaesthesia.

An oral anti-anxiety drug or inhaled sedative may be used with local or regional anaesthesia.

Endorsed dentists and dental specialists: what is allowed

May practise minimal and moderate sedation. (definition hover-overs)

Must ensure sedation does not exceed moderate sedation. (definition hover-over)

May use one or more drugs.

May administer drugs by any route.

Other dental practitioners: what is allowed

The registration standard only permits dentists and dental specialists to provide sedation.

Current state and territory laws prohibit the use of sedatives by dental hygienists, dental prosthetists, dental therapists and oral health therapists.

Other members of the dental team may treat patients who have received minimal or moderate sedation from a dentist or dental specialist. The dentist or dental specialist who gave the sedation remains responsible for managing the effects of the sedation.

The Dental Board's regulatory documents

The Dental Board has a regulatory framework of standards and codes to ensure dentists and dental specialists deliver safe and effective sedation. Click on the links below to access these documents.

Links

- [Registration standard: sedation in dentistry](#)
- [Code of conduct](#)
- [Scope of practice registration standard](#)
- [Recency of practice registration standard](#)
- [CPD registration standard](#)

Maintaining professional competence

Sedation risks

Sedation carries risks that are not routinely present in dental treatment. There have been significant adverse events, including death, from sedation for dental treatment.

Dentists and dental specialists who practise sedation should be aware of risks to patients, other staff and themselves, and manage them to deliver safe and effective care. They must regularly reflect on their ability to provide safe and effective sedation and plan their CPD accordingly.

Culturally safe and respectful care, free from racism to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Ahpra is developing a multi-year National Cultural Safety Accreditation and Continuing Professional Development and Upskilling Framework and Strategy. This aims to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by eliminating racism from the healthcare system.

The framework and strategy will develop nationally consistent standards, codes, and guidelines for registered practitioners on cultural safety for accreditation and continuing professional development.

Until this is in place, dental practitioners must reflect regularly on their ability to provide culturally safe care and plan their CPD accordingly. The [code of conduct](#) sets out what dental practitioners must do to ensure culturally safe and respectful care, free from racism to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Mandatory CPD requirements for endorsed dentists and dental specialists

In addition to the requirements of the [CPD registration standard](#), endorsed dentists and dental specialists must meet the CPD requirements of the registration standard: sedation in dentistry.

To apply for, or renew, an endorsement for sedation in dentistry, dentists and dental specialists must complete mandatory CPD every 12 months.

This CPD must include:

- response to medical emergencies
- airway management skills
- non-technical skills (definition hover-over)
- use of simulation methods.

Practitioners can select their own activity to meet these requirements. There is no minimum number of hours of CPD activity for these requirements.

The Dental Board does not approve refresher courses for endorsed dentists and dental specialists.

Non-technical skills: interpersonal skills which include communication skills; leadership skills; team-work skills; decision-making skills; and situation-awareness skills (source: <https://www.arpana.gov.au/>)

Clinical practice standards for sedation

The Dental Board does not publish clinical practice standards for sedation in dentistry. These are published by other entities such as professional and government organisations.

The sources below may provide clinical guidance for sedation in dentistry. This is not an exhaustive list and practitioners should determine what is relevant to their practice.

Links

- [ANZCA PG09\(G\) Guideline on procedural sedation 2023](#)
- [Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare](#)
- [Australian Medicines Handbook](#)
- [MIMS Australia](#)
- [NPS MedicineWise](#)
- Professional dental associations
- [Therapeutic Guidelines](#)

Legislation and other regulation

Commonwealth, state and territory legislation, and other government regulations may be relevant to sedation in dentistry. Laws can vary between states and territories.

State and territory governments may set requirements regarding the facilities where sedation can be provided.

Dentists and dental specialists practising sedation may be required to report certain events, for example, sentinel events, to a department of health or another government agency.

State and territory health departments may publish guidance on how to comply with legislation and/or regulations.

Links

- [State and territory health departments](#)
- [State and territory drugs and poisons legislation](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

Information for patients

Sedation for dental treatment

Sedation helps to relieve a patient's anxiety or helps them to stay relaxed during uncomfortable procedures. Sedation is not pain relief, so a patient could be given a local anaesthetic as well as sedation for a procedure.

The different levels of sedation range from where patients are fully conscious through to where patients are unconscious.

<GRAPHIC HERE TO SHOW SPECTRUM OF SEDATION>

Patients receiving sedation from a dentist or dental specialist should always be able to respond purposefully to verbal instructions and light touch.

How sedation is given to dental patients

Sedation is usually given to patients in one or more of the following ways:

- *Oral sedation – this usually involves swallowing a pill or liquid containing a sedative drug*
- *Inhaled sedation – this means breathing in a sedative gas*
- *Intravenous sedation – this is when sedative drugs are delivered through a small, flexible tube inserted into a patient's vein.*

While all dentists and dental specialists are allowed to provide light levels of sedation, not all of them will offer this to patients.

Minimal sedation

What it is: *a reduction in anxiety where patients remain fully awake.*

Who can provide it: *Dentists and dental specialists can provide minimal sedation.*

How: *minimal sedation is given either as a tablet or liquid the patient swallows, or by breathing in a sedative gas.*

Where: *it's safe to receive minimal sedation in dental rooms.*

Check the register: *Look up your dentist or dental specialist on the [public register](#). They must hold current registration as a dentist or dental specialist to give you minimal sedation.*

Moderate sedation

What it is: *a state of reduced consciousness where patients are drowsy but can still respond purposefully to verbal instructions and light touch.*

Who can provide it: *Only dentists and dental specialists holding an endorsement of their registration can provide moderate sedation.*

How: *moderate sedation can be given with oral, inhaled or intravenous sedative drugs. One or more types of sedation can be used.*

Where: *it's safe to receive moderate sedation in dental rooms.*

Check the register: *Look up your dentist or dental specialist on the [public register](#). They must hold current registration as a dentist or dental specialist **and** endorsement of their registration to give you moderate sedation.*

<EXAMPLE FROM PUBLIC REGISTER>

Division/Registration Type - Dentist, General

Registration Expiry Date		30/11/2024
Conditions	?	None
Endorsements	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Endorsed conscious sedation practitioner
Notations	?	None
Registration Requirements	?	None

Dental treatment during sedation

If you are receiving minimal sedation, the dentist or dental specialist who provides your sedation might also perform your dental treatment, although, another member of the dental team could also perform your dental treatment.

If you are receiving moderate sedation, then it will usually be another dental practitioner who performs your dental treatment.

Whoever performs your dental treatment, it is always the dentist or dental specialist who provides your sedation who is responsible for its effects and your safety.

More information about sedation for dental treatment

If you need more information about dental sedation, you can:

- talk to your dentist or dental specialist
- seek a second opinion from another dentist or dental specialist
- talk to your general practitioner (family doctor)
- seek a second opinion from another medical practitioner.

Talking to your dentist or dental specialist about sedation

If you, or someone you care for, is thinking about sedation for dental treatment, you can ask the dentist or dental specialist some questions beforehand:

- What type of sedation are you planning to give me?
- What are your qualifications, training and experience to provide the sedation you are planning give?
- What are the risks and benefits of the sedation you are offering/providing?
- How should I prepare for the sedation and what is the recovery process?

Concerns about a dental practitioner

If you have concerns that a dental practitioner may be putting public safety at risk, please visit our [notifications webpage](#).

Concerns about advertising

If you have concerns about the advertising of sedation, or any regulated health services, please visit our [advertising webpage](#).