



dental health  
services victoria

# Factors associated with recruitment and retention in the public sector

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## Two year wait for dental care

AAP | May 23, 2010 1:48PM

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NSW Premier Kristina Keneally is being urged to lobby the federal government for a national dental health service after it emerged that nearly half a million Australians in urgent need of dental care are on waiting lists longer than two years.

Greens MP Lee Rhiannon said the Premier must respond to the crisis to ensure the crisis does not worsen.

“Dental health is essential to good physical health and emotional well-being but there are more than 500,000 people on dental waiting lists in Australia,” Ms Rhiannon said in a statement on Sunday.

“Dental healthcare is long overdue for an overhaul as the current system fails many Australians, particularly those who are already disadvantaged.”

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# The workforce issue in Victoria

- Number of eligible patients
    - Approximately 1.5 million
  - Number treated annually
    - Approximately 326,000 patients
  - Waiting lists
    - Approximately 110,000 individuals at end 2009
  - Approximately 30% of population eligible for public dental care **but** only 14% of dentists work in public sector
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# Question

What can we learn from our staff to help grow our workforce for the health of Victorians?

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# Research

“Factors associated with recruitment and retention in the public sector”

Authors: Matthew Hopcraft, Elizabeth Milford, Kehn Yapp, Yujin Lim, Vanessa Tan, Leo Goh, Cheng Cheng Low, Tung Phan

Journal of Public Health Dentistry (accepted for publication)

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# Research Aims

- Workforce demographics
- Workforce employment intentions
- Factors considered when making employment decisions
  
- Research undertaken on public dentists only

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# Public dental workforce demographics

- 40% of public sector dentists had been working in the public sector for less than 3 yrs
- 47% of public sector dentists obtained their degree overseas

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# Public dental workforce demographics

- Public dental employees working solely in public sector
  - 66% women
  - 50% men
  
- Average age
  - 44 years for men
  - 36 years for women

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# Public dental workforce demographics

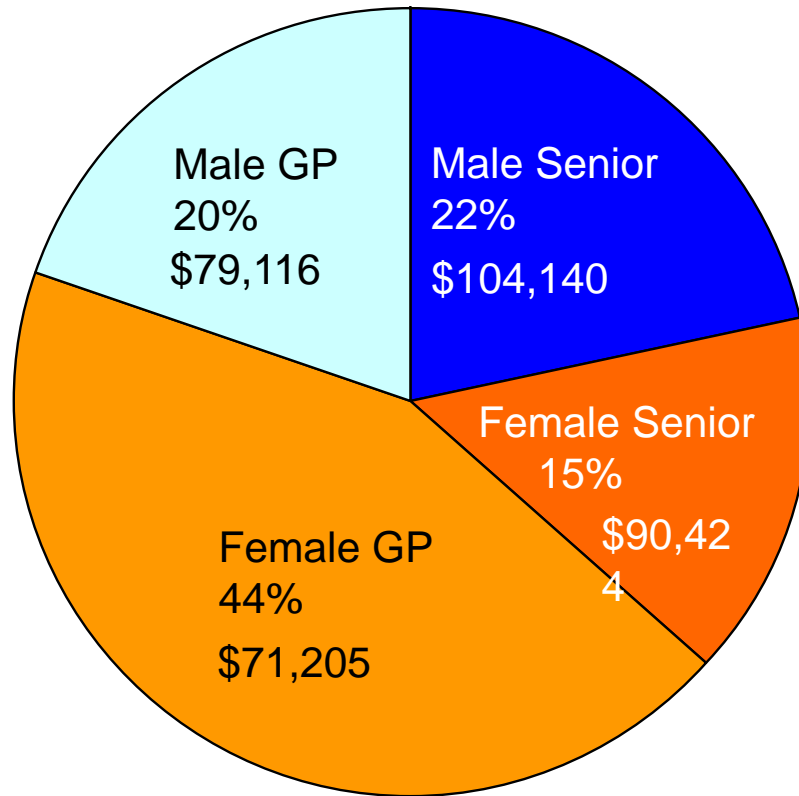
- Distribution of workforce
  - 66% of dentists were in staff positions
  - 34% in senior dentist or management positions
- Gender distribution of public dental workforce
  - 58% women
- Gender distribution of total dental workforce
  - 35% women

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# Public dental workforce demographics

- Average public sector wages by gender
  - Male
    - \$90,623
  - Female
    - \$75,584

# Gender Balance - Senior & Staff Positions



Excludes specialists

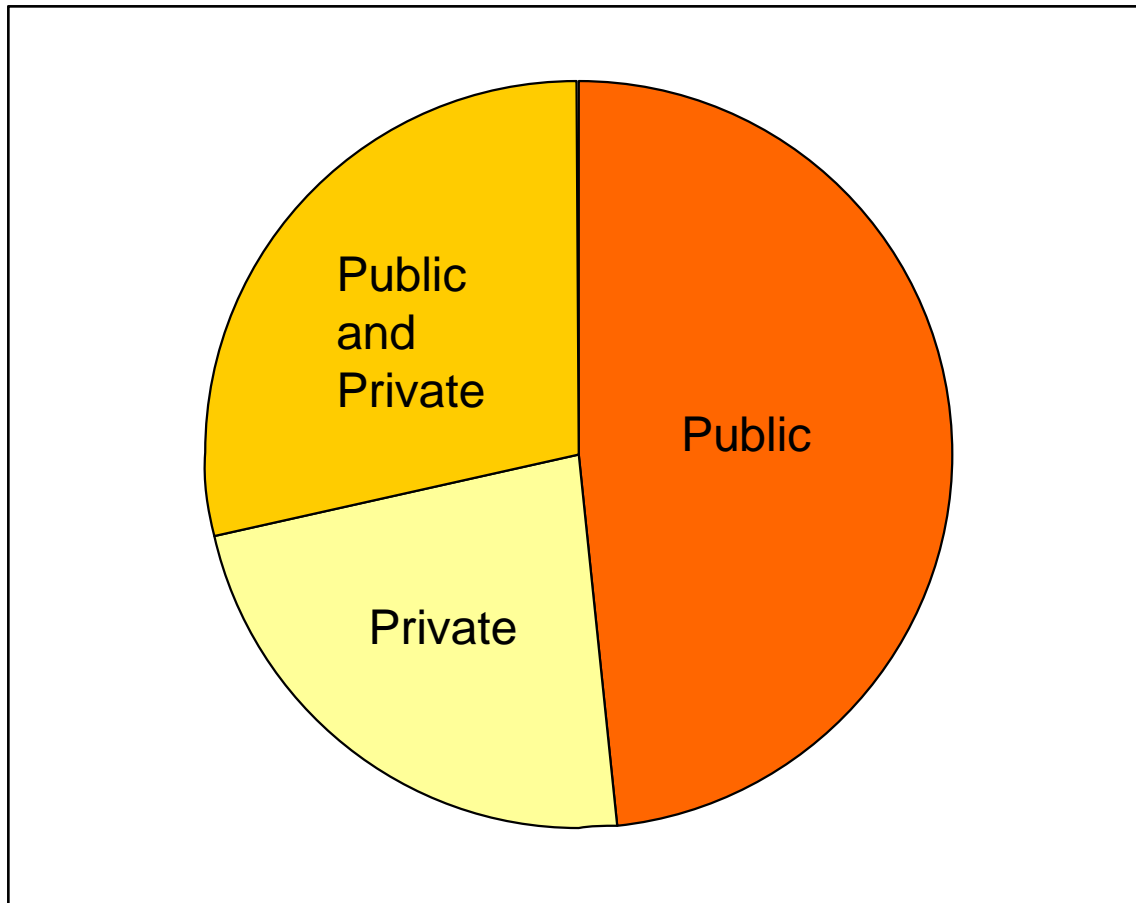
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# Recruitment

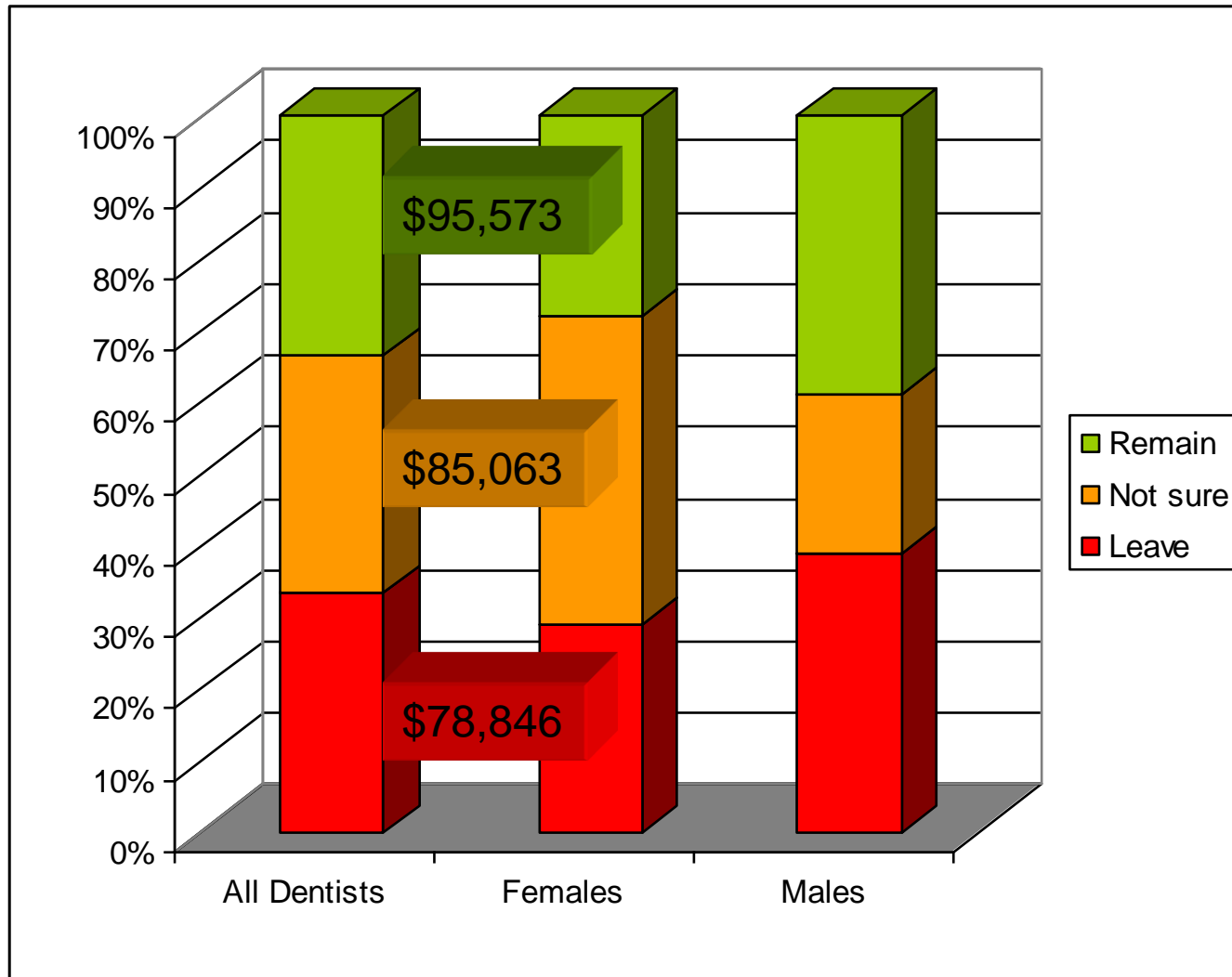
## Reasons for initial recruitment

- To gain professional support / mentoring
- To gain clinical experience
- To practice dentistry in a community based setting
- To make a difference
- To work in a multi-disciplinary environment

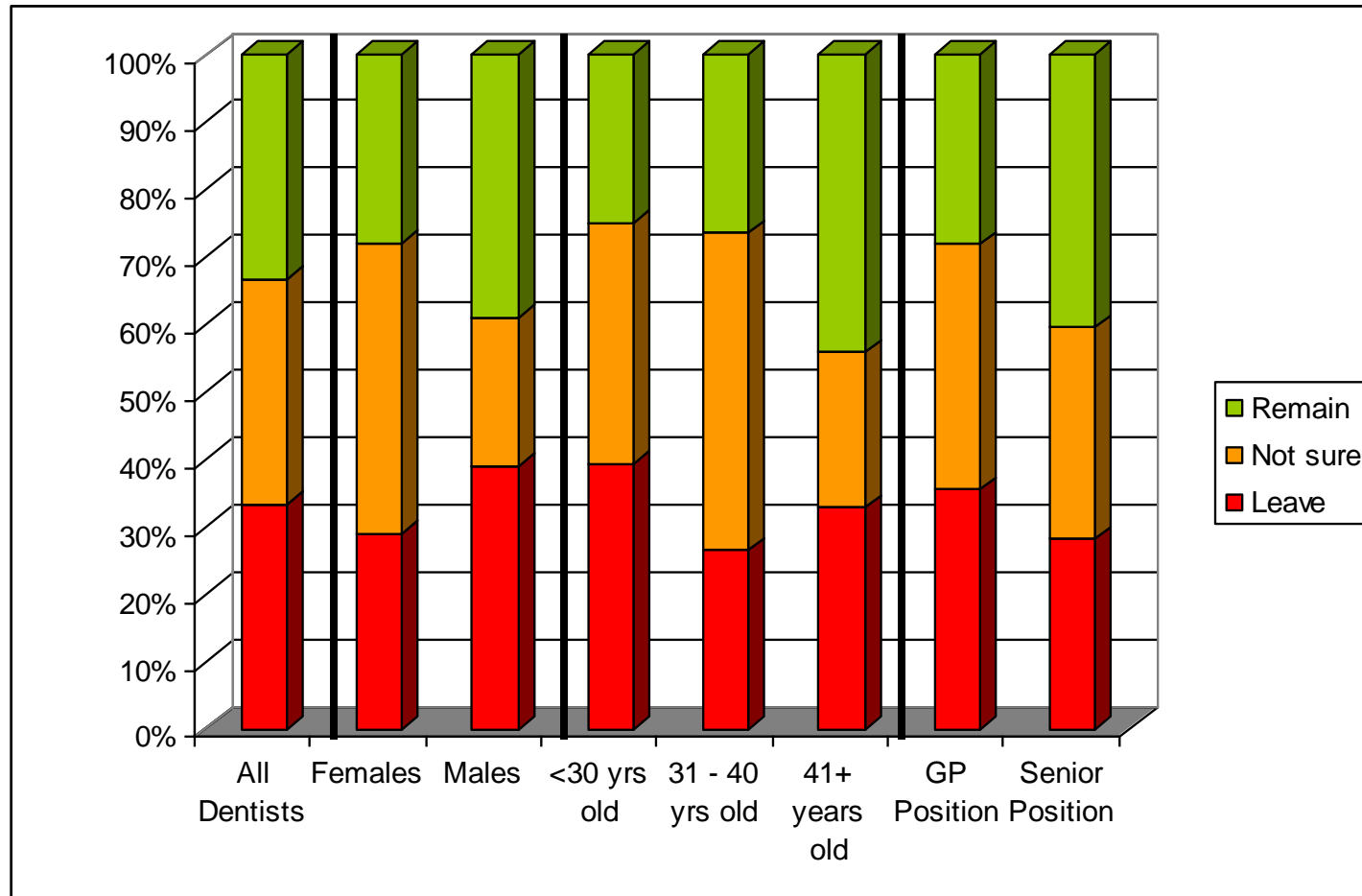
# Recruitment: Dentists in First 12 months after graduation



# Intentions: Gender



# Intentions



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# Factors associated with intention to remain in public sector

- Number of years in public sector
- FTE annual salary
- Country of birth/ location of primary dental qualification

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# Intention is related to rewards

## Rewards

- Intrinsic: helping others, a sense of meaningfulness.
- Extrinsic: monetary, recognition

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# Factors associated with intention to remain in public sector

- Access to salary packaging
- Workplace flexibility
- Increased remuneration
- Other financial incentives
- Better access to CPD
- Professional support / mentoring
- Access to dental specialists
- Improved facilities / infrastructure
- Altruistic factors
- Broader range of clinical experience
- Broader range of dental materials and equipment
- Career advancement opportunities

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# Factors associated with intention to leave the public sector

- Poor remuneration
- Frustration with public dental policies
- Broader clinical experience available in the private sector
- Limited career opportunities (reported by women)

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# Remuneration

- Remuneration not a key factor in recruitment, but is a key factor in retention
- Poor remuneration was strongly associated with the decision to remain or leave the public sector
- More than 50% of respondents gave additional comments on the need for greater remuneration
- Financial inequality between public and private dentists is a very significant factor in retention

# Financial inequality

- Average starting salaries- all dentists (2009)
  - \$70,000
- Starting salary for public sector dentist (2010)
  - \$56,000 (level 1) to \$60,000 (level 2a)
- Average salary self employed private dentists (2007)
  - \$166,000
- Average salary employed private dentist (2007)
  - \$105,000
- Average public sector wages by gender (2006)
  - Male
    - \$90,623
  - Female
    - \$75,584

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# Remuneration

- Financial inequality between public and private dentists is a very significant factor in retention
- **Consider link between female intention to leave and low remuneration**

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# Influence of public dental policies

## Influences on intention to leave

- ❑ 86% of dentists felt constrained by budgetary issues involving lab procedures, or materials, or equipment.
- ❑ 54% felt they were not adequately supported by CHC administration
- ❑ 54% concerned with poor availability of specialist referral options for their patients

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# Recommendations

## Recruitment

- Graduates
- Dentists dissatisfied with private

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# Recommendations

## Retention

- Aim to get past 2 yrs
- Look at reported influences of decision making
  - Remuneration
    - Address public vs private wage disparities
  - Public dental policies and clinical experience

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# Recommendations: Gender equality

- Gender equality in pay rates
- Gender equality in promotion prospects
- Gender related retention factors
  
- Women rated these factors as more important than their male counterparts
  - Workplace flexibility
  - Increased remuneration

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# The future

- Increased supply of clinicians
  - Increased overseas-trained dentists
  - Increased local dental graduates
  - Increased local Oral Health graduates
  
- Increased investment in education
  - Increased debt for graduates

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# Conclusion

- Equal pay for men and women- \$15,000
- More clinical freedom- \$150 per crown
- A happy employee – Priceless