

Public Dental Waiting Times Database, 2021–22; Data Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
Synonymous names:	PDWT NMDS 2021–22 DQS
METEOR identifier:	783374
Registration status:	AIHW Data Quality Statements , Superseded 07/03/2024

Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

This data quality statement covers nine years of data between 2013–14 and 2021–22 presented in the report [Oral health and dental care in Australia](#) collated under an agreement to report against the [Public Dental Waiting Times \(PDWT\) National Minimum Data Set \(NMDS\)](#).

- The PDWT NMDS defines three types of waiting list: general dental care, denture care and assessment. New South Wales does not have a denture care waiting list. Only New South Wales and the Northern Territory have assessment waiting lists.
- Data are not comparable across jurisdictions due to differences in how services are arranged and different arrangements that determine which people requiring treatment are placed on a public dental waiting list (including how jurisdictions prioritise certain disadvantaged population groups). Therefore, the calculation of an Australian total is not appropriate.
- Data for jurisdictions are comparable across years.
- The collection excludes people who are treated under jurisdictional priority client schemes.
- Waiting times could not be calculated for some records; for instance, where a record had no date of offer or date of first visit. Records that reported dates resulting in negative waiting times were not able to be submitted.
- Records with waiting times of zero days are included for calculations of waiting times from listing date to date of offer but are excluded from waiting times calculations for listing date to date of first visit.
- Data were not supplied by all jurisdictions in each collection year.
- Jurisdictions do not necessarily provide data for all types of waiting lists.
- Data for 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22 reflect the impact of COVID-19 on service activity. This should be considered when interpreting these results and making comparisons with previous reporting periods.
- Western Australian data include only Dental Health Services information, which is the primary, but not sole, provider of public dental services in Western Australia.

Institutional environment:	The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is an independent corporate Commonwealth entity under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987 (AIHW Act), governed by a management Board and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health portfolio. The AIHW is a nationally recognised information management agency. Its purpose is to create authoritative and accessible information and statistics that inform decisions and improve the health and welfare of all Australians. Compliance with the confidentiality requirements in the AIHW Act, the Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and AIHW's data governance arrangements ensures that the AIHW is well positioned to release information for public benefit while protecting the identity of individuals and organisations. For further information see the AIHW website www.aihw.gov.au/about-us, which includes details about the AIHW's governance (www.aihw.gov.au/about-us/our-governance) and our role and strategic goals (www.aihw.gov.au/about-us/our-vision-and-strategic-goals). The data for this collection are collected by state and territory departments responsible for the provision of public dental services. Jurisdictional-level data releases must be cleared by the relevant state or territory.
Timeliness:	The reference periods for these data are financial years 2013–14 to 2021–22. Data are compiled annually.
Accessibility:	The AIHW will publish data from this collection on the AIHW website .
Interpretability:	Metadata information for the PDWT NMDS is published in the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry (METEOR) at the following AIHW web address: Public dental waiting times NMDS 2022–
Relevance:	The purpose of the PDWT NMDS is to collect information about the length of time that patients placed on a public dental waiting list wait for public dental care in Australia. The scope of the NMDS is adults who were placed on selected public dental waiting lists who received or were offered public dental care in the reporting period in Australia. The time between listing date and date of offer, and listing date and date of first visit, for these reporting periods may not reflect current or future waiting times experienced by patients. The availability of clinical resources, demand for services, and client uptake of care are among the variables that will affect these figures throughout routine operations. An increase in the number of services provided to people on the waiting list (or offers of care), especially to people who have been waiting longer, may increase overall waiting times reflected in this collection. This might occur, for example, as a result of additional clinical resources being made available. The data collection excludes people who are treated under jurisdictional priority client schemes, and may also exclude some other people who are not placed on a public dental waiting list for any other reason. Therefore, the waiting times reported are not the median waiting times (and waiting times at the 90th percentile) experienced by all people aged 18 or over who received public dental services. Data are reported by jurisdiction of receipt of dental care, regardless of the jurisdiction of usual residence of the person who received the treatment.
Accuracy:	Data were not supplied by all jurisdictions in each collection year. Data for 2013–14 and 2014–15 do not include New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory. Data for 2015–16 and 2016–17 do not include New South Wales or the Northern Territory. Data for 2016–17 does not include Victoria. Data for 2017–18 do not include New South Wales. Data for 2018–19 do not include New South Wales or the Northern Territory. Data for 2017–18, 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22 do not include denture care

waiting list data for the Northern Territory.

Data for 2013–14 to 2019–20 do not include assessment waiting list data for New South Wales or the Northern Territory.

Data for 2020–21 and 2021–22 do not include assessment waiting list data for the Northern Territory.

Data providers are primarily responsible for the quality of the data they provide, although the AIHW has undertaken basic validation of the data. The AIHW does not adjust data to account for possible data errors or missing or incorrect values; however:

- data provided that resulted in a negative waiting time were not able to be submitted
- data were excluded from waiting times calculations where a record had no date of offer or date of first visit, and so a waiting time could not be calculated.

Waiting times of zero days are included in the analysis of 'listing date' to 'date of offer' but are excluded from waiting times calculations for 'listing date' to 'date of first visit' as these are considered to be errors in the data.

Only treatments that result in a person being removed from a public dental waiting list are considered to be 'first visits'.

As two separate waiting periods are described in this indicator (that is, waiting period from 'listing date' to 'date of offer', and to 'date of first visit'), the waiting periods calculated may not be based on data relating to the same people. For example, where a record does not record the date of first visit (or the date of offer), the person's waiting time will be used only in calculating one of the measures. Where a person's date of offer falls in a different reporting period from their date of first visit, the two separate waiting periods will be reported separately in the relevant reporting periods.

In South Australia, there is a large variation between the number of denture care offers and reported first visits due to no dates being reported for first visit under the Pensioner Denture Scheme in South Australia; that is, most cases are excluded. Therefore, caution is advised in interpreting the 50th and 90th percentile waiting times for denture care. Also wait times reported for denture care wait list do not reflect the totality of the clients that are provided dental care as the clients requiring general care prior to denture care are offered a general course of care and offered a denture course of care with the same day on and off from the denture care and zero wait times between date of listing and date of offer.

In Tasmania, people who do not respond to offers of care are 'suspended' from the waiting list. If they later present for care, they are restored to the waiting list in their original position and retain all their previous waiting time, rather than starting a new episode of waiting. Often this places the person immediately at the top of the list, and if the resources are available they will be given an appointment. This policy can result in longer times between listing date and date of first visit and/or date of offer. It may particularly influence the 90th percentile figures.

Waiting times reported for denture care in Tasmania do not reflect the totality of clients provided with denture services for Tasmania as people requiring general dental care before having denture care are treated through the general dental care waiting list, after which they start a course of care for a denture. At no point are they added to the denture waiting list.

In some states, Indigenous people are not included in the scope of the collection as they are treated as a priority group.

Waiting times data were suppressed where the number of contributing records was fewer than 20, as waiting times are more likely to be volatile where the records numbers are low.

Coherence: National Public Dental Waiting Times data were first collected in 2013–14 under the agreement to collect PDWT NMDS data.

In relation to the ability to compare data over time, and between jurisdictions:

- data for jurisdictions are comparable across years
- data are not comparable across jurisdictions due to differences in how services are arranged and different arrangements that determine which people requiring treatment are placed on a public dental waiting list (including how jurisdictions prioritise certain disadvantaged population groups). Therefore, the calculation of an Australian total is not appropriate
- Western Australian data includes only Dental Health Services information, which is the primary, but not sole, provider of public dental services in Western Australia.

Data products

Implementation start date: 01/07/2020

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [Public Dental Waiting Times Database, 2019-20; Data Quality Statement](#)

[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 21/09/2023

Has been superseded by [Public Dental Waiting Times Database, 2022–23; Data Quality Statement](#)

[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Standard 07/03/2024

See also [National Healthcare Agreement: PI 13–Waiting times for public dentistry, 2022](#)

[Health](#), Standard 24/09/2021

See also [Public dental waiting times NMDS 2022–Health](#), Standard 08/02/2023