

NZDA Conference update

Over 800 Dentists, Auxiliaries, Students and Exhibitors from across New Zealand came together for three days of learning, networking, and of course shopping; at the recently held NZDA Conference at the Tākina Convention Centre in Wellington.

Whilst exhibitor numbers and stand sizes were down on previous years (in part due to May's Dental Expo and the smaller venue in Wellington), the level of interaction with customers remained strong. Dentists seem to be managing the current economic environment reasonably well. However, a clear split exists between rurally based Practices, who are benefiting from an export led economic recovery and those in the main centres where trading remains more difficult and patient inflows below average.

This was the second NZDA conference to feature a revised schedule with two 60-minute breaks between education sessions. Exhibitor feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with most preferring this format over the previous structure of short morning and afternoon breaks and a single lunch hour. This change, originally proposed by NZDIG, is a small example of the growing collaboration between NZDA and NZDIG.

Strengthening relationships with NZDA and other oral health bodies remains a strategic priority for NZDIG. In support of this, NZDIG has backed NZDA's initiative to bring together multiple sectors of the profession under one roof. The 2026 NZDA Conference in Auckland will include members of the NZ Oral Health Association (NZOHA) and the Institute of Dental Technologists (NZIDT), offering broader professional engagement and more value for exhibitors.

Lastly, I would like to encourage all members to take the time to read a summary of the NZDA's "Towards.Better.Oral.Health.for.New.Zealand.(868 8696)" which was launched at the Conference. It's a bold, forward-looking plan aimed at improving oral health outcomes across the country and addressing workforce shortages which currently limits the amount of dentistry being completed in New Zealand. A summary of the report can be found at: https://assets.nzda.org.nz/files/Roadmap/NZDA_Roadmap_Summary.pdf