

ADAQ Museum of Dentistry congratulated for their achievements in Standards Review Program

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) proudly celebrated the achievements of the **ADAQ Museum of Dentistry** on Friday 15 November 2024, during a special presentation event held at the historic Miegunyah House Museum, Brisbane. This recognised the **ADAQ Museum of Dentistry's** remarkable achievement in completing the intensive year-long **Standards Review Program** where they assessed their practice against the [*National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, Version 2.0*](#) (2023).

The ADAQ Museum of Dentistry is dedicated to preserving the rich history of dentistry, boasting one of the largest collections of dental equipment in Queensland. Its archives provide invaluable insights into the evolution of dental practices and offer visitors a unique perspective on the experiences of dental professionals and patients alike.

The Museum's historical collection features a variety of intriguing dental artifacts, including ornate foot-pedal drills, early x-ray equipment, anaesthesia machines, an exquisite swan-armed dental chair from the 1800s, and a range of extraction key instruments. This diverse array of objects not only serves as a testament to the history of dentistry but also as an essential educational resource for the public.

Located on the first floor of the Australian Dental Association Queensland's (ADAQ) headquarters, the Museum is currently open by appointment only. Staff members invite everyone to explore the captivating collection, suitable for both medical professionals and those with a casual interest in dentistry.

Did you know? There is a link between dental fillings and tattoos! The Bonwill electro-magnetic mallet was one of the first electric handheld devices in history. Patented by the American William GA Bonwill in 1871, this device uses electricity as a motor to plug gold or other metal amalgam fillings into teeth. Samuel O'Reilly, inventor of the electric tattooing pen (1891), is reported to have first adapted one of these dental mallets to create his coil machine for tattooing purposes. Like today's tattoo machines, Bonwill's device is operated by way of two vertical electromagnetic coils. It was an excruciatingly slow and painful process for the patient who had to endure the pressure of this percussion for hours.

Did you know? Old cartoons would often feature false teeth that would spring out of a person's mouth and chatter! Up until the late nineteenth century, dentures were carved in ivory and spring fixings connected upper and lower arches. Retention wasn't great, and dental plates would dislodge very easily and suddenly while eating or speaking. You can view old dentures from as early as the late 1600s at the Museum.



Did You know? Dentists used Sir Isaac Newton's theory of light and colour to improve the quality of prosthetic teeth! Newton demonstrated that colour is essentially a quality of light. Dentistry was one of the crafts where this knowledge could be exploited to achieve a more natural 'look' for false teeth made from porcelain. Accurate shading and colour matching to natural teeth and complexions remains one of the most challenging parts of dental restorations to this day. At the Museum of Dentistry, you can see many shade samples for artificial teeth from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

ADAQ Dental Museum Project Officer, Alessandra Boi, remarked, "This program was a golden opportunity for a small private museum with big ambitions like ours. Being the 'new kid on the block', it was great for our organisation to be engaged in, and be immersed in, the museum sector workings, and be reassured that many problems and snags we face are shared and we are not alone! At the same time, it was very encouraging to know what we can do well, and build our confidence, especially as we try to reach out to the public outside the dental field. Everyone from the facilitators to the consultants have been very supportive and generous with their professional advice."

They continued, "We look forward to working towards our agreed forward plan, which includes rationalising our collection and finding new audiences. This will ensure we can achieve our main goal which is to use the history of dentistry as a tool and opportunity for education programs (oral health, sciences and technology, and art) around Queensland."

Rebekah Butler, Executive Director of M&G QLD, stated, "We congratulate the ADAQ Dental Museum on their achievements through participation in our Standards Review Program. Their dedicated staff and volunteers have excelled in fostering professional networks, which are crucial for the Museum's future growth."

Industry experts **Rebecca Lush and Josh Tarrant, M&G QLD's Standards Program Reviewers**, added, "We would like to congratulate the team for managing such a significant move and establishing a presence in the new building. From what we saw during the review, so much work has already been done to ensure the history of dentistry is being displayed and celebrated. No doubt the value in this is creating a sense of community and benefit-adding to the ADAQ membership."

M&G QLD's Standards Program Reviewers generously provide their services pro bono and support participating organisations by sharing their professional expertise and guidance.

The 2024 Standards Review Program included participants from Brisbane, Logan and the Scenic Rim regions.

M&G QLD's Standards Review Program supports Queensland's public museums and galleries to build skills and capacity; plan for a sustainable future; identify strategic priorities for improvement; and ensure the safeguarding and accessibility of community collections and stories.

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Image Caption: M&G QLD's Executive Director, Rebekah Butler (right), awarding Gary Smith from the ADAQ Museum of Dentistry with a certificate of recognition for completing the Standards Review Program.

Photograph: Madeleine Green, courtesy of M&G QLD.



Image Caption: Anatomical and demonstration models made from plastic, bone and metal from the Museum's collection – circa 1890s-1960s.

Photograph: Courtesy of the ADAQ Museum of Dentistry.



Image Caption: Oral health products and advertisements from the Museum's collections – circa 1930s-1960s.

Photograph: Courtesy of the ADAQ Museum of Dentistry.



Image Caption: A collection of the Museum's extraction keys – circa 1780-1890.
Photograph: Courtesy of the ADAQ Museum of Dentistry.



Image Caption: The participants of the 2024 Standards Review Program together at QWHA Miegunyah House Museum.
Photograph: Madeleine Green, courtesy of M&G QLD.