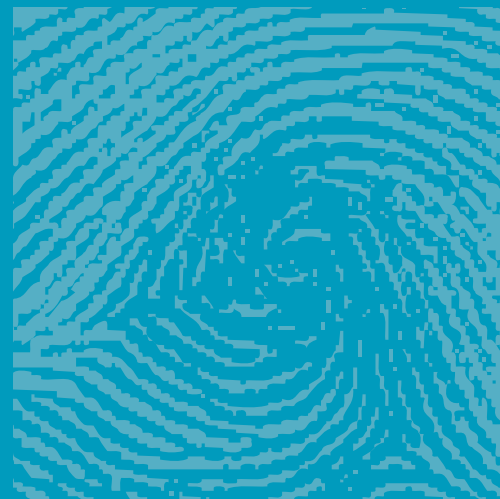


Snapshot

Dr John Rogers
Principal Dental Advisor



What do I do?

My role covers policy, planning, program development, monitoring and evaluation. It's about contributing an understanding of dental public health principles and practice to each of these areas.

Where has dentistry taken me?

Dentistry has taken me all around the world. I graduated as a dentist in the mid 1970s, and had my first job in Alice Springs in a community health service. I travelled for two years and ended up in private practice in England before moving to Papua New Guinea to work as a provincial dental officer. I stayed in PNG for three years and then went to the US to complete a Master of Public Health course. I moved back to London after I graduated with my Masters, and worked on preschool dental oral health promotion projects, then went to the Middle East for two and a half years delivering general primary health care. In the mid 80s I came back to Australia and managed a community health centre, and then came into the Department of Human Services in the early 90s.

What do I like most about my role?

I feel lucky to have a job like this. It's an opportunity to do something worthwhile. There are large inequalities in oral health status across the Victorian community, so there is a need for appropriate public dental services that are efficient, effective and high quality. The challenge is to ensure that there are sufficient resources to address the inequalities, to manage the demand for public dental care, and to ensure those resources are used well.

What would I change?

There are a lot of myths about the public system that we need to debunk. I think some dentists in the private sector see public dentistry as 'poor dentistry for poor people'. But those that have more direct contact with the public system are usually surprised at the high standard of facilities and equipment, the skills, enthusiasm and dedication of the staff and the needs of the client group.

Most oral diseases are amenable to prevention through interventions such as fluoridation. It's important that as a community more people understand oral health issues and the possible solutions.

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