



Selecting Dental and Medical Students:  
*The Australian and New Zealand Experience*

Inaugural Forum  
15 – 17 May, Adelaide, South Australia

### **ABSTRACT:**

**Title:** Socially accountable selection of dental students for regional and remote Australia.

**Presenter:** Dr Felicity Croker, James Cook University

**Forum Theme 2:** Social Accountability, Qualities and Tools

The mission of the James Cook University (JCU) Dental Surgery program is to educate dentists to meet the oral health needs of Northern Australia with an emphasis on rural, remote, Indigenous and tropical health. This presentation will describe the socially accountable selection processes adopted by JCU so as to enable participation by a broad range of students, including those from under-represented populations as part of the widening participation agenda. JCU Dentistry currently has triple the number of Indigenous students than other Australian programs, some of whom enter through an enabling pathway program. Socially accountable practices that move beyond an emphasis on academic excellence create a tension as people with lower chances of academic “success” may be selected. This challenge is being met by embedding capacity building and support practices into the pre-clinical curriculum so these students can attain the required standards and achieve success. The first graduation will be in December 2013. To maintain this socially accountable approach, selection processes must explicitly manage the tension between expectations of academic excellence and inclusive practices.