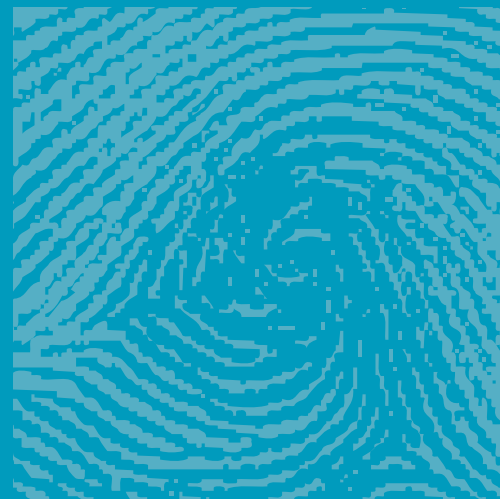


# Snapshot

Dr Helen Marchant, Community Health Dentist  
Dental Advisor: Department of Human Services



## What do I do?

As Dental Advisor I'm involved in various projects within the Department of Human Services and externally, including water fluoridation across Victoria, professional development for dental professionals and legislative issues pertaining to the oral health of Victorians. I am responsible for giving specific clinical advice. The best thing about working in the department is being part of the development of policy for oral health across the State.

I think it's important that the department has policy staff that are in touch with the outside world, and I work three sessions per week as a clinician at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne.

## What was my career path?

I always wanted to travel, and knew that dentistry is a great profession to travel with. After graduating from the University of Birmingham in the UK I worked in Israel, India and Nepal before coming to Australia in 1989 to work in Tennant Creek in remote central Australia. This was the start of seven rewarding years in the Northern Territory working in aboriginal communities, and while I was in the wilds of Arnhem Land I completed a Masters degree in Community Dental Practice through distance education at the University of London. But being from London I am a city girl and settled in Melbourne in 1999.

## What do I like most about working as a clinician and a dental advisor?

I like the healing nature of my clinical role. Many of my clients have complex dental, social and medical needs. Our clients are often in pain, so it's wonderful to work in a role where you really feel like you're relieving symptoms and removing pain.

I've always loved working in different places, and the two clinical roles I have are quite different to each other. My work in the department takes me all over Melbourne and sometimes into rural Victoria, so I am in contact with a wide variety of people with a wide variety of issues. I find the politics of health extremely fascinating.

Community health is a challenging and rewarding environment. I have always wanted to be able to fix things and see immediate results. Giving practical help to people really attracted me to dentistry.

## What skills and characteristics do I need in my job?

As a dentist you need to be good with people. The practical nature of dentistry is rewarding and challenging, but I think a dentist should also have good personal skills and enjoy being with people.

## Want more information?

Speak with careers teacher

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