

13 November 2015

## United for universal oral health care

The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) urges Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to work together to ensure every Australian has access to good oral health care, and offers its support to the Health Minister, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, as she considers health system reform including the future of the Commonwealth's *Healthier Medicare* initiative.

The current oral health care system marginalises low income Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those in rural and remote areas, and those living with chronic and complex conditions. On average Adult Australians have one of the lowest levels of oral health status in the OECD.

Additional investment in oral health care would result in substantial returns for individuals, families, workplaces and the nation.

In the lead-up to the 2016–17 Federal Budget, NOHA wants all government health agencies to recognise and support oral health care as a critical part of team-based primary care. There is no reason why the mouth and teeth should be quarantined from the rest of the body, nor from Australia's aspirational goal of universal healthcare available to everyone, everywhere, on the basis of health need only.

Giving children a healthy start to life is so important and targeted children's dental services need guaranteed commitment and funding. NOHA urges the Minister to reinstate the previous funding levels for the Child Dental Benefit Scheme.

National Oral Health Alliance members



Where public dental health services are concerned, waiting lists are again blowing out after the injection of some much-needed additional funding in the recent past. This is as a result of the recent cessation of Commonwealth funding, and there is no guarantee of funding beyond this financial year. Poor oral health costs individuals and the nation a great deal and, notwithstanding the fiscal circumstances, next year's Budget must include a strategic and long-term boost in funding.

These issues and related matters are currently being considered by the Health Minister, the Hon Sussan Ley MP. The members of NOHA have offered their advice and support for the Minister's consideration of system reforms.

**For further information:** Tony McBride, NOHA spokesperson; 0407 531 468

**The National Oral Health Alliance brings together 11 core groups whose members have a particular interest in oral and dental care. Organisations and individuals can become supporters of NOHA and the causes it pursues by going to [www.oralhealth.asn.au](http://www.oralhealth.asn.au) .**