



## Media Release

### Stronger leadership needed for public dental health

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Four national health bodies have come together to support the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's call for the establishment of a Commonwealth Chief Dental Officer (CCDO) position in Canberra and a permanent Oral Health Advisory Council.

The two would provide specialised high-level advice and direction to Government on oral health policy and service provision.

The organisations joining with the AHHA are the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) and the Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (AHCRA).

The Australian Government is funding many dental programs that are being administered in a range of different areas. There is a significant risk of inefficiency, duplication and waste as a result of an uncoordinated approach to the planning and implementation of new initiatives, as well as poor integration with existing programs.

There is an urgent need for stronger intra- and inter-departmental coordination of the Government's oral and dental health reform program to ensure that the maximum benefits are delivered in an efficient and equitable manner.

Australia is the only country in the region that has neither a Chief Dental Officer nor a high level advisory body. Given the significant level of funds to be expended in the coming year, the five organisations believe that a Chief Dental Officer is urgently needed to drive change, in collaboration with an independent Oral Health Advisory Council. They would provide regular advice on the design, implementation and progress of the Commonwealth's dental programs to help ensure that the Australian community receives the best possible value for its investment in public dental care.

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