



## MEDIA RELEASE

13 August 2010

### **National Oral Health Alliance seeks commitment to a 5-step plan to save decaying dental care**

The National Oral Health Alliance has written to all political parties urging them to adopt a five-step program, **REPAIR**, to address the chronically poor state of oral health in Australia.

Over 7 million Australians report they cannot access dental services when they need them. Poor oral health is almost entirely preventable and impacts seriously on other aspects of health and on general wellbeing.

**REPAIR** provides the building blocks to immediately improve access to dental services while also improving investment in better oral health and emphasising prevention in the longer term.

To **REPAIR oral health**, governments need to:

1. **RE-vitalise** the system;
2. Focus on **Prevention** and oral health promotion;
3. Improve **Access** to services;
4. **Improve** workforce capacity and distribution; and
5. Undertake **Research**, monitoring and evaluation.

The NOHA believes that an improved oral health system will contribute to greater equity overall in Australia's health system.

"It makes no sense in health terms to quarantine the mouth from the rest of the body," said Tony McBride, Chair, Australian Health Care Reform Alliance.

"Members of the National Oral Health Alliance believe that oral services should be part of the primary care system. With broad community agreement that policy and funding responsibility for all of primary care rests at a federal government level, we need to hear how a future government would improve Australians' oral health," said Prue Power, Executive Director, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association.

The National Oral Health Alliance comprises community, dental and health organisations who are seeking solutions to the poor access to oral services and the poor oral health outcomes experienced by many Australians.

**Media Contacts:**

Clare Cameron, Australian Council of Social Service, 0419 626 155

Julie Satur, Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association, 0438 776 046

Neil Hewson, President, Australian Dental Association, 0419 344 587

Tony McBride, Chair, Australian Health Care Reform Alliance, 0407 531 468

Prue Power, Executive Director, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association, 0417 419 857

[www.oralhealth.asn.au](http://www.oralhealth.asn.au)

---

**Members:** Australian Council of Social Service; Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association; Australian Dental Association; Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association; Australian Health Care Reform Alliance; Australian Nursing Federation; Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health; Brotherhood of St Laurence; Dental Hygienists' Association of Australia Inc; Health Issues Centre; National Rural Health Alliance; Public Health Association Australia.