

Make oral health a priority

8 August 2018

The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) today called on the Australian Government to take the lead on oral health disease prevention by boosting public dental health services.

‘This week is Dental Health Week, and a good time to again call for more Commonwealth investment in oral health’, National Oral Health Alliance spokesperson Dr Chris Bourke, said

‘They must take the lead in negotiations with the states and territories for fairer public dental funding that will provide better access to oral health care for vulnerable populations in Australia, and more effective oral disease prevention.’

Last week state and territory Health Ministers met in Alice Springs and agreed to begin formal negotiations with the Commonwealth on a new deal for public adult dental services, to take effect when the current National Partnership Agreement ends in June 2019.

‘The Turnbull government has flagged prevention as an area of focus in government health policy. They now need to apply that principle to adult public dental health services’, Dr Bourke said.

‘It is a fact that many Australian adults, especially from vulnerable populations, put off needed dental treatment because they cannot afford it, which leads to more severe problems later on. Let’s put an end to this perverse situation, so that Australian adults who can least afford dental care can receive it.’

‘For similar reasons, NOHA continues to call for effective promotion of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, underutilised by those who need it most—it provides a maximum claimable amount of \$1,000 per child over 2 years.

‘We also remain committed to improving oral health in rural and remote Australia through fluoridation of water supplies, increased dental practitioner numbers, and an improved dental workforce mix.’

The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) is a group of consumer, dental and general health organisations that have come together to support action by governments and professional bodies to improve oral and dental health in Australia.

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