



**Media Release**

**4 APRIL 2019**

### **Budget disappointment for oral health**

The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA)<sup>1</sup> was very disappointed with the lack of new investment in the Commonwealth Budget for oral health.

Spokesperson for the Alliance, Dr Chris Bourke, noted 'The commitment to continue an existing program, the Child Dental Benefit Scheme, is welcome but more needs to be done. NOHA is very concerned with the continued refusal by the Commonwealth Government to make oral health a real priority and, in particular, do more to improve oral health for people who are socially disadvantaged or on low incomes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living in regional and remote areas and people with additional or specialised health care needs. There are two immediate priorities:

'Firstly, adult public dental services need consistent and secure funding to enable public services to do their job of delivering the dental care to the most vulnerable. An immediate boost of \$500 million per year from the Australian government is required.

'The recent Grattan Institute report on oral health highlighted the chronic underfunding of public dental services and the toll suffered by many of the poorest in our community. We know that over 30% of Australian adults have untreated tooth decay and that oral conditions are the third-highest reason for preventable hospital admissions.

'Secondly, 3 million Australians do not have access to fluoridated water. The Commonwealth needs to step in and work with water supply authorities to increase fluoridation. The benefit of fluoridation in preventing tooth decay is backed by significant evidence, and has been for over 50 years.

Contact: Chris Bourke, Spokesperson for NOHA, 0418 869 443 [www.oralhealth.asn.au](http://www.oralhealth.asn.au)

<sup>1</sup> The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) seeks to improve the oral health of all Australians by the collaboration of consumer, dental and general health member organisations to support action by governments