



Media Release

29 April 2019

Oral health shake-up not an optional extra this election

The National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) welcomes election commitments from Labor and the Greens to provide more support to improve oral health, with proposals that clearly recognise oral health as a key part of a strong health policy. We call on the Coalition to equally commit resources for oral health - this is not an optional extra in good health policy.

‘Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease affecting 9 out of 10 Australians. Every year 17% of adult Australians suffer with toothache, 20% can’t chew properly, and 27% report disfigurement’, says NOHA spokesperson Dr Chris Bourke.

‘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.

‘With targeted investment in oral health for children and senior concession card holders available for use in the public and private sectors and in Aboriginal Medical Services, and a requirement that the states and territories maintain their current funding levels for public dental services, Labor’s policy will see more funds available to support public adult dental services and a much-needed reduction in wait times.

‘This is a step towards a universal dental health scheme, an expenditure commitment of \$2.4 billion is a significant boost from the current limited resources applied by the Commonwealth to dental health.

‘NOHA has also made water fluoridation a priority for this election. We urge all parties to address the fact that there are 3 million Australians who currently 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.’

Media contact: Chris Bourke, Spokesperson for NOHA, 0418 869 443 www.oralhealth.asn.au

NOHA members

Australian Council of Social Service,
Australian Dental Association
Australian Dental & Oral Health
Therapists Association
Australian Dental Prosthetists
Association

Australian Health Care Reform Alliance
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals
Association
Consumers Health Forum
Council on the Ageing

Dental Hygienists' Association of
Australia
National Rural Health Alliance
Public Health Association of Australia
Royal Flying Doctor Service

