



Victorian
Oral Health
Alliance

30 April 2019
MEDIA RELEASE

Alliance welcomes ALP dental commitment to put a smile on older Australians' faces

The Victorian Oral Health Alliance, a coalition of dental health professionals, health services and consumers, has welcomed the Australian Labor Party's announcement of \$2.4 billion towards a Pensioner Dental Plan, should they win government on 18 May. This commitment to improve oral health care for older Australian's is a significant step forward from the current limited funding in dental healthcare.

The Australian Labor Party has committed to provide older Australians over the age of 65, with a pension or health care card, up to \$1,000 worth of essential dental care every two years which will be covered by Medicare, aligning with the funding support available to children through the Child Dental Benefits Scheme.

'Oral health remains one of the forgotten areas of healthcare with the highest out of pocket costs of over 60 per cent for patients and long waits for public care in Victoria of 20 months (plus a 12 month wait to get on the list after previous care)', said Tony McBride, VOHA spokesperson 'The proposed investment will help to assist the dental health needs of 3 million older Australians and reduce increasing waiting lists.'

Importantly, Labor's announcement includes a commitment to preventive oral health care nationally. Prevention is essential to reducing the social and general health impacts of the two main oral diseases, gum disease and tooth decay, and reducing the cost burden of these most common chronic diseases in our population.

This announcement follows the Australian Greens promising \$5.8 billion to provide Medicare-funded dental care.

The Victorian Oral Health Alliance calls on the Coalition to also address the major funding gap in dental health care in the lead up to the Federal Election.

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VOHA Members

- Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB)
- Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association Victoria (ADOHTA Vic)
- cohealth
- COTA Victoria
- IPC Health
- North Richmond Community Health
- Victorian Healthcare Association

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