



Victorian
Oral Health
Alliance

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World Oral Health Day- yet continuing gaps in public care

On World Oral Health Day the Victorian Oral Health Alliance is posing this question of State and Federal Governments: how long will the mouth be seen as less worthy of health care than all other parts of the body?

And how long is it reasonable for there to be such glaring inequity in access to oral health/dental care, where many of the 40% of Australians eligible for free or low-cost public care to be made to wait often two to three years (yes, years) for basic care?

By comparison even in the worst served parts of Australia, you can generally get to see a GP in two to three weeks, or a specialist mostly in three to four months (not years). And how long do all Australians wait for more significant action on prevention of gum disease and caries, when oral diseases are among the most preventable of all diseases?

The need for action is clear.

- Longest waiting time in 10 years: on average 24.8 months to receive an appointment for basic dental care, an increase of 2.1 months since June 2021, and longer rural Victoria
- Consumer impacts:
 - On average people with a Health Care Card have seven more teeth affected by decay than rest of population
 - Poor access to care for older Australians
 - Health, social and employment impacts
- Shrinking Commonwealth \$ for adult public care
 - While population grew by 9% in last 8 years and subsidy for private health insurance grew by 24%, the funding for public adult care decreased by 44%
- The Aged Care Royal Commission found countless stories of suffering from pain and discomfort, poor nutrition, and inability to access timely / affordable dental care

VOHA recognises recent catch-up funding by the Victorian Government but calls on both levels of Government to take care of the mouth as seriously as that for the rest of the body. A good initial step would be for the Federal Government to fund a recommendation of the Royal Commission, namely a Senior Dental Benefits Scheme.

The Victorian Oral Health Alliance is a coalition of over 20 oral health professional, services and consumer and community organisations (see overleaf).

Contact

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Victorian Oral Health Alliance

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Victorian Oral Health Alliance



MEMBERS

	Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB)		IPC Health
	Australian Dental & Oral Health Therapists Association (ADOHTA)		North Richmond Community Health
	Australian Dental Health Foundation		Peninsula Health
	Australian Dental Prosthetists Association (ADPA)		Public Health Association Australia (Victorian Branch) – Oral Health Special Interest Group
	Australian Network for Integration of Oral Health		Star Health
	Brotherhood of St Laurence		The University of Melbourne Dental School
	cohealth		Uniting AgeWell
	Community Information Support Victoria		Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
	COTA Victoria		Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA)
	Dental Hygienists Association of Australia		Your Community Health
	Health Issues Centre Consumer voices for better healthcare		

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