



**AUSTRALIAN DENTAL  
ASSOCIATION INC.**

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**Submission No. 037.1**

(Dental Services)

Date: 26/04/2013

Dr Alison Clegg  
Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
Inquiry into Adult Dental Services in Australia  
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Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Dr Clegg

The Australian Dental Association Inc. (ADA) again thanks the Committee for the opportunity to present to the Inquiry into Adult Dental Services in Australia.

At the conclusion of the hearing on 23rd April 2013 the Chair offered witnesses the opportunity to make further brief submissions.

In accepting that offer the ADA provides the following brief further observations and information:

1. In identifying how best to implement a national partnership Agreement between the State, Territory and Federal governments, the effectiveness of the Agreement would be enhanced with the creation of a clear delineation of roles between governments.
  - i) State and Territory governments could re-direct their funding, both for infrastructure and delivery, to special needs groups which in many cases involve sometimes complex treatment and facilities to deliver care. In so doing, this sector could continue to deliver the existing educative role it provides through Universities in training dental practitioners. Where they may be delivered in conjunction with the private sector support to this sector must be maintained but public sector activity should be focussed more on these areas and not on the delivery of less complex care. Access to GA facilities needs to be enhanced. The Federal government must also seek modifications to private health fund behaviour which often creates a disincentive to hospitals and day care centres offering dental services to those with complex needs and which also disincentivises preventive treatment by excluding such services from rebates to members.

- ii) The Federal government should focus its activities in ensuring delivery of dental care by directing its funding to actual delivery to the identified sectors of the community in need of assistance due to disadvantage. Accessing the resources of the private sector by adoption of the key elements outlined in the ADA's DentalAccess scheme should occur. Adoption of schemes similar to that in place for veterans should be considered. A scheme that provided access to a comprehensive suite of services with an agreed schedule of fees per service which also allows the charging of a co-payment should be considered.
  - iii) A shared area of responsibility between governments would be to oral health promotional and educational activities, through the oral practitioner/health practitioner communities, community groups, hospitals, schools, and government agencies and fluoridation of water supplies.
2. The following essential additional background materials are provided which outline the ADA's views as to how best to deal with the issues of delivery of adult services in Australia as identified in the Committee's terms of reference:
- a) ADA's Pre-Budget submission.
  - b) ADA's Dental Access program.
  - c) ADA's submission to the ACCC in response to its inquiry into Private health Insurer Conduct. This document provides necessary information for the Committee to consider when considering Private health insurance issues and the provision of provider numbers to dental practitioners who do not have a right to independent practice.
  - d) The ACCC's response to the Senate can be seen at: <http://transition.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1104510>

Should you require clarification of any matters raised in this letter, please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Karin Alexander  
President