



Health Committee identifies next steps for dental health

The House of Representatives Health Committee today tabled a report in Parliament looking at how access to public dental services can be improved for adult Australians most in need.

The committee's inquiry examined priorities for additional adult dental services to be delivered by state and territory governments from 2014 with the assistance of a \$1.3 billion commitment of federal funding under a National Partnership Agreement.

Committee chair, Jill Hall MP, said that poor dental health can have significant impacts on a person's quality of life, causing pain and social anxieties about appearance.

"Many Australians face difficulties in accessing public dental treatment," she said.

"Long waiting lists for public dental services in many areas lead to lengthy delays. People living in rural, regional and remote Australia often have to travel long distances to access dental treatment."

The committee made a range of recommendations to address these issues, including:

- The improvement of the interaction between the public and private dental sectors;
- A greater focus on the delivery of preventive dental services; and
- A long-term commitment to funding public dental services.

"The recommendations put forward by the Committee for the National Partnership Agreement on adult dental services are intended to maximise access to treatment public dental services so that those with the greatest need will be able to get treatment when they need it, no matter who they are or where they live in Australia."

Copies of the committee's report, entitled *Bridging the Dental Gap: Inquiry into adult dental services*, may be obtained from the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/dental

For media comment: please contact the Office of Jill Hall MP on (02) 4947 9711.

For all other enquiries: please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.