

# THE ORAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

## WHO'S PUTTING THEIR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS?

### A REPORT CARD ON FEDERAL ORAL HEALTH POLICIES

#### ELECTION 2004

#### QUESTION 1. Reduce waiting lists

What is required = Increase funding for public oral health services and implement other plans for increasing access as described in the National Oral Health Plan  
REQUIRES: \$200m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	Implement Plan titled: <i>Australian Dental Care</i> \$300m over four years.  TOTAL: \$75m p.a.	Implement Plan titled: <i>Fairer Budget Balance for Health</i> \$20m over 4 years -concession card holders and schools \$100m over 4 years dental hygienists for aged care  TOTAL: \$75m p.a.	National health plan, universal public health care scheme for dental treatment.

#### QUESTION 2. Increase supply of dentists

What is required = Increase undergraduate student places by 150 each year  
REQUIRES: \$6m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	National Dental Workforce Strategy.	University places for allied health.	Abolish HECS and increase number of dental training places.

#### QUESTION 3. Rural and remote

What is required = Improve recruitment and retention of oral health professionals in rural and remote areas  
REQUIRES: \$5m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	No relevant answer provided.	Services via Primary Care Divisions, community health centres.	Multidisciplinary community health centres, incentives for dentists

#### QUESTION 4. Aged, Indigenous and homeless

What is required = Targeted strategies as per the National Oral Health Plan  
REQUIRES: \$60m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$13m over 3 years for assessments at residential care</li> <li>• \$18m over 3 years for target programs for Indigenous communities – dental auxiliaries visits, trained Aboriginal dental care workers</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL: \$10.3m p.a.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1b basic health care services in Aboriginal communities, including dental services</li> <li>• \$100m dental health assessments and follow up by dental hygienists to supplement the Commonwealth's contractual arrangement with aged care providers</li> <li>• Outreach for the homeless</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL: \$1b for health (including oral health), plus \$100m</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding for aged care facilities, provision of regular dental health services</li> <li>Increased funding for ACCHS</li> <li>• Address high rates of homelessness among people who experience mental health illness, increase funding for dental health services</li> </ul>

**QUESTION 5. Community based preventive programs**

What is required = Various oral health promotion and disease prevention measures including fluoridation of public water supplies, and targeted health promotion resources for non-dental health workers and specific socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

REQUIRES: \$20m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	Fund dental health promotion and education campaigns.	Greater resources allocated to prevention and overarching national approach to oral health, importance of community based prevention	Develop a comprehensive program for dental health promotion initiatives

**QUESTION 6. Incentives for dental care providers to contribute to public dental health services**

What is required = Policy measures required, including indexation of benchmark (DVA) rates to ensure costs of service delivery are covered.

REQUIRES: 25m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	No references found in documents provided (see documents provided on website).	No relevant response provided (see document provided on website)	Work with unions and employers to ensure appropriate reimbursement and working conditions for all dental health providers and support staff in public dental health services.

**QUESTION 7. Dental policy evidence based, independently evaluated and consumer participation**

What is required = Various research and data dissemination activities

REQUIRES: \$2m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	Quality of services based on data collection and benchmarking.	National independent body to facilitate development, implementation and evaluation of dental policy and activities consistent with current evidence.  Would include consumers and oral health experts. Plus independent health arbiter to manage the coordination and long term planning of services.	Dental health policy research, NHMRC funding for dental health.  Community control and management of local health services.

**OVERALL**

What is required = \$317m p.a.

Australian Liberal Party	Australian Labor Party	Australian Democrats	Australian Greens
No response received	TOTAL: \$85m p.a.	TOTAL: \$75m p.a. plus part of \$1b plus \$100m	Not costed

The Oral Health Alliance is an informal non-politically aligned group of organisations with a common concern to improve the oral health of Australians. Its members are listed below. This Oral Health Report Card provides a summary comparison of the policy positions provided by each of the parties in response to seven questions posed by The Alliance. Also included are indicators of the types of measures and investment required to adequately address the serious issues in oral health throughout Australia, so that you can make a comparison.

For the full text of the parties' responses, as well as details of current Federal Government expenditure, see :

[www.healthissuescentre.org.au](http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au)

Members of the Oral Health Alliance include: Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch, Australian Dental Therapists Association, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Catholic Social Services Victoria, Council on the Ageing, Health Issues Centre, Public Health Association of Australia, Victorian Healthcare Association and the Victorian Council of Social Service.

