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DENTICARE FOR EVERYONE

Millions of Australians are unable to afford proper dental care. The Greens Denticare plan will ens

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Australia's oral health is poor and getting worse. Less than half of Australians have good oral health and dental v treatment.

60% of dental care is paid for out-of-pocket by consumers, with the result that **a third of people say they can't see a dentist because of the expense.**

Up to 10% of GP visits are due to poor dental health, and more than 60,000 potentially avoidable hospital visits a approximately \$500m in direct costs and up to \$2 billion in lost productivity every year.

In 2012, the Greens negotiated a new national dental health scheme worth nearly \$5 billion over the next million children. The Greens also secured \$1.3 billion for extra public services and hundreds of millions more for to dental health Australia has seen.

Our Denticare policy would bring dental health fully in to Medicare and extend benefits to all Australians. **Denticare care under Medicare, and would phase in over 5 years, starting with the most needy.** Under Denticare, goi

DENTICARE.

Bringing dental care
into Medicare.



> BRING DENTAL CARE INTO MEDICARE

Millions of Australians are unable to afford proper dental care. Many more put off dental visits and struggle. It's time we fixed this gaping hole in our world-class health system.

The mouth is part of the body and dental health should be part of our universal health care system. That so that everyone can get necessary treatment no matter what their circumstances may be.

> PUBLICLY FUNDED DENTAL CARE

The Greens plan, Denticare, adds dental treatment to the Medicare Benefits schedule, meaning dental is covered. Our plan for Denticare will:

- Provide dental treatment covered by Medicare. Phased in over five years, Medicare will cover preventative and restorative care, making it affordable to go to the dentist.

- Start with the most disadvantaged. Low income earners, kids and teens, pensioners and concession card holder under Medicare, before rolling out the scheme to everybody.

- Ease pressure on the public system. Because of the Greens, billions of extra dollars are being injected into public dental services will be able to treat complex cases and hard-to-reach sectors of the community without se

Through our work in Parliament, the Greens **have already secured the biggest reform to dental health in decades** to all Australians.

> FIXING A HEALTH CRISIS

Australia's oral health is poor and getting worse. Less than half of Australians have good oral health and the high cost of dental treatment. 60% of dental care is paid for out-of-pocket by consumers, with the result that many people do not go to the dentist or delay going to the dentist because of the expense.ⁱ

Good oral health is important for overall health and wellbeing. Complications from dental disease can lead to life-threatening situations.

Untreated dental disease results in an unnecessary burden on the health system: Up to 10% of GP visits and more than 60,000 potentially avoidable hospital visits a year are due to dental issuesⁱⁱⁱ. This costs the country more than \$2 billion in lost productivity every year^{iv}.

An estimated 400,000 people are on waiting lists for public dental care, with average wait times of 27 months^v.

Just as the mouth is an integral part of the body, so too should dental care be an integral part of the public health system. Dental care should be incorporated into Medicare under a universal dental health scheme: Denticare.

> A FAIR AND MORE CARING SOCIETY

The evidence shows that the health burden of dental neglect falls heavily on disadvantaged groups. Low income people, Indigenous peoples, the elderly and people in rural and regional areas are all significantly more likely to suffer from dental neglect.

Dental neglect can have serious consequences for people's lives. It can lead to poor nutrition. It can lead to social isolation and could potentially prevent somebody from getting a job or finding rental accommodation.

It is unacceptable that disadvantaged Australians are left to suffer or must endure never-ending waiting lists for dental care. Under Denticare, nobody is left behind.

Australia can afford to be a more caring country.

ⁱ AIHW, Dental attendance patterns and oral health status (2011)

ⁱⁱ Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Dental and Oral Health: Policy Issue Paper, p. 2.

ⁱⁱⁱ AIHW, Oral health and dental care in Australia: Key facts and figures 2011, p. 16.

^{iv} Menzies Centre for Health Policy

^v Report of the National Advisory Council on Dental Health 2012, p. 16

 [Download the Denticare initiative \(196Kb\)](#)

HEALTH

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