



30 March 2016

The Hon. Jill Hennessy
Minister for Health

Dear Minister Hennessy,

Re: Closure of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule

As the peak membership body for Victorian dentists, the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB) is committed to promoting the oral health of all Victorians and the professional lives of our members. In this context, we are greatly concerned that the federal government has indicated it plans to close the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) as part of this year's budget.

The likely loss of this program comes at a perilous time for the state of Australian childrens' oral health. Recent reports state that in 2013-14 alone, over 50% of all six year olds experienced tooth decay, and 24,030 children aged under 14 were hospitalised¹. Of those children hospitalised, 4,970 (21%) were from Victoria².

Research shows that the state of a child's dental health has a serious effect on how well they do at school, their social skills, self-esteem, and ultimately on their adult dental and overall health. The existence of schemes such as the CDBS means that children won't be negatively affected throughout their life by easily preventable dental pain and discomfort.

Claims by both the Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley and the Prime Minister that the CDBS has failed to prove its worth have been called into question by the Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008³, which stated that any failure on the part of the scheme to meet its objectives reflects "an unrealistic original target, rather than significant underutilisation."

¹AIHW: Chrisopoulos S, Harford JE & Ellershaw A (2016). Oral health and dental care in Australia: key facts and figures 2015. Cat. no. DEN 229. Canberra: AIHW. Available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554609>

² State Government of Victoria, Victorian Health Surveillance Information System, available at <https://hns.dhs.vic.gov.au/3netapps/vhisspublicsite/Report.aspx?LocationType=VIC&LocationID=1&LocationName=&Sex=&AgeGroupIDs=10,11,12&ReportYearIDs=23&BoDReportYearID=0&StandardYear=2011&ShowNote=1&ReportID=23&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0> accessed 23-3-16

³ Available at [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)

**Australian Dental Association
Victorian Branch Inc.**

Level 3, 10 Yarra St South Yarra
PO Box 9015 South Yarra Vic 3141
Phone: 03 8825 4600
Fax: 03 8825 4644
ask@adavb.org
www.adavb.net

ABN 80 263 088 594
ARBN 152 948 680

Reg'd Assoc No. A0022649E

The health of 3.4 million disadvantaged children eligible to be treated under the CDBS will take a major hit when the federal government axes the scheme.

Research shows that it is far more cost effective to spend money on preventive measures than corrective treatment, meaning the CDBS represents great value for money. Furthermore, across Australia, dentists provided over 95% of their services under the scheme at no out of pocket cost to the families of their patients⁴, which encourages regular access to preventive oral health care for children.

Rather than taking more away from people who are already disadvantaged, the federal government should be increasing investment in dental health services, not just for children, but right across Australian society.

The sustainability of the Victorian public dental system is already threatened by the continued uncertainty of federal funding for adult dental services, and the possible closure of the CDBS heightens our concerns. If the scheme closes, governments must answer this vital question: how will public dental care for children be funded in Victoria?

Victorians need more government funding for dental services, not less. The oral health of our children is on the line, and this vital scheme can't be allowed to go without a fight.

We would be pleased to support any measures you adopt to save the CDBS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liew', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Stephen Liew
ADAVB President

Cc: Hon. Mary Wooldridge, Ms Colleen Hartland

⁴ Australian Government, Department of Health (2016). Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008, p. 30-31. Available at

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)



30 March 2016

Ms. Colleen Hartland, MLC
Victorian Greens' Spokesperson for Health

Dear Ms Hartland,

Re: Closure of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule

As the peak membership body for Victorian dentists, the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB) is committed to promoting the oral health of all Victorians and the professional lives of our members. In this context, we are greatly concerned that the federal government has indicated it plans to close the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) as part of this year's budget.

The likely loss of this program comes at a perilous time for the state of Australian childrens' oral health. Recent reports state that in 2013-14 alone, over 50% of all six year olds experienced tooth decay, and 24,030 children aged under 14 were hospitalised¹. Of those children hospitalised, 4,970 (21%) were from Victoria².

Research shows that the state of a child's dental health has a serious effect on how well they do at school, their social skills, self-esteem, and ultimately on their adult dental and overall health. The existence of schemes such as the CDBS means that children won't be negatively affected throughout their life by easily preventable dental pain and discomfort.

Claims by both the Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley and the Prime Minister that the CDBS has failed to prove its worth have been called into question by the Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008³, which stated that any failure on the part of the scheme to meet its objectives reflects "an unrealistic original target, rather than significant underutilisation."

¹AIHW: Chrisopoulos S, Harford JE & Ellershaw A (2016). Oral health and dental care in Australia: key facts and figures 2015. Cat. no. DEN 229. Canberra: AIHW. Available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554609>

² State Government of Victoria, Victorian Health Surveillance Information System, available at <https://hns.dhs.vic.gov.au/3netapps/vhisspublicsite/Report.aspx?LocationType=VIC&LocationID=1&LocationName=&Sex=&AgeGroupIDs=10,11,12&ReportYearIDs=23&BoDReportYearID=0&StandardYear=2011&ShowNote=1&ReportID=23&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0> accessed 23-3-16

³ Available at [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)

**Australian Dental Association
Victorian Branch Inc.**

Level 3, 10 Yarra St South Yarra
PO Box 9015 South Yarra Vic 3141
Phone: 03 8825 4600
Fax: 03 8825 4644
ask@adavb.org
www.adavb.net

ABN 80 263 088 594
ARBN 152 948 680
Reg'd Assoc No. A0022649E

The health of 3.4 million disadvantaged children eligible to be treated under the CDBS will take a major hit when the federal government axes the scheme.

Research shows that it is far more cost effective to spend money on preventive measures than corrective treatment, meaning the CDBS represents great value for money. Furthermore, across Australia, dentists provided over 95% of their services under the scheme at no out of pocket cost to the families of their patients⁴, which encourages regular access to preventive oral health care for children.

Rather than taking more away from people who are already disadvantaged, the federal government should be increasing investment in dental health services, not just for children, but right across Australian society.

The sustainability of the Victorian public dental system is already threatened by the continued uncertainty of federal funding for adult dental services, and the possible closure of the CDBS heightens our concerns. If the scheme closes, governments must answer this vital question: how will public dental care for children be funded in Victoria?

Victorians need more government funding for dental services, not less. The oral health of our children is on the line, and this vital scheme can't be allowed to go without a fight.

We would be pleased to support any measures you adopt to save the CDBS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liew', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Stephen Liew
ADAVB President

Cc: Minister Hennessy, Hon. Mary Wooldridge

⁴ Australian Government, Department of Health (2016). Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008, p. 30-31. Available at

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)



30 March 2016

The Hon. Mary Wooldridge
Shadow Minister for Health

Dear Ms Wooldridge,

Re: Closure of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule

As the peak membership body for Victorian dentists, the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB) is committed to promoting the oral health of all Victorians and the professional lives of our members. In this context, we are greatly concerned that the federal government has indicated it plans to close the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) as part of this year's budget.

The likely loss of this program comes at a perilous time for the state of Australian childrens' oral health. Recent reports state that in 2013-14 alone, over 50% of all six year olds experienced tooth decay, and 24,030 children aged under 14 were hospitalised¹. Of those children hospitalised, 4,970 (21%) were from Victoria².

Research shows that the state of a child's dental health has a serious effect on how well they do at school, their social skills, self-esteem, and ultimately on their adult dental and overall health. The existence of schemes such as the CDBS means that children won't be negatively affected throughout their life by easily preventable dental pain and discomfort.

Claims by both the Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley and the Prime Minister that the CDBS has failed to prove its worth have been called into question by the Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008³, which stated that any failure on the part of the scheme to meet its objectives reflects "an unrealistic original target, rather than significant underutilisation."

¹AIHW: Chrisopoulos S, Harford JE & Ellershaw A (2016). Oral health and dental care in Australia: key facts and figures 2015. Cat. no. DEN 229. Canberra: AIHW. Available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554609>

² State Government of Victoria, Victorian Health Surveillance Information System, available at <https://hns.dhs.vic.gov.au/3netapps/vhisspublicsite/Report.aspx?LocationType=VIC&LocationID=1&LocationName=&Sex=&AgeGroupIDs=10,11,12&ReportYearIDs=23&BoDReportYearID=0&StandardYear=2011&ShowNote=1&ReportID=23&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0&HealthIndicator=ACSC&IsBoDReport=0&ReportYearID=0> accessed 23-3-16

³ Available at [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)

**Australian Dental Association
Victorian Branch Inc.**

Level 3, 10 Yarra St South Yarra
PO Box 9015 South Yarra Vic 3141
Phone: 03 8825 4600
Fax: 03 8825 4644
ask@adavb.org
www.adavb.net

ABN 80 263 088 594
ARBN 152 948 680

Reg'd Assoc No. A0022649E

The health of 3.4 million disadvantaged children eligible to be treated under the CDBS will take a major hit when the federal government axes the scheme.

Research shows that it is far more cost effective to spend money on preventive measures than corrective treatment, meaning the CDBS represents great value for money. Furthermore, across Australia, dentists provided over 95% of their services under the scheme at no out of pocket cost to the families of their patients⁴, which encourages regular access to preventive oral health care for children.

Rather than taking more away from people who are already disadvantaged, the federal government should be increasing investment in dental health services, not just for children, but right across Australian society.

The sustainability of the Victorian public dental system is already threatened by the continued uncertainty of federal funding for adult dental services, and the possible closure of the CDBS heightens our concerns. If the scheme closes, governments must answer this vital question: how will public dental care for children be funded in Victoria?

Victorians need more government funding for dental services, not less. The oral health of our children is on the line, and this vital scheme can't be allowed to go without a fight.

We would be pleased to support any measures you adopt to save the CDBS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liew', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Stephen Liew
ADAVB President

Cc: Minister Hennessy, Ms Colleen Hartland

⁴ Australian Government, Department of Health (2016). Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008, p. 30-31.
Available at

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/\\$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20\(D16-150740\).PDF](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5AE86FB9D21A8277CA257BF0001F952F/$File/Report%20on%20the%20Third%20Review%20of%20the%20Dental%20Benefits%20Act%202008%20(D16-150740).PDF)