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MEDIA RELEASE

Federal Budget indicates a commitment to fill dental gaps

The Australian Dental Association Inc. (ADA) is pleased that the Federal Government has listened to its concerns and has begun to address the workforce numbers and infrastructure problems that exist in the public sector.

However, the ADA has expressed great concern over the closure of the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS) from 31 December 2011, with no replacement scheme being announced. ADA President, Dr Shane Fryer, said “the closure of the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme will leave many chronically ill patients without subsidised access to much-needed quality dental care. While the ADA has never supported the Scheme, to leave patients who have been reliant upon the support for the past four years without any replacement will have devastating consequences for their whole treatment.

The Federal Budget has allocated \$53.1 million over the next three years to establish new dental internship placements. The ADA hopes that in providing these 50 placements per year, the current mal-distribution of dentists will be partly remedied and at the same time it will provide these graduates with a meaningful educative experience. Dr Fryer said “the ADA is pleased that some of our long-term concerns have been heeded and anticipates further dialogue with government to maximise this initiative.”

In a further move to start addressing other concerns in oral care in Australia, the Federal Government also announced the establishment of an Advisory Council to consult the Government on dental policy for the next twelve months.

Dr Fryer said “For a number of years we have raised concerns with the Federal Government about the issues of access to dental care encountered by many Australians. These issues are faced by Indigenous Australians, those in regional and rural areas, those from lower socio-economic standing and those with special needs.

“The Federal Budget 2011-2012 shows a commitment from the Federal Government to begin addressing the issues that the ADA has raised regarding dental care and access over the past few years.



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL
ASSOCIATION INC.

Media Release

Dr Shane Fryer
Federal President

The ADA approached the Federal Government with a funding policy to address these key issues. The policy, *DentalAccess*, targets funding towards Australians most in need of support to access quality dental care. If the CDDS is to be closed, then *DentalAccess* must replace it.

Dr Fryer said that “ADA's *DentalAccess* was first presented to the Federal Government in 2009, and the ADA looks forward to working as a key member on the Advisory Council to address the groups of Australians that require the most support to access dental care.

“The ADA is hopeful that *DentalAccess* will be seen as the next step to reforming the way in which needy Australians access dental care by focusing funding on Australia’s most disadvantaged first”, Dr Fryer concluded.

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