

# Faster dental services for Canberra



ACT Government

Embargoed until 1 May 2001

"Waiting times will be significantly reduced for clients of the ACT's Dental Health Program," the Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services, Michael Moore, announced today.

The ACT Government has allocated **\$1 million in 2001-02 for quicker access to dental assessments and restorative treatments** such as fillings and root-canal therapy.

The Government has actually allocated an extra \$2.576 million over four years to the Dental Health Program to achieve a really significant improvement overall for people in need in the ACT.

"Some people have been waiting more than two years for dental treatment, and that is just not acceptable," Mr Moore said.

"Long waits for treatment can cause unnecessary suffering and anxiety for the client. And to make matters worse, the original problem can deteriorate during a long wait, resulting in the need for more costly and invasive medical treatment.

"In the case of older people, often any delay in the treatment of their dental problem is extremely distressing and may have an effect on their overall health. "The need for dentures or denture repair may impact on the food intake and general diet and hence the health and well being of individuals.

"For younger people and children, basic dental care is an investment in their future health, and it is important that we encourage good dental hygiene and preventative care. Regular visits to the dentist for children and the important care of filling small cavities, is good practice and of course, a good early intervention strategy.

"This extra funding will increase the options available to people of all ages and will greatly speed up access to essential dental treatment," he said.

The Commonwealth Government pulled out of funding public dental health programs across Australia leaving the States and Territories to deal with the full impact of the policy.

As a result, the ACT Government now has to fill the funding gap to ensure that people in Canberra have access to the dental treatment they need, when they need it.

The ACT Dental Health Program is run by the ACT Department of Community Care and is available to health care card-holders. It is anticipated that the extra funding in the first year will reduce the waiting list and, more importantly, the waiting times for patients by treating an additional 950 clients.

Statement ends  
Media Contact:

Rachel Hill – 6205 0077, 0407 231 984  
[rachel.hill@act.gov.au](mailto:rachel.hill@act.gov.au)

ACT Budget 2001-02