



ACT Government

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Taking the Territory forward

MEDIA RELEASE

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BETTER ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE FOR NEEDY CANBERRANS

The ACT Government will invest an extra \$1.7 million through the Dental Health Program to enable 415 Canberrans in need to get restorative dental care sooner.

Minister for Health Katy Gallagher said today the funding would be used to either recruit an extra dental team for the ACT Government's Dental Health Program, refer patients to private providers or a mixture of both

"This funding will help us provide treatment to needy Canberrans sooner, both now and into the future," Ms Gallagher said.

"Good dental health is recognised as a major factor in overall physical and mental health. Poor dental health can lead to a range of other serious health problems and also affect a person's self esteem.

"That's why the ACT Labor Government continues to invest in providing Canberrans, especially those in need with dental care.

The ACT Government's dental health program provides dental health care to adults who are primary Centrelink cardholders, current ACT concession Centrelink Concession cardholders, recent refugees and to clients in remand.

"We also provide dental health services for all children under 5 who live in the ACT, all children aged 5 years to 14 years who attend school or live in the ACT and young people who are living in, or attending school in the ACT, who are aged under 18 and who are covered by a current concession Centrelink Card.

"The extra funds provided through this year's ACT Budget will greatly assist in providing dental services for adult clients," Ms Gallagher said.

Ms Gallagher said the additional \$1.7 million provided to the ACT Dental Health Program in this Budget is further evidence of the ACT Labor Government's commitment to dental health care which over the past 4 years, has seen the ACT Government increase funding for its dental program by 20 per cent.

"Our commitment to dental care stands in stark contrast to the approach of the Howard Government who in one of their first acts on taking office in 1996 destroyed Labor's Commonwealth Dental Scheme.

"This has meant that people on low incomes and in need of dental care have had to wait longer," she said.

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“The small funding increase announced by the Howard Government in its most recent budget goes nowhere near restoring funding levels to where they should be and will do little to improve dental health care in the ACT or across Australia.

“It’s time the Howard Government stopped shirking its responsibility and used some of its multi-billion dollar surplus to help Australians fix their teeth,” Ms. Gallagher concluded.