



ACT Government  
**2005-2006 BUDGET**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**BUDGET TACKLES DENTAL WAITING LISTS**

Funding has been provided in the 2005–06 Budget to reduce the denture waiting list and general anaesthetic waiting list in the Dental Health Program and to maintain the restorative waiting list at its current level of seven months, the ACT Minister for Health, Simon Corbell said today.

Mr Corbell said the recurrent funding of \$278,000 would enable the program to increase dental teams, subject to the availability of dentists.

“Currently all clients who have never received a course of general dental care are waiting six months, the lowest on record since the removal of the Commonwealth funding in 1997,” he said.

“In 1997, when Commonwealth funding was withdrawn, 3,612 clients were waiting 126 weeks for restorative services, this figures has been dramatically reduced to 1,638 clients waiting 35 weeks for restorative services.

“This excellent result has increased the demand for denture services.

“If the program successfully recruits an extra dental team of one full-time dental officer and one full-time dental assistant, it will be able to provide 371 clients with a full course of general dental treatment.

“In addition, with the proposed extra funding, the program will continue partnerships with private providers to maintain the current low waiting time to access restorative services and to reduce the demand pressures on denture services.”

Mr Corbell said the ability to reduce the waiting list for denture services and further reduce the waiting time for restorative services meets the Government’s commitment to put in place measures to improve services to older people.

“An emerging issue for the program is the gradual increase of new additions to the Centralised Waiting and Recall List in the last 12 months averaging 180 new additions per month compared to the average for the six months prior to this of 126,” he said.

“The National Advisory Council for Oral Health standard for access to dental services is an average of at least one course of general dental care every three years for all adults.



“Currently all those that have never received a course of general dental care are waiting seven months and those who have received a full course of general dental care are being recalled every 19 months.

“This is a fair and equitable system that creates a balance between people who are on the waiting list with high treatment needs that have never received a service and those clients who are dentally fit after receiving a full course of treatment.”

Mr Corbell said the increased funding would also help address the increased demand for treatment under general anaesthetic being experienced because of the increased throughput and reduced waiting times.

**Statement ends**