



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Ref No: MC25-015130

Ms Leonie M. Short
Seniors Dental Care Australia/Oral Health Care Training and Education
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Dear Ms Short

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 August 2025 to the Minister for Health and Ageing and the Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon Mark Butler MP and the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, the Hon Sam Rae MP, regarding a Seniors Dental Benefit Scheme. The Ministers has asked me to reply.

The Australian Government acknowledges the importance of good oral health in supporting general health and wellbeing and, in partnership with the states and territories, we are working to develop a new National Oral Health Plan for the next 10 years. This will include goals to improve the oral health status of Australians and reduce inequalities in oral health status across the Australian population.

The National Dental Reform Oversight Group, comprising senior policy officials from all jurisdictions, has developed options for sustainable and longer-term funding arrangements that better meet community needs, including those of older Australians, with that advice to be considered at a future meeting of health ministers.

I can assure you that the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing regularly seeks, and is provided with, clinical advice on a broad range of dental and oral health issues. Advice is received from departmental dental advisers, as well as the Dental Clinical Advisory Committee, which comprises dental and oral health experts nominated by peak dental organisations. The National Dental Directors group, comprising of Chief Dental Officers, or equivalent, from each state and territory, plus an independent consumer representative, also provide national leadership on oral health issues.

The Commonwealth does not set the fees for private dental services but we do recognise that private dental services in Australia can be expensive. That's why, the Government supports access to private sector dental services through the private health insurance rebate, with an estimated \$7.8 billion to be spent on the rebate in 2025-26 to make private health insurance more affordable and the largest component of private health insurance-funded extras benefits paid to individuals being for dental services.

The Government also makes a significant funding contribution through the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) for public hospital services, including dental services requiring hospital treatment. Under the NHRA, state and territory governments have committed to providing public hospital services free-of-charge to eligible patients with our Government further providing \$107.8 million in 2025-26, in addition to the \$215.6 million provided over two years from 2023-24 to state and territory governments to support public dental services for adults.

I acknowledge that there is more work to be done and appreciate your advocacy on this important matter.

Thank you again for your correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Bec Sykes
Director, Oral Health
Primary Care Division
11 November 2025