



Volunteers from across the country are stepping up to improve the oral health outcomes of some of Australia's most vulnerable communities

The Mars Wrigley Foundation and Australian Dental Health Foundation congratulate the recipients of the 2019 Community Service Grants

In recent years, while oral health in Australia has seen substantial improvements,¹ this positive trend is starting to decline, particularly in remote and disadvantaged communities across Australia.² Differences between the oral health of children in cities and rural communities is widening, with 37% of adults in rural areas suffering from untreated tooth decay, compared to 23% of adults in major cities.³ Every day, Australians living in remote or disadvantaged communities encounter a number of barriers to good oral health, such as poor diet, access to dental facilities, financial pressure, and lower health literacy, all of which greatly impact the health equity of those living in this country.⁴

Now in its ninth year, the Community Service Grants program encourages volunteer dentists and dental students to provide oral health community services and education to high risk populations in Australia. Since the program's inception, we've awarded more than half a million dollars in grant funding to volunteer dentists and dental students to provide free-of-charge treatments and robust oral health education to patients from some of Australia's most remote and disadvantaged communities.

These volunteers have provided much-needed treatment and educational services to some of Australia's most vulnerable communities, including the homeless, Indigenous, domestic violence victims, the disabled, low income earners, refugees, the elderly and those living in rural Australia.

This year, the Mars Wrigley Foundation has awarded a total of US\$82,000 (approx. AU\$118,000) in Grant funding to 13 worthy projects, and is excited to announce the 2019 winners.

"Over the past nine years, the Community Service Grants program has helped hard working volunteers carry out important work that provides oral care services and dental education to disadvantaged communities across Australia. We received a record number of applications this year and continue to be impressed with the work carried out by Grant recipients. We look forward to seeing this year's results!"

– *Chloe Dougherty, on behalf of the EXTRA® Oral Healthcare Program*

"The ADHF applauds 2019's successful Grantees. These Grants will go to organisations providing oral care and education at a grassroots level and the ADHF is proud of our members working to deliver services that are vital to ensuring equity in access to oral healthcare services and education across Australia."

– *David Owen, Chairman Advisory Board, Australian Dental Health Foundation*

This year's grant recipients

NT

Royal Flying Doctor Service (Central Services), Remote NT & SA

WA

University of Western Australia Dental School, Perth

SA

University of Adelaide Dental School, Adelaide

Dental Outreach, Limestone Coast, Eyre Peninsula, York Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, Mid North

Dental on Eyre, Lake Eyre District

TAS

Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania), Circular Head



In 2019, we awarded 13 grants totalling US\$82,000

QLD

Griffith University, Hope4Health, Cherbourg

NSW

Carevan Foundation
Albury, Wodonga, Western Sydney

Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section)
Bourke, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri

Royal Far West, Manly

Sydney Dental Hospital,
Department of Paediatric Dentistry, Sydney

Oral Health Services and
Sydney Dental Hospital, Sydney

VIC

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne

Principles in Action Grant (US\$10,000 X 1)

**Royal Flying Doctor Service (Central Operations), SA & NT:
Remote Mobile Dental Service to South Australia and Northern Territory**

Due to the inequitable distribution of dental professionals, there is currently a gap in service of dental care in remote Northern Territory and South Australia. Based out of Adelaide, the Royal Flying Doctor Service team will travel to seven remote communities across the Northern Territory and South Australia to provide same day treatment, realistic treatment plans and robust education programs to high-risk children, parents and carers in some of the most remote communities in Australia.



Community Service Grants (US\$6,000 X 12)

Carevan Foundation, NSW: The Sun Smiles Fluoride Varnish Program

A previous Grant winner, the Carevan Foundation will use this year's Grant funding to expand its Sun Smiles oral health education program to disadvantaged students living in Wodonga, Albury and the Western suburbs of Sydney. Through provision of fluoride varnish, dental screening services and education services, the Sun Smiles program stands to improve the oral health of over 1000 children.



**Royal Flying Doctor Service (South-Eastern Section):
Oral Health Services for Aged Care Facilities**

For many in aged care facilities, oral health takes a back seat due to the myriad of other health conditions and life factors present. However, as oral health has a large impact on general health it must be considered in the holistic management of the patient. The project team will use funding to educate carers and allied health professionals in Bourke, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri about the importance of maintaining the oral health of aged care residents and possible pathways for referral. Further, the team will provide oral health screenings and referrals for treatment where necessary.

Royal Far West: Healthy Smiles Despite the Miles: Treatment of severe malocclusions for geographically isolated and financially disadvantaged children

Treatment of severely crowded or protruding teeth improves aesthetics, oral function, and the mental health and social outcomes of patients. Royal Far West provides free dental orthodontic treatment for children with severe malocclusions (abnormal positioning of the teeth/jaws), living in rural and remote areas of NSW, who cannot access or afford appropriate services close to home. This Grant will fund the treatment of malocclusions for 60 children, through the provision of oral health examinations, necessary treatment and education.



Sydney Dental Hospital, Department of Paediatric Dentistry: Smile Stronger, Smile Longer

Children with low social economic status are known to be at risk of early childhood caries. The Paediatric Dentistry Department at Sydney Dental Hospital understands that targeting these children at a young age, within a known community setting, can help prevent and mitigate the severity of dental caries in their future as well as improve engagement with dental professionals. This Grant will fund a program of dental screening, fluoride varnish application and oral health education for 100 children aged between 3 and 6 at four playgroups in low socio-economic areas of metropolitan Sydney.



Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Sydney Dental Hospital: Piloting Dalarinji

The aim of this project is to establish an Oral Health referral pathway for pregnant Aboriginal women with high risk dental needs. Through this Grant funding, Sydney Dental Hospital in partnership with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) and Dalarinji Aboriginal Oral Health Clinic (DOHC) will screen and educate 80 pregnant Aboriginal women, while providing referrals and treatment to those with high risk dental needs.



Dental Outreach: Aged Care Program

Poor oral health has been linked with increased mortality and morbidity in nursing home residents and has known measurable impacts on the quality of life for those individuals. Through this Grant funding, the project team at Dental Outreach will operate their mobile dental outreach clinics to provide on-site oral health care services for up to 72 aged care facilities across rural and regional South Australia, providing education, screenings and treatments to 2,240 residents.



University of Adelaide Dental School: Community Outreach Dental Program

There are approximately 8,500 homeless people in South Australia. When reflecting on the homeless population in comparison to the general population, 47% had a mental health issue compared to 34% and 34% reported a drug and or alcohol issue compared to 17%.

To accommodate the growing health issues surrounding homelessness, the University of Adelaide's Community Outreach Dental Program will continue to provide dental screenings and care but will also offer patients timely mental health information and referrals to allied health services where necessary.



Dental on Eyre: Smiles on Eyre

This Grant will fund the implementation of a fluoride education and delivery program to vulnerable populations in the Eyre region, including mothers and babies, school children and disadvantaged patients in regional hospitals. The aim of the Smiles on Eyre program is to educate the community about the preventive effects of fluoride to reduce the experience of early stages of oral disease and minimise the need for invasive treatments.





University of Western Australia: From clinics to communities: oral health promotion for vulnerable cohorts

Building off the success of previous years, the project team of 60 volunteer dental professionals and dental students will seek to develop tailored education and treatment referral pathways for 1500 vulnerable patients in Western Australia. In line with Australia's Oral Health Tracker and the WA Health Sustainability Review, the team has identified priority populations - aged care residents, Indigenous communities and the homeless - who will be engaged through tailored educational material and programs.



Cherbourg Volunteer Dental Clinic: Hope for Health

Cherbourg is one of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia⁵. The Indigenous people of Cherbourg experience many health inequalities, including a lack of access to regular dental services. Through Grant funding, Griffith University dental students and a supervising dentist will work in conjunction with the Barambah Medical Service, to provide emergency and preventive dental treatment and education to the Indigenous community living in Cherbourg.



Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania): Mobile Dental Clinic

The Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania (RFDS) will use this year's Grant funding to expand the programs delivered through both the school dental therapist team and adult dental team mobile outreach unit to provide dental care for vulnerable children and adults living in remote areas. As a result, the RFDS will help treat and educate 2600 vulnerable and Indigenous Tasmanians living in regional areas.

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre: Role of the dental team in management of head and neck cancer patients

Due to the complex nature of head and neck cancer, there is an increased need for patients to maintain excellent oral hygiene before, during and after their treatment journey. The project team at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PMCC) will provide education to dentists, hygienists, prosthetists and oral health therapists about their pivotal role in long term care for these high-risk patients and develop long-term support pathways for community dental teams and PMCC.



MARS WRIGLEY Foundation

The Mars Wrigley Foundation was established in 1987 and has positively impacted millions of people in the areas of oral health, environmental stewardship and local needs in site and sourcing communities around the world. For more than 25 years, Wrigley has supported independent, clinical research into the benefits of chewing gum including saliva stimulation and plaque acid neutralisation. The EXTRA® Oral Healthcare Program supports oral health professionals in the promotion of the oral health benefits of chewing sugarfree gum as part of a regular oral care routine.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014. Canberra: AIHW.

2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016. Oral health and dental care in Australia: key facts and figures 2015. Dental statistics and research series. Canberra: AIHW.

3. Australian Dental Association: Australia's Oral Health Tracker 2018: ADA

4. J. Owens, T.A. Dyer & K. Mistry (2010): People with learning disabilities and specialist services BDJ 208 pp. 203-205.

5. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, Annual Report, 2016-17. Canberra: ABS.

*as at July 2018