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HEALTHIER SMILES

Changing the nation's oral health, one project at a time

The **ADA Dental Health Foundation (ADA DHF)** and the **Mars Wrigley Foundation** congratulate the recipients of the 2024 Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants, designed to improve oral health outcomes for some of Australia's most disadvantaged groups.

While Australia has seen substantial improvements in oral health over recent years, we are beginning to see this positive trend decline in disadvantaged and remote communities.¹ In fact, Australians from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds are now almost half as likely to consult a dental professional, and nine times more likely to suffer complete tooth loss.¹ While there are a number of factors at play, barriers such as lower access to dental facilities, financial pressures, and lower health literacy all contribute to Australia's dental health inequity.¹

Now in its 13th year, the Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants program is a well-established initiative supporting dentists and dental students from across Australia who seek to improve oral health outcomes by providing screening, treatment, and education to those most in need.

This year, the Mars Wrigley Foundation has awarded US\$82,000 (approx. AU\$121,386*) in grant funding to the following 10 worthy projects.

The 2024 Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants recipients



Digital Dentures (NSW)

Oral health education for the elderly



All elderly residents and visiting family member and carer at the RACV will receive oral health education on daily oral hygiene, care (including denture care), healthy diet, changes to note

and importance of regular dental visits, and information on where to access timely dental care. The project aims to provide 12 residents the following: scanning of existing dentures, cleaning of dentures, new dentures, referrals as required.

Aged Care Oral Health Capacity Building (Vic)

Improving oral healthcare for aged care residents



This project will provide a Capacity Building Program including training and support for residential aged care facility staff working at Barwon Health. Specifically,

oral health and hygiene care for residents including oral assessment, individual hygiene and care needs, and how to communicate and refer concerns.

The Carevan Foundation (NSW)

The Tooth Fairy's Best Friend: Adopt-a-School project



The children's picture book *Who is the tooth fairy's best friend?* engages children in learning about caring for their teeth and discovering the magic of fluoride for good oral health. The book contains a beautifully illustrated story, a wisdom tooth tips page, glossary and an information page for teachers, parents and carers. All primary

school students will receive oral hygiene instruction, a colouring sheet, Fluoride Fairy certificate, Tooth Troll Mask and Tooth Fairy take-home bag with a Tooth Troll tooth timer, toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. They will also receive a Pyjama Fairy and Friends Activity Book.

“ The ADA DHF congratulates the successful grantees of this year's Healthier Smiles program. Achieving equity in access to oral healthcare is the ultimate goal of the ADA DHF, and we are proud and supportive of our members who are committed to working towards this goal by delivering oral health services and education to underserved communities across Australia. ”

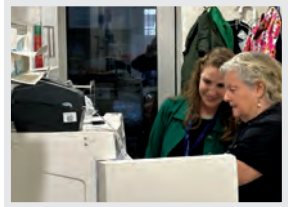
Dr Richard Olive, Chairman Advisory Board, ADA Dental Health Foundation

“ Over the past decade, the Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants program has provided more than AU\$1.2 million in funding to volunteer dentists and dental students striving to improve the oral health outcomes and education of some of Australia's most vulnerable communities. The contributions made by the grant recipients since the inception of this program have gone a long way in driving meaningful change in the quality of oral healthcare provided to those in need and have inspired more dental volunteers across Australia to support their communities. We look forward to seeing the work the grant recipients this year will deliver to help more Australians transform their oral health and smiles. ”

Erin Sing, on behalf of the Mars Wrigley Foundation

Common Ground Dental Clinic (SA)

Enhancing infection control standards



This project provides free, comprehensive dental care, including screenings, restorative services, oral health education, and specialised referrals where possible. Furthermore, through student involvement, it ensures upcoming professionals are well equipped and sensitive to the needs of marginalised communities such as homeless individuals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of trauma.

Condobolin Aboriginal Dental Service (NSW)

Screening, education and treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients



The primary goal of this clinic is to improve dental health and education for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who might not otherwise have the opportunity to access dental services. It will provide general dental services and will also work closely with the community medical centre and public school to complete regular dental screenings and oral hygiene education and improve dental literacy in the community.

Say it With a Smile (Qld)

Encouraging children to practice oral healthcare



These workshops aim to utilise education as a preventative tool and engage children to be more proactive with their oral care and encourage health-related behaviour changes. They endeavour to help children understand the importance of preventative care through proper oral hygiene habits at home, the

role of dental practitioners in the community to promote positive future dental experiences, and the role of free sugars in the diet so that they are equipped with the knowledge to make healthier food choices.

Smile With Confidence (Vic)

Providing trauma informed dental care for survivors of family violence and sexual assault



This project will provide, on an average, a total of six sessions to each individual. The session layout may vary depending on the oral health needs and degree of clinical care identified by the dental professional, in collaboration with the client. The three main components will be: a full dental exam, clinical care/restorative treatment and oral health education delivered through trauma-informed practice.

SmileCARE (NSW)

Improving oral health in aged care



SmileCARE is a multi-disciplinary education program aimed at changing the culture of mouth care in Australian aged care for the better. SmileCARE translates the theory-based BOHRC modules into hands-on, practical care, delivered on-site with face-to-face, small group oral hygiene instruction training sessions in a simulated care setting with 'Gordon', a specialised aged care manikin, mouth models and a range of dental hygiene products specific to the needs of geriatric oral healthcare.



**Special Care Clinic
(WA)**

**Working to develop dental care
for autistic people**



Dental settings are extremely challenging, particularly for autistic people. This clinic provides an autism-appropriate environment (for example, sensory mindfulness, social spacing, longer appointment times, decreased wait-time, individualised support, and an emphasis on visual communication) in consultation with Autism Australia

WA and relevant care workers so it is able to best tailor dental care for the individual.

**TIMA Rural Outreach Volunteer Clinic
(WA)**

**Treatment and oral health education
for needy patients**



This service allows patients to receive critical dental treatment, while not creating financial burden for the patient. It would also mean that patients are able to address any occurring dental diseases, before it progresses to a more significant stage.

Patients will also receive oral hygiene education, oral health knowledge and an oral health package to raise awareness of good oral hygiene habits.

- The exact amount distributed in AU\$ may fluctuate with the exchange rate at the time of distribution.
- It is at the discretion of the Mars Wrigley Foundation and the ADADHF to determine the amount of funds dispersed and the number of grant recipients based on the merit of applications received.

About the Mars Wrigley Foundation

Established in 1987, the Mars Wrigley Foundation aspires to support People & Planet through oral health education, environmental stewardship, and local community partnerships. The foundation has been supporting the Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants program for over a decade, providing funding to key oral health projects around the country.

For more than 25 years, Mars 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 oral health benefits of chewing sugar-free gum as part of a regular oral care routine.

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