



The Mars Wrigley Foundation and Australian Dental Health Foundation congratulate the recipients of the 2022 Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants, as Australian dental volunteers once again step up to improve the oral health of some of the country's most vulnerable communities.

# HEALTHIER SMILES

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<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Australians from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds are now almost half as likely to consult a dental professional, and nine times more likely to suffer complete tooth loss<sup>1</sup>. 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<sup>1</sup>.

Now in its 11th year, the Mars Wrigley Foundation and Australian Dental Health Foundation (ADHF) 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\$111,000)\* in grant funding to 10 worthy projects, and is excited to introduce the 2022 recipients.

## The Mars Wrigley Foundation and Australian Dental Health Foundation 2022 Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants recipients

### NSW

CAREVAN FOUNDATION

SYDNEY DENTAL HOSPITAL

SMYLA DENTAL CARES

BIRIPI ABORIGINAL MEDICAL CORPORATION

### SA

HEALTH PARTNERS



### QLD

CQ UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

ESESSON FOUNDATION

JCU DENTAL CAIRNS

CHERBOURG VOLUNTEER DENTAL CLINIC

### WA

TZU CHI FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

“ The ADHF congratulates the successful grantees of this year’s Healthier Smiles program. Achieving equity in access to oral healthcare is the ultimate goal of the ADHF, 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, Australian Dental Health Foundation

## Health Partners

### Giving A Smile To Women In Need



Many women who experience homelessness are unable to access timely oral healthcare through the public dental system and can't afford private dental care. With the grant funding, Health Partners aims

to improve oral health promotion through the education of clients, residents and staff of Catherine House – an organisation that offers recovery-orientated services for women experiencing homelessness. The project will additionally provide oral health packs and a comprehensive course of dental treatment for Catherine House residents.

## Tzu Chi Foundation Australia

### Cycle of Love



The Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) provides ongoing care for patients who require complex dental treatments but are unable to access public services or afford private dental care. The

grant will support TIMA in delivering free dental screenings and treatments at its ongoing monthly dental clinic at Leeming Dental Clinic, and oral health promotion through dental packages that include toothbrushes, toothpaste and educational materials. Ultimately, the project aims to empower patients by alleviating their dental-related stress and financial burden.

## CQ University Australia

### All Access CQU Oral Health Outreach Project



Long waiting periods for public dental care<sup>2</sup> and transport issues are among the largest barriers that vulnerable populations face in attending dental appointments<sup>3</sup>. In response to this, CQ University Australia aims to support

adult clients of the Lives Lived Well Rockhampton Residential Rehabilitation Centre’s Binbi Yadubay “Healthy Beginnings”, a new live-in program for people struggling with alcohol and other drug use. The grant will fund the purchasing of mobile dental equipment and materials to extend the provision of free dental services in settings beyond the dental clinic.

## Carevan Foundation

### The Pyjama Fairy: Brush, Book, Bed Project

Aboriginal and disadvantaged communities in rural areas are among the populations with the greatest oral health needs in Australia<sup>4</sup>. To help address this, the Carevan Foundation will use grant funding to develop a suite of digital oral health resources for children based on the successful children’s program, “Brush, Book, Bed”, which will be disseminated nationwide via social media. Additionally, as part of the program, 500 children will receive Bedtime Bags with toothbrushes, toothpaste and oral health resources.



## Esson Foundation

### Esson Volunteer Dental Clinic



The Esson Foundation aims to build a permanent volunteer dental clinic in Ipswich Health Centre to provide dental screening, treatment and education to children in need in Southeast Queensland, including refugees,

immigrants and victims of domestic violence. The grant funding will be used to equip one of the donated clinic rooms in the Health Centre, and fund costs associated with patient treatments. Ultimately, the project seeks to deliver comprehensive oral health education to help reduce oral disease among at-risk groups.

## JCU Dental Cairns

### Homeless Smile Project



The prevalence and severity of oral health problems are three times greater among people experiencing homelessness compared to the general public<sup>5</sup>. With the grant funding, a team of dental professionals and students will provide dental screening and comprehensive treatment to people experiencing homelessness in Cairns. All participants will also receive oral health education and essential dental care products, such as toothbrushes and paste, to support them in breaking the cycle of dental issues through a preventative approach.

#### References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022. Canberra: AIHW.
2. National Advisory Council on Dental Health, 2012.
3. McLean S. et al., 2014.
4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020.
5. The University of Queensland, 2014.
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

## Sydney Dental Hospital Paediatric Oral Health – Refugees



Many refugee families are unable to adequately navigate Australia's dental health services due to factors such as language barriers and system complexities, resulting in the perpetuation of severe dental diseases. In collaboration with the New South Wales Refugee Health Service, Sydney Dental Hospital will use grant funding to screen at least

200 patients before referring them to appropriate care facilities. The project will also invest in oral health promotion through one-to-one motivational interviews facilitated by a translator, and the provision of a toothbrush, toothpaste and educational resources in their preferred language.

## Smyla Dental Cares: Smyla Dental Cares



A lack of knowledge on oral health is often the reason for poor oral health among lower socioeconomic communities. In particular, Smyla Dental Cares has observed that many patients believe that baby teeth can be replaced without

future consequences, thus contributing to a neglect of dental health maintenance. With the grant funding, a team of volunteer dental professionals will provide paediatric dentistry care through a mobile dental suite to more than 400 at-risk members of the community, including Aboriginal families living in low socioeconomic areas of NSW. Beyond screening and treatment, the program will also deliver oral health education by hosting free workshops during organised events at schools and community events.

## Cherbourg Volunteer Dental Clinic Cherbourg Volunteer Dental Clinic



Indigenous people of Cherbourg – Australia's most disadvantaged community<sup>6</sup> – experience many health inequalities, including a lack of access to regular dental services. With the grant funding, the project team will work in conjunction with the Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Services to provide volunteer dental screening, treatment, and education. The clinic's aim is to allow the community of Cherbourg to transition from emergency intervention to preventative dental health through ongoing education and support.

## Biripi Aboriginal Medical Corporation Aboriginal Elders Oral Screening and Care



Many Indigenous elders are unable to afford dental care and treatment, resulting in the loss of teeth or poorly fitted dentures that affect their lifestyle and ability to derive proper nutrition. The grant funding will assist the Biripi Aboriginal Medical Corporation in supporting Elders of the Biripi community through the provision of comprehensive dental care, including fillings, extractions and specialised denture services. The project team also aims to create awareness of the importance of maintaining oral health and the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and smoking on the deterioration of oral health.

**“ Over the past decade, the Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants program has provided more than AU\$1.1 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. ”**

Sarah McCartney, on behalf of the Mars Wrigley Foundation

## 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.

- 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 Australian Dental Health Foundation to determine the amount of funds dispersed and the number of grant recipients based on the merit of applications received.