



# Volunteer dental programs

Quarterly impact report

1 January to 31 March 2025



Dental Health  
Foundation

## Chairman's Introduction



It is now 8 years since the then ADA Federal Council agreed to the merger of the ADA Foundation and the National Dental Foundation and the renaming of the Foundation as the ADA Dental Health Foundation. In those 8 years, the Foundation's volunteers have delivered just on \$9M worth of pro bono dental care to those in our community who fall through the cracks of our excellent but not infallible mix of private and public dental services. That is yet another milestone of achievements for all the stakeholders who have contributed over that period. In the past quarter,

January to March 2025, our volunteers provided impact of more than \$263K, and this is the 20<sup>th</sup> quarter of impact greater than \$250K during those 8 years. It is a wonderful record of volunteering and service to address the shortcomings of Australia's dental care delivery system.

There are two key groups of stakeholders who determine how much impact the Foundation can achieve. They are of course the volunteers, the dentists, specialist dentists and dental prosthetists who deliver the services and the sponsors and donors whose funding determines how much we can staff the process of connecting patients and volunteers. We are always on the lookout for more volunteers and ways to help non practice owning practitioners to contribute. However, perhaps the biggest limitation we have is our budget and particularly the donations and sponsorships that provide the funds to employ our State Coordinators. For every dollar donated to the ADA DHF, we can deliver, through our volunteers, 5 dollars of impact! As the end of financial year approaches, please consider whether you can help us increase our impact by your tax deductible donation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Rick Olive AM RFD

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rick Olive', written over a faint horizontal line.

Chairman,  
ADA Dental Health Foundation

## Creating impact with the ADA Dental Health Foundation

Our mission is to address the inequality between those Australians who can access the dental care they need, and those who can't.

Our vision is an Australia where no disadvantaged member of our community falls through the cracks and needlessly suffers from a lack of access to dignified professional oral health care.

Through the work that we do, we deliver better access to quality oral health care for all Australians regardless of their geographical or social situation.

From men and women who have overcome addiction, who are enduring long-term economic hardship or suffering from mental and physical health challenges; to those establishing their independence after domestic violence has stolen their freedom, and the homeless whose needless dental suffering no longer compounds their more basic struggles. We are there to provide life changing oral health treatment wherever we can help.

Through our Dental Rescue Days®, Adopt a Patient and Rebuilding Smiles® programs, our national team connects eligible individuals with specialist oral health volunteers who provide their time, expertise and practice facilities at no cost to patients.

We also fund programs that facilitate better long-term oral health outcomes through our Healthier Smiles Community Service Grants and Oral Health Education Projects and reduce the inequality of access to education through our First Nations Study Grants.

To date, we've created change for thousands of community members by enabling the pro bono delivery of **approximately \$9,000,000** of professional oral health services.

We would like to thank all of our volunteer dental practices who make our programs possible as well as those companies who generously offer their financial support to our programs.



## Volunteer Program Outcomes

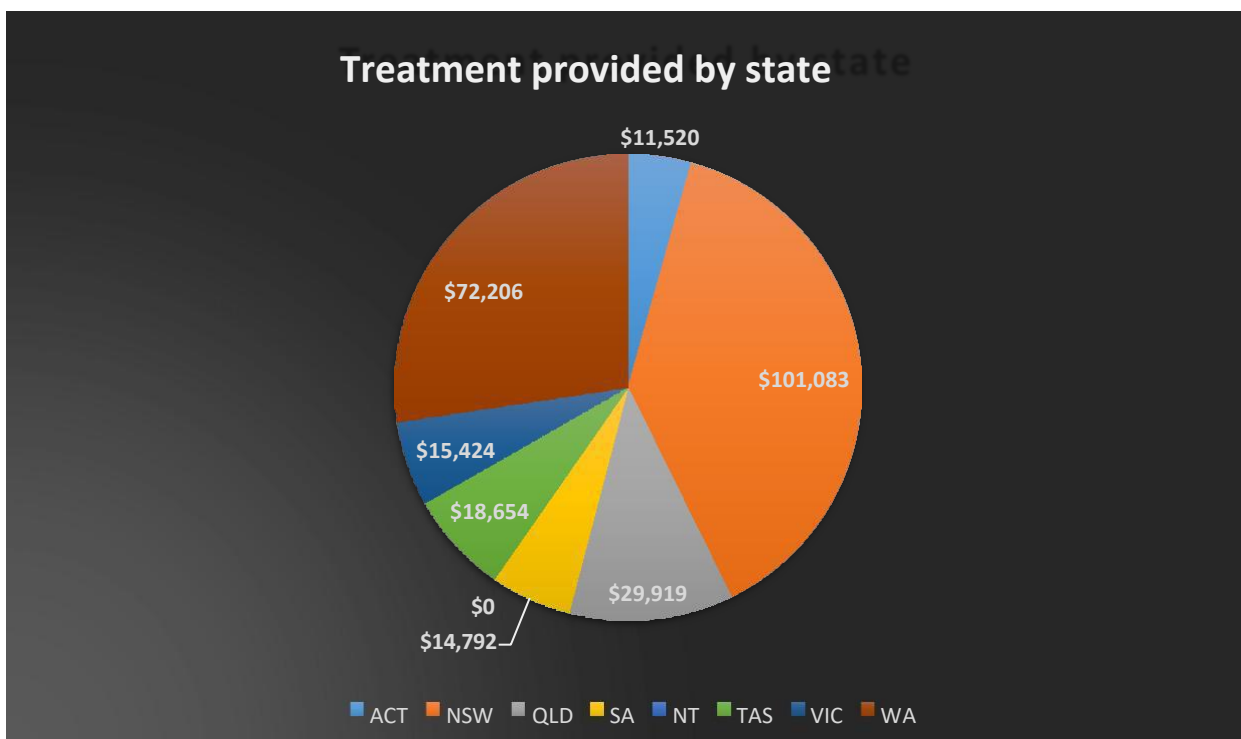
In this third quarter of financial year 2025 (Jan-Mar), the Foundation coordinated **2 Dental Rescue Days**<sup>®</sup> around Australia, providing **33** appointments to disadvantaged patients. The Dental Rescue Day<sup>®</sup> program coordinates access to local private practices and clinics for eligible patients, whereby a group of patients will receive a comprehensive general oral check-up in a single day as well as treatment for acute concerns.

**290** appointments were attended by patients under the **Adopt a Patient** program. Under this program, an individual patient attends a local private practice or clinic to receive dental treatment and will usually require several appointments to address their often more complex oral health issues. Currently there are **85** patients being treated under the AAP program in practices throughout Australia.

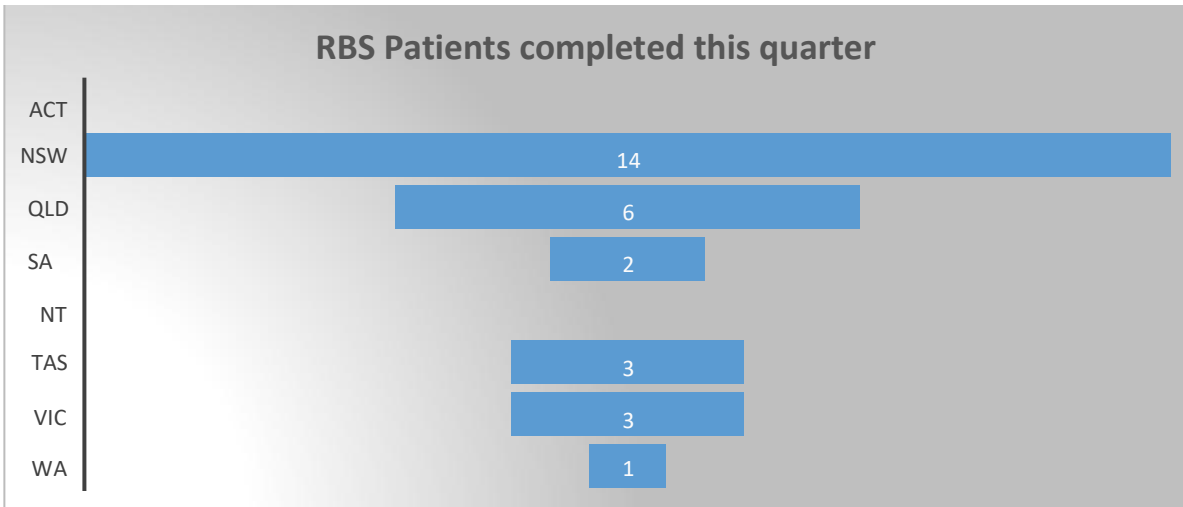
The **Rebuilding Smiles**<sup>®</sup> program focuses on providing assistance to individuals and families who have experienced family and domestic violence. During this quarter, **29** cases were completed with **120** patients currently connected to a practice or receiving treatment.

Across all three volunteer programs, pro bono treatment of **\$263,598** has been delivered by our volunteer general practitioners and specialists during the quarter.

### Total treatment delivered by state



## Rebuilding Smiles completed cases



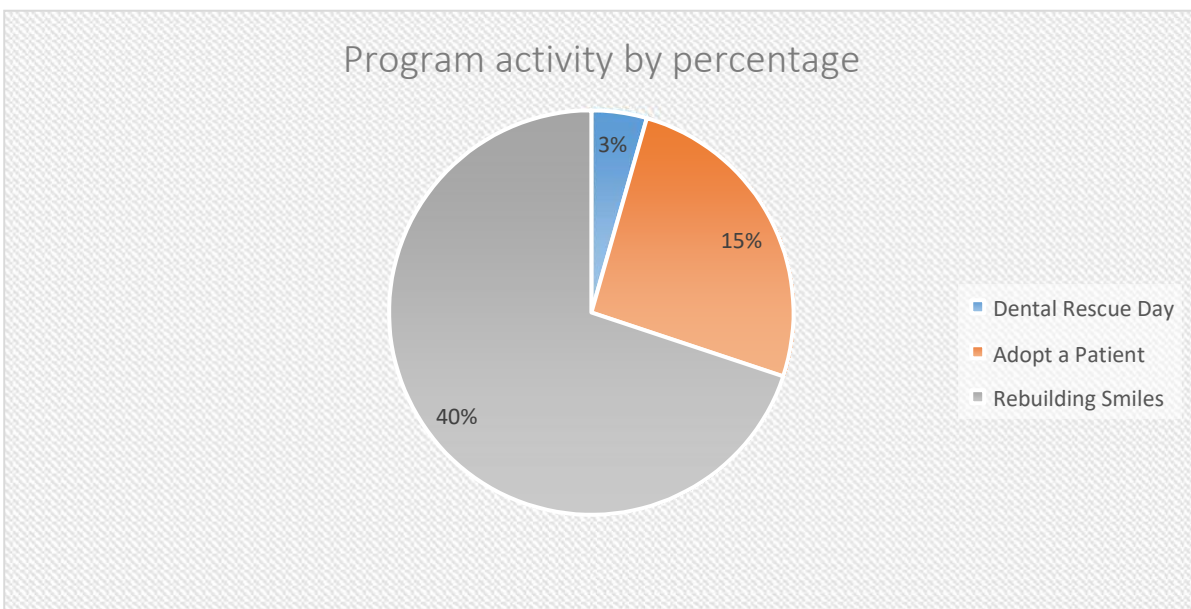
## Volunteers

During the quarter, **79 general dentists, prosthetists and specialists** around Australia provided pro bono services to patients. Additionally, many of their staff were involved with coordinating appointments, assisting in surgery and providing oral hygiene and education to patients.

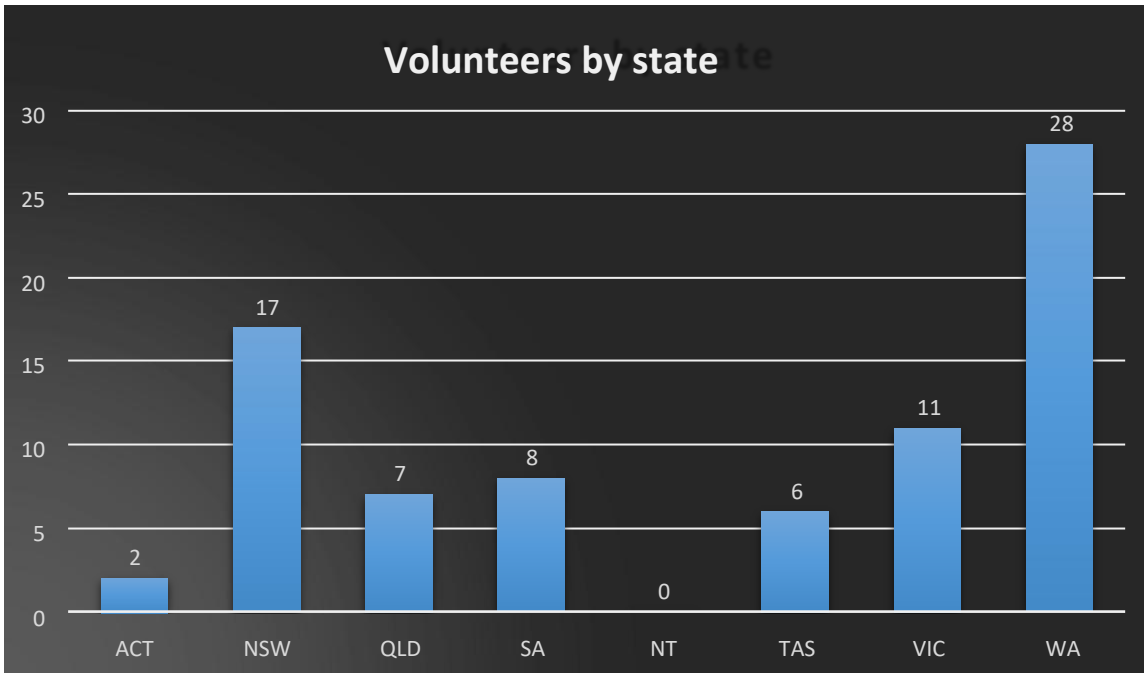
Our Volunteer lists are steadily growing and we have renewed interest and engagement in assisting our programs from those who continue to support our programs. If you know of a colleague who might like to assist us please spread the word about the great value that volunteering can offer.

Our Coordinators continually strive to offer their utmost support to the clients referred to our waiting lists and to the dental practitioners who participate and volunteer in our programs.

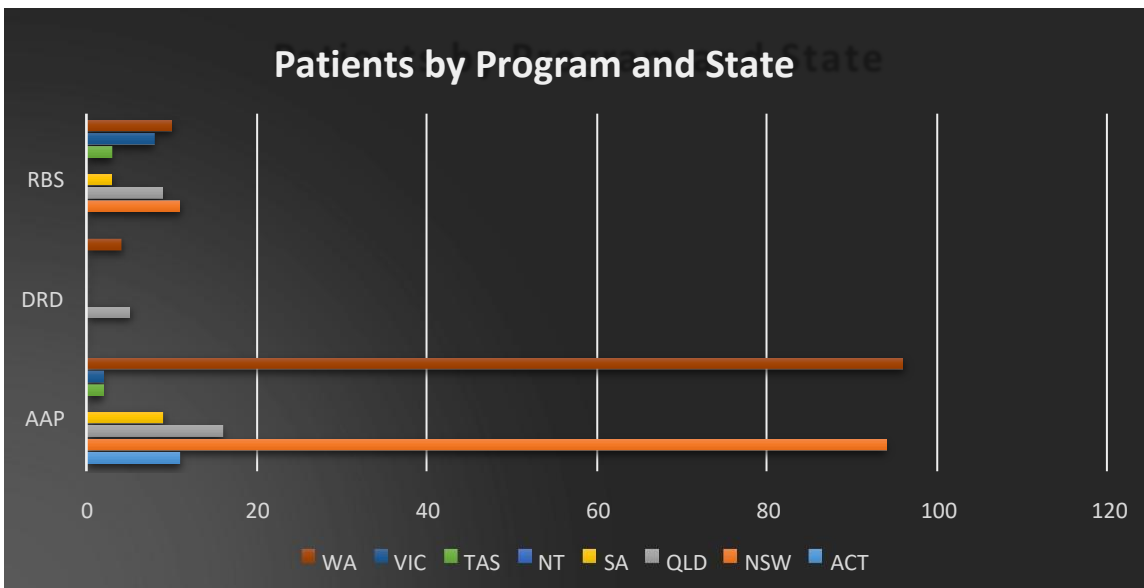
## Program activity by percentage



## Volunteers by state



## Patients by Program and State



## Quarterly Spotlight

### Dr. Penny Ellis



#### Making a Difference in Dental Care

Dr. Penny Ellis, a dedicated dentist from South Australia, has been making a significant impact through her volunteer work. Her passion for dentistry and her commitment to providing quality care to those in need has driven her to go above and beyond, bridging the gap between private and public dental care in Australia.

Dr. Ellis's motivation for volunteering stems from a deep understanding of the disparity between public and private dental care in Australia. "I appreciate the gap between public and private dental care is wide," she shares. Her commitment to making a difference led her to take on pro bono work for the East Adelaide Domestic

Violence Service in the past. She saw this volunteering opportunity as yet another way to contribute to improving the care of public dental patients.

While every case brings its own challenges and rewards, Dr. Ellis highlights a recent case that left a lasting impression on her. "Every case carries with it highlights, but for me, my latest case was a genuinely lovely person for whom we achieved a great restorative result." For Dr. Ellis, the most satisfying aspect of her volunteer work is the ability to make a real, tangible difference in someone's life through dental care.

For those considering volunteering but unsure if it's the right choice, Dr. Ellis has this to say: "They will never feel this sense of satisfaction with normal fee-paying clients." The fulfillment that comes from helping individuals who may not otherwise have access to quality dental care is an experience that cannot be matched in the private sector.

Dr. Ellis strongly believes in the value of volunteering, not only for personal satisfaction but also for the benefit of the community. "I would definitely recommend volunteering to other dental practices," she says. She notes that this type of volunteer work has enriched his life both personally and professionally, providing an opportunity for growth in ways that fee-for-service work simply cannot offer.

Volunteering has had a profound impact on Dr. Ellis's professional life. "In terms of professional motivation and satisfaction, this kind of volunteering is very effective for enriching your life and career," she explains. Although volunteering has not changed her attitude toward dentistry or life in general, she acknowledges that she has always had a social conscience about the state of publicly funded dental care, even without working within that system.

Dr. Penny Ellis's volunteer work is a testament to the power of giving back and making a difference in the lives of those who need it most. By dedicating her time and expertise to pro bono dental care, she is helping to narrow the gap between private and public services, one patient at a time. Her story serves as an inspiration to other dental professionals who may be considering the rewards of volunteering. Through her efforts, Dr. Ellis continues to exemplify the true spirit of service and compassion in the dental community.

## Other News

### First Nations Study Grants

Applications for the 2025 grants will be closing on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.



### Healthier Smiles Grants

The ADA DHF and Mars Wrigley Foundation's 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. Ten grants were awarded across Australia in 2024. Applications open on our [website](#) for the 2025 grants on 15<sup>th</sup> May.





## We would like to extend our thanks

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following clinics for their continued support and offer of their facilities without which we would struggle to treat so many patients.

- ❖ St Pats Oral Health Clinic WA
- ❖ OHCWA/UWA Dental School Clinic WA
- ❖ Filling the Gap Clinic ADANSW

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