2nd July 2018

Mr Greg Hunt MP

Federal Minister for Health

Dear Minister Hunt,

RE: FUNDING FOR REGULAR DENTAL SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

I write to you to appeal for better funding for dental health, in particular for adults with additional needs who require specialized dental facilities such as the dental hospital at Westmead.

Current funding for pediatric special needs dentistry allows individuals to attend the facility every six months if required. This ensures proper and meaningful observations of childrens teeth at routine and timely intervals. This changes dramatically when the child turns 18. Current waiting times are 2 years between appointments. Studies show that regular dental visits improve ones' general heath. For adults with additional needs, many do not have the capacity to regularly brush and floss their teeth. Nor do many have the capacity to verbally convey their pain. This usually manifests in violent and aggressive behaviours.

Studies show that poor dental health is connected to major chronic diseases. A report released by Dental Health Services Victoria "Links between oral health and general health – the case for action", is based on a literature review that examined the connection between oral health status and major chronic diseases.

The report states that:

- **Dental decay is the second most costly diet-related disease in Australia with an economic impact comparable with heart disease and diabetes.**

- **Poor oral health is significantly associated with major chronic illnesses.**

- **Poor oral health causes disability.**

- **Oral health issues and major diseases share common risk factors.**

- **General health problems may cause or worsen oral health conditions.**

Our adults with additional needs deserve to see a dentist more than once every two years. I ask that you review the funding for this program and ensure support for our vulnerable.

Yours sincerely

Name

Address

Signature