

# Media Release

18 November 2018

## ADAVB welcomes increased focus from Labor on child dental health



The Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB) cautiously welcomes the election pledge from the Labor party that promises to provide free dental care at all public primary and secondary schools throughout Victoria.

“Measures that ensure more children have access to dental care are certainly welcome. However, we are uncertain at this stage how this scheme will work in conjunction with the federally funded Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) that already provides up to \$1000 over two years for children aged 2-17 years, whose families receive Family Tax Benefit A. The CDBS can currently be accessed at the family’s choice of dental health care provider in both the public and private sector,” said ADAVB President, Dr Kevin Morris.

This new school dental scheme may impact children who already have care provided by their regular family dentist. “Continuity of care is a critical part of any health care system, and parents should be able to maintain a choice of provider, as they currently can with the CDBS,” Dr Morris said. “It is important that families can continue to visit their existing dentist under this new scheme.”

Regular visits to the dentist are an important measure for the prevention and early detection of tooth decay and other oral health issues and help to establish healthy behaviours and set the basis for good oral health care into adulthood.

The ADAVB has been advocating for increased funding to tackle public dental waiting lists, with waiting times increasing 70 per cent in the past four years. It’s not clear that this new plan will significantly alleviate pressure on waiting times for adult patients, with resources directed to providing free care for more than 618,000 children in public schools in Victoria.

The ADAVB looks forward to seeing further details of this new plan, and working with the Labor Government, if re-elected, to ensure the school dental scheme provides the best outcomes for all children.

### Interviews:

Dr Kevin Morris , ADAVB President

A/Prof Matt Hopcraft, ADAVB CEO

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### Further information:

- [Data obtained by ADAVB about preventable hospitalisations](#)
- [Data obtained by ADAVB about public dental care waiting times](#)

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