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ADA CALLS FOR LIBERALS TO MATCH LABOR'S DENTAL SPEND

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) congratulates Labor for its announcement to allocate \$2.4 billion to a Pensioner Dental Plan and is calling for the Liberal Party to match the funding commitment.

The ADA which represents the interest of dentists around Australia, believes Bill Shorten's announcement will go a long way to addressing the issue of older Australians accessing dental care.

Under the Labor Plan, people receiving an Age Pension or holding a Commonwealth Seniors card will receive \$1,000 in dental care every two years.

This means a range of dental services including examinations, x-rays, cleaning, fluoride treatment, fillings, root canals, extractions, periodontal treatment and dentures would be covered, and delivered either through their chosen private dentist or through public services.

"This funding will go a long way to addressing many of the dental concerns of up to three million older Australians," said ADA President Dr Carmelo Bonanno.

So far this election, the Liberals have not committed funds for additional dental care for older Australians, and the ADA is pressing them to put their cards on the table.

"We would like to see more from the Liberals on what they intend to do, to address the issue of affordability for a significant proportion of the Australian population. Can they deliver a similar benefit?"

The ADA is lobbying both major parties on four key oral health policies designed to close the gap in need and access to dental services:

- to introduce a dental benefits scheme for the financially disadvantaged,
- to bring in a dental benefits scheme for older Australians,
- to guarantee the long-term future of National Partnership Agreements, and
- to amend legislation on differential rebates so customers choosing their own dentist get the same private health insurance rebate as patients seeing a preferred provider.

"The election represents a crossroad for the major political parties in terms of how they can improve publicly funded dental care, and we are keen to see whether the Liberal party steps up," added Dr Bonanno.

For interviews with Dr Carmelo Bonanno, call ADA Media Advisor Jenny Barlass on 0484 869086.

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