



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: Oral Health Care Reform

I am writing to you in conjunction with the national convenor of the Oral Health Special Interest Group (OHSIG) of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA). The OHSIG has over a hundred members coming primarily from population oral health research, academia and public dental services. The PHAA and its OHSIG have been long and active advocates for a nationally-driven approach to addressing the relatively poor oral health of most Australians and the major inequities in access to care and oral health outcomes incumbent in the current dental care system.

The following resolution was one of three passed at the recent PHAA Conference in Adelaide : “This conference resolves that the PHAA will continue to demand action from government until fair, equitable prevention-focussed oral health services (including treatment) are accessible by all Australians”. Oral health was singled out, not only because of the PHAA’s great concern, but also because of the challenges and opportunities provided by the Prime Minister’s commitment to urgent further action on dental care in the context of the 2011 budget.

We noted and strongly support your call for “the independents, the Greens and the dental workforce to put their ideas on the table so a detailed discussion can be held on dental reform”. While the PHAA continues to strongly support the four recommendations for oral health reform contained in the Final Report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, it remains convinced that to be successful, the government must commit to the development and broad endorsement of a future vision for oral health care and a consequent detailed implementation plan. The dominance of private practice dentists within the slowly growing diversity of the oral health workforce makes it essential that the government commit to an ongoing, collaborative, open and transparent approach to the planning and implementation of oral health care reform. It also demands strong counter-balancing participation by population oral health, public oral health service and community representatives.

On behalf of the PHAA, OHSIG members prepared the attached REPAIR document for consideration by the members of the National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA). NOHA adopted the ideas in large part.

Therefore:

1. We recommend the document to you as providing the Gillard government with a valuable roadmap that should gain broad industry, public and political support; and
2. We ask your support for two positions at the table for PHAA Oral Health Special Interest Group nominees in the upcoming discussions on the direction and detail of dental reform.

Yours sincerely



Michael Moore
CEO PHAA



Bruce Simmons
OHSIG national convenor and
PHAA Board member