Recent proposal revamps Australian oral healthcare system

By DTI

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In a 2018 Dental Tribune International article, it was revealed that the Australian Dental Association and Australian Health Policy Collaboration (AHPC) at Victoria University had released a national oral health report card. According to that report, more than 90% of Australian adults had experienced caries in their permanent teeth.

In the article, Prof. Rosemary Calder, Director of the AHPC, said: “In 2015 to 2016, there were 67,266 hospitalisations for oral health problems and almost one-third of these were children under the age of 9 years. Worryingly, there’s a growing number of children in this age group who are being admitted to hospital for dental health reasons.”

Future of oral health care in Australia

As alluded to in this recent report, most Australians pay for dental care straight out of their own pockets. This means that patients who are not able to afford treatment either wait until it is too late or for any kind of restorative treatment or go to the hospital emergency department.

To combat this issue, Duckett and his team suggested: “The first step is for the Commonwealth to take over funding of existing public dental schemes, fund them properly to the tune of an extra $1 billion per year, and enable private-sector providers to deliver publicly-funded care.”

Many Australians suffer from preventable oral health issues, and the current system puts a strain on states and health institutions whose time could be better served working on other public policy. It might not be too long before a change comes. Speaking on the possibility of the proposed scheme being taken on, Duckett said, “The first few stages of our scheme are inevitable, it’s only an issue of timing.”

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