Dear Dental Tribune International Group Editor

Yours sincerely,

whole profession.

creasingly put quality over price.

Canada found that dentists in-

dentistry should not repeat the

a thriving business. However,

work made in Asia CAN be

they consider sending an order to

their Western counterparts but

plenty of them.

Don’t get me wrong, dental

However, low prices often

 programs for baby boomers

are supported by over a billion

dollars of federal spending via

insurance rebates and uncapped

programmes for baby boomers

with the personal resources to

egotiate medical funding for those

with chronic diseases. Middle and

low income Australians, the ma-

jority of the population, face either

afford ability barriers for private

dentistry or a scarcity of resources

for public dentistry barely main-

tained by state and territory gov-

ernments. This is an unfair and

ujoint situation.

Policy directions have been

proposed, not the least by the

National Health and Hospitals

Reform Commission in 2008 and

2009. The holdest proposal was

a universal social insurance

scheme for dental services. While

its costs, community or profes-
sional support might be debated,

what seems irrefutable is the need
to decide on a long-term direction
for financing reform and make an
immediate start on an incremen-
tal implementation. The insurer-

cance proposal was accompanied

by policy on a dental graduate

residency year, a revitalisation of
dental services for children and

an investment in oral health pro-
motion, which have all less been

controversial, but also stalled.

While the universal dental

insurance scheme seemed to be

stalled by professional opposition

and its full implementation cost,

the recent Australian federal
election has brought all the

former proposals back to life.

Specifically the Australian Labor
Party has been forced to agree to

“urgent further action on dental
care ... in the context of the 2011
Budget” in an agreement with the

Australian Greens as so as to form

the new Gillard minority govern-

ment. Similar interest in dental

care has been shown by the

‘cross-bench Independents’ who

have also been crucial in deter-
making who governs Australia.

The hope is that the Gillard

Government will pursue a similar

approach to other contentious

policy areas and form a ‘working

group’ under the Federal Cabinet

with all parties, the Independents

represented and a small number

of experts to drive policy in the

lead up to the 2011 Budget. It is

not beyond Australians to develop
detailed policy that could steer

a path through competing self-

interests and arrive at improved

oral health and fairer access to
dental services in Australia.

The politics of a dental plan for Australia

Two separate worlds of den-
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[Image: Glass ionomer luting cement – very low film thickness – perfect occlusal accuracy]

[Image: Light-curing nano-ceram composite – highly aesthetic and bio-compatible – universal for all filling classes – also available as flowable version]

[Image: Nano-Ceram® Technology]

Prof. John Spencer

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