

# Dental volunteers from across Australia are stepping up to close the gap in oral health care



## The Wrigley Company Foundation and Australian Dental Health Foundation congratulate the recipients of the 2017 Community Service Grants

While oral health in Australia has been improving over the long term, in recent years, oral health outcomes for many Australians, particularly the most vulnerable or those living in regional or remote areas, have remained low due to socio-economic disparities, a lack of education, and a lack of services operating in areas of high risk or need.<sup>1,3</sup> A 2013 survey showed that nearly one third of people aged five or older avoided the dentist due to cost.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, cost of treatments, limited access and lack of awareness are often barriers to oral care treatment for Australia's most disadvantaged communities.<sup>2</sup>

*"Over the past six years, the grant funding has greatly assisted hard working volunteers to help bridge the gap in access to oral care services and dental education throughout Australia. The Wrigley Company Foundation is honoured to fund the work of these dental volunteers and assist them in improving the oral health and education of many of those in need across Australia."*

*This year, we received a record 32 applications of merit from across the country. We are thrilled that funding from the grants will have a positive impact on oral health education and outcomes in almost every state and territory. We look forward to seeing how the successful applicants improve oral health outcomes for these communities throughout the course of their projects."*

— Catherine Pemberton, Corporate Affairs Director, Wrigley Pacific

*"The ADHF applauds this year's successful grantees. Volunteer groups of dental professionals who provide Australia's most disadvantaged communities with free oral health treatments and education are an essential component of eliminating the oral health disparities in this country. These volunteers work on the front line to provide preventative dental screenings, care and education to curb the growing rate of dental disease in this country."*

—David Owen, Chairman Advisory Board,  
Australian Dental Association Foundation

Now in its seventh year, the Wrigley Company Foundation and the Australian Dental Health Foundation (ADHF) Community Service Grants program is supporting dentists from across Australia to improve oral care services for those who need it most.

The Community Service Grants are awarded to volunteer dentists and dental students, encouraging them to implement oral health community service, education, and preventative care in some of the highest risk and disadvantaged communities across Australia.

This year, the Wrigley Company Foundation has awarded a total of US\$82,000 to 13 worthy projects, and is excited to announce the 2017 winners.

## This year's grant recipients

SA

Common Ground Adelaide/University of Adelaide/Flinders University Adelaide

NT

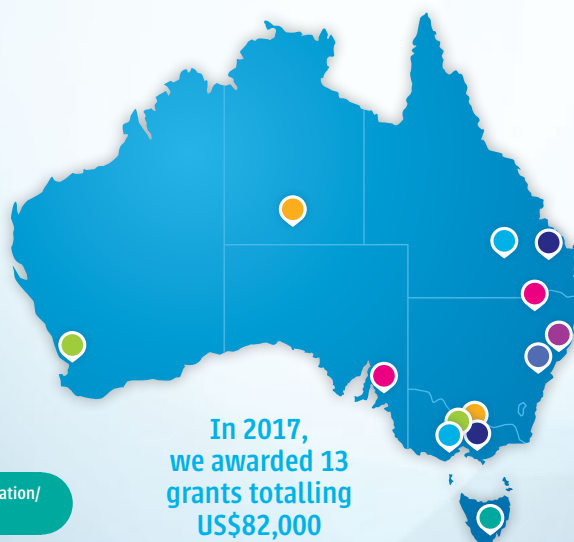
Oral Health Central Australia Health Service Alice Springs

WA

University of Western Australia - Refugee Health Service Sorrento

TAS

Dental South/South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation/ Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Hobart



In 2017,  
we awarded 13  
grants totalling  
US\$82,000

QLD

Roma Dental Centre Roma

University of Queensland Cherbourg

NSW

The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation Sydney

University of Newcastle Ourimbah

University of Sydney - The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health Central Northern NSW

VIC

Goulburn Valley Dental Group Shepparton

EACH Croydon

Sharonne Adele Zaks (Private Practice) Thornbury

University of Melbourne - Calvary Health Care Bethlehem Hospital Caulfield South

## Principles in Action Grant (US\$10,000 X 1)

**The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation:**  
 Perinatal Oral Health Education at the Royal Hospital for Women

A need was identified to provide the 4,200 mothers who give birth at The Royal with credible, easy to understand information (from a dental professional) on how to care for their own oral health during pregnancy, and steps they can take to influence and help improve the long term dental health of their baby. The project team will use the grant to develop and produce a sustainable source of perinatal oral health education, including a fact card and a shareable two-minute video. The card and link to the video will be provided to women as part of their antenatal care.



## Dental Practitioner Grants &amp; Dental Student Grants (US\$6,000 X 12)

**University of Newcastle: Ungooroo Dental Service**

The University of Newcastle has donated its Oral Health Van to the Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation, establishing a permanent facility for dental services and education to be provided to the local Indigenous communities living in the Upper and Lower Hunter regions of New South Wales. More than 200 patients will receive a comprehensive dental examination, diagnosis and treatment plan, restorative treatment where necessary and individualised oral health education from qualified dental professionals and dental students.


**Roma Dental Centre: Country Smiles**

The town of Roma has suffered from poor oral health for decades due to the end of the mining boom, its remote location and a lack of availability of dental professionals for preventative and interceptive care and oral health education.

Due to the rural location of the town, activities such as farming cattle, leisure sports and horse riding also result in a high amount of trauma patients presenting for dental treatment. Community service activities will be aimed at providing oral hygiene education and to reduce levels of dental phobia that currently exist in the community and to improve trauma prevention.

Dentists and auxiliary staff including an oral health therapist will visit schools, preschools, nursing homes, sporting clubs, the local Lions and Rotary Clubs and give oral health talks to improve oral health outcomes for almost 2,000 town members.

**Goulburn Valley Dental Group: Goulburn Valley Healthy Smiles**

A private dental practice located in Shepparton, the Goulburn Valley Dental Group's Healthy Smiles program seeks to provide primary school children living in regional areas of Victoria with access to education about the importance of tooth brushing, the damage of sugary and acidic drinks and to promote healthy eating. With the funding from their Community Service Grant, Goulburn Valley Dental Group will provide education sessions and take home education kits to over 1,500 students and parents to improve the community's oral health outcomes for years to come.



### University of Sydney - The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health: Community-led Oral Health Promotion for Aboriginal Children

Recognizing limited access to culturally appropriate oral health services and relevant oral health promotion, as well as a lack of daily oral hygiene practices, the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health will use the grant to support a school-based, culturally competent oral health promotion program in Central Northern NSW. Oral health education will be provided to Aboriginal primary school children to support daily in-school tooth brushing, structured water bottle programs and in-school water fountains, with fluoride varnish application each term. Kits including toothpaste, toothbrushes and water bottles will be given to the children to encourage daily tooth brushing and water consumption both at school and at home. Dental health education sessions will also be hosted for parents and guardians in a community setting to foster a collaborative approach to reducing caries in these children.



### EACH: Filling the Gaps in Croydon

Filling the Gaps in Croydon (Victoria) will provide dental screening to preschool and primary school-aged children in Croydon, offering early intervention and referral where needed.

The Croydon area has a large refugee population (65 per cent) as well as 37 per cent of children presenting with decayed, missing or filled deciduous or permanent teeth, which is higher than the Victorian average. Due to the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community, the project will translate key resources to educate and engage the CALD children and their families, as well as funding to engage an interpreter to support screenings.



### University of Queensland: Oral Health Alliance VIPs: People, Pathways and Priorities

The University of Queensland's project will address oral care needs of Brisbane's homeless population by providing these individuals with priority access to public dental services, through outreach, education and streamlined appointment pathways. Dental professionals and dental students will volunteer over 600 hours of their time to provide preventative screenings, treatment and educational courses to approximately 200 of Brisbane's homeless.

### Sharonne Adele Zaks (Private Practice): Trauma-informed Dental Care for Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault

This project will see the production of educational videos for both dental practitioners and sexual assault survivors. These videos will help dentists understand how to help survivors of sexual assault cope with dental fears. The video created for dentists will help dentists define trauma, discussing the neurobiological effects involved and how these can impact communication and patient responses.



### Common Ground Adelaide/University of Adelaide/Flinders University: Community Outreach Dental Program

The Community Outreach Dental Program will seek to ascertain the current oral health needs of the homeless community in the Adelaide area to determine the services that will be appropriate to complement and support existing dental services that are nearing full capacity. Further to this, the project will encourage collaborative learning for students (who volunteer) and ultimately lead to holistic health outcomes for this difficult to reach group of people.





### University of Melbourne - Calvary Health Care Bethlehem Hospital: Oral Care for Special Needs Patients with Progressive Neurological Conditions and in End-of-life Care

Bethlehem Hospital will continue to move towards the establishment of a permanent dental service at the Hospital. The dental service team provides specialist dental care to patients with progressive neurological conditions whose oral care is compromised, with intention to service patients with complex medical issues and special needs in future.



### Oral Health Central Australia Health Service: Increasing Oral Health Literacy for Urban Indigenous

The focus of this program is to introduce parents and carers from central Northern Territory to good oral health habits, so that these can be established within the family at the primary stage of socialisation. The objective is to use education to help reduce the rate of dental caries and oral disease among Indigenous children and families in the region over time.

### Dental South/South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation/Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania: Oral Health Promotion Visits

In partnership with the South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania, the project team at Dental South will provide school children with oral health promotion and preventative services. The team will educate children on good oral health practices for them to develop a good rapport with dental practitioners from a young age, in a familiar setting in the comfort of their school classroom. The core of the project will be education with follow-up dental care (provided by the RFDS) for those who are not already accessing it.



### University of Western Australia - Refugee Health Service: An integrated, multidisciplinary oral health education and prevention program for refugee children

Refugee children face considerable disadvantage and continue to experience alarmingly high rates of dental caries. A large majority of children at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children/ Perth Children's Hospital Refugee Health Service (RHS) receive referrals for dental extractions under general anaesthesia as part of pain relief, with little or no resources dedicated towards oral health education and prevention. The recent Syrian refugee arrivals exemplify the huge dental burden, as most of them have been without health and dental care for up to four years. This grant will provide refugee families and children with much needed oral hygiene material along with access to oral health education within the multidisciplinary setting of the RHS.

#### WRIGLEY Company Foundation

##### About the Wrigley Company Foundation

Established in 1987, the Wrigley Company Foundation (WCF) aspires to support People & Planet through oral health education, environmental stewardship, and local community partnerships. For 30 years, Wrigley has supported independent, clinical research into the benefits of chewing gum including saliva stimulation and plaque acid neutralisation. The EXTRA® Oral Healthcare Program supports oral health professionals in the promotion of oral health benefits of chewing sugarfree gum as part of a regular oral care routine.



##### About the Australian Dental Health Foundation

The ADHF, together with its dedicated supporters and volunteers, is helping disadvantaged Australians obtain good oral health through its research, education and dental aid projects.  
[www.adhf.org.au](http://www.adhf.org.au)