

# Media Release

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Victorian  
Oral  
Health  
Alliance

## **BUDGET FAILS VULNERABLE VICTORIANS**

The Victorian State Budget does nothing to address some of the worst gaps in the Victorian dental health system, according to the Victorian Oral Health Alliance (VOHA).

VOHA spokesperson Tony McBride said the budget failed thousands of Victorians most in need of immediate dental care and was “bordering on wilful neglect”.

Mr McBride said the budget offered less per person this year than in previous budgets, and that the unchanged dental treatment targets presented by the State were effectively a decrease of 3.45 per cent in the number of treatments, which would be available under the new Budget.

“The budget figures indicate that only the same number of patients is to be treated in 2008/09 as in 2007/08, when waiting lists still hover around two years for people who desperately need to be treated now.”

“The ratio of emergency attendance treatment continues to be greater than general attendance treatment, resulting in the most at need not receiving timely dental care when they require it,” Mr McBride said.

“With 4 per cent inflation and an increase of only 1 per cent in proposed dental spending, the Victorian Government appears to be happy to reduce its funding of dental services offered to our growing population.

“There are about 1.5 million people in Victoria eligible for public dental services but only one-in-five of them, 305,000 people<sup>1</sup> are targeted for treatment. This means that the government intends for these people to only receive treatment once every five years.

“This borders on wilful neglect when we now know so much about the devastating impact of delaying necessary dental treatment.”

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The VOHA website allows Victorians to see how long the dental waiting lists are in their area - visit [www.voha.org](http://www.voha.org) to see the most current figures the State has released – June 2007.

Victorians can also advocate for improved access to public dental services via letter or email to their local MP or State Health Minister via the website

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### **Further information:**

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<sup>1</sup> Human Services Service Delivery 2008-09 page 96