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Long waiting times for dentures affect Victoria's most vulnerable citizens

Some of the State's most vulnerable citizens are waiting more than three years to get dentures through the public dental system.

The President of the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch, Dr Greg Morris, said these people are facing reduced quality of life, without the ability to eat properly and to maintain their appearance.

"It is disgraceful that Victorian's senior citizens and those who are missing their natural teeth, are being deprived their most basic rights – to ability to eat properly. Victoria's public waiting times for dentures are a disgrace and the delays for public dental services are longer in rural areas of Victoria," he said.

Dr Morris said that the reduction in some of the waiting times across the State is a positive sign that the Government is taking some initiative to address the appalling state of public dental care but more has to be done.

The longest waiting times for dentures are at Wangaratta (48 months), Warrnambool (46 months), East Bentleigh (43 months), and Ringwood East and Eltham (each 42 months).

Dr Morris said that it is time the State Government set realistic targets to cut dental waiting times.

"It is noted that the figures from last March to June have shown a slight decrease in some waiting times, but there is still a lot of work to be done," he said.

"Of the 65 Government public dental clinics, people served by 49 of the clinics have to wait more than a year for dentures. Many have to wait over two years, which is unacceptable, often leading to general health problems, discomfort and self-consciousness.

"The Government should be able to set waiting time targets which are realistic. In our view, no one should have to wait more than six months for any dental care they require."

With less than eight weeks to the State election, the ADAVB and the Victorian Oral Health Alliance are encouraging all Victorians to get behind this important issue. VOHA has an advocacy site – www.voha.org – to help inform Victorians about public dental issues and allow them to directly raise their concerns by sending letters and emails to local MPs and the State Health Minister.

Area	Waiting time at June '06
Wangaratta	48 months
Warrnambool	46 months
East Bentleigh	43 months
Ringwood East	42 months
Eltham	42 months
Echuca	41 months
Ballarat	39 months
Churchill	39 months

Moe	39 months
Broadmeadows	34 months
Hoppers Crossing	34 months
Bendigo	33 months
Frankston	33 months

For further information on the public waiting times for dentures and the VOHA, or to arrange an interview with an ADAVB spokesperson please contact:

Porter Novelli Melbourne

Sarah Harvie
Phone: (03) 9289 9555
Mobile: 0402 217 956
Email: sharvie@porternovelli.com.au

Tanya Jayasuriya
Phone: (03) 9289 9555
Mobile: 0422 155 002
Email: tjayasuriya@porternovelli.com.au