



# Dental volunteers set to tackle the gap in oral health care and education

## The Wrigley Company Foundation and Australian Dental Association Foundation congratulate the recipients of the 2016 Community Service Grants

In recent years, while oral health in Australia has seen significant improvements<sup>1</sup>, this positive trend is starting to decline, particularly in remote and disadvantaged communities across Australia.<sup>2</sup> Differences between the oral health of children in cities and rural communities is widening, with dental decay more than twice as likely to affect children living in remote parts of Australia than in major cities.<sup>3</sup> Every day, Australians living in remote or disadvantaged communities encounter a number of barriers to good oral health, such as limited poor diet, access to dental facilities, financial strain, and reduced health literacy, all of which greatly impact the health equity of those living in this country.<sup>3</sup>

*“The ADAF 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 volunteer initiatives are helping first-hand to curb the growing rate of dental decay and disease in this country.”*

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

*“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*

*Wrigley’s EXTRA® Oral Healthcare Program operates in 47 countries worldwide, where initiatives such as the Community Service Grants support communities where oral care support is needed most.”*

*— Patrick Gantier, General Manager, Wrigley Pacific*

Now in its sixth year, the Wrigley Company Foundation and Australian Dental Association Foundation (ADAF) Community Service Grants program is a fundamental initiative that works to close the gap in access to oral care services and education across Australia.

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

This year, the Wrigley Company Foundation has awarded a total of US\$82,000 in grant funding to 11 worthy projects, and is excited to announce the 2016 winners.

## This year’s grant recipients

**SA**  
Dental Outreach, Adelaide

**QLD**  
STEPS Group Australia, Caloundra  
Griffith University, Cherbourg  
Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service, Toowoomba



- NSW**
- Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Sydney
- University of Newcastle, Gosford and Wyong
- Carevan Foundation, Western Sydney
- VIC**
- Carevan Foundation, Albury, Wodonga
- University of Melbourne, Melbourne
- Plenty Valley Community Health, Epping

Principles in Action Grant (US\$10,000 X 4)

**Cerebral Palsy Alliance: Oral Health E-Learning Program for carers and disability workers supporting people with cerebral palsy**

The Cerebral Palsy Alliance aims to continue their work in supporting disability workers, carers and those living with cerebral palsy. Expanding on an education program funded by the 2015 Community Service Grants program, in 2016 the Alliance will develop a professional, targeted and interactive oral health and hygiene e-learning program to educate more than 500 carers, disability workers and parents of people living with cerebral palsy in rural and regional NSW. The grant funding will help better educate them on how to best support and address the oral health and hygiene needs of those they care for.



**Carevan Foundation: Sun Smiles**

The Carevan Foundation is a non-profit organisation that provides dental care for socially and economically disadvantaged primary school children in rural NSW and Victoria. In 2016, the Sun Smiles project will see more than 60 dental volunteers conduct school visits, dental screenings and oral health education sessions. These sessions aim to improve the oral health literacy and hygiene skills of rural primary school children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Albury, Wodonga, and Western Sydney.



**Dental Outreach: Aged Care Program**

Oral health for the elderly plays an essential role in their quality of life and overall health and wellbeing. The Dental Outreach Aged Care Program aims to improve the oral health outcomes of nursing home residents living in remote South Australia, with a particular focus on residents who require greater care from nursing home staff. Having received funding for a similar project for the previous two years, this grant will see volunteers continue to address issues affecting nursing home residents by providing crucial oral care to those most in need.



**Plenty Valley Community Health: Children's Dental Program**

The Children's Dental Program run by dental student volunteers, will support children's groups in metropolitan Victoria by providing school dental check-ups to more than 1,100 school children. The project aims to help these children establish positive oral hygiene habits from a young age, through interactive tooth brushing demonstrations and oral hygiene and nutrition education sessions.



## Dental Practitioner Grants & Dental Student Grants (US\$6,000 X 7)

### University of Newcastle: Integrating oral hygiene into Geriatric Rehabilitation Wards

The University of Newcastle's project will address oral care needs of older patients in rehabilitation, providing up to 100 patients with an oral health risk assessment and teeth or denture cleaning. Oral health education will complement the project and will be provided to patients, their carers and to nursing staff in the geriatric wards, to ensure oral health is prioritised for these patients in the future.



### Cerebral Palsy Alliance: Oral Health and Hygiene Education Program

An additional grant has been awarded to the Cerebral Palsy Alliance to purchase DAC Universal to better service people living with cerebral palsy. The DAC Universal is an advanced, state of the art piece of equipment allowing the Alliance's dentists and hygienists to operate on patients both in metropolitan and regional NSW in a safe and hazard free environment.

### Griffith University: Cherbourg Volunteer Dental Clinic

With the nearest public dental clinic over an hour away, the Indigenous people of Cherbourg in Queensland experience a lack of access to dental treatment and oral health education, resulting in an increased incidence of dental disease and associated chronic diseases. Through a week long dental clinic run by volunteer dental students, the Cherbourg Volunteer Dental Clinic will provide much needed oral health care and education to the predominantly Indigenous community in rural Queensland. The clinic will aim to ultimately transition the community from emergency oral health intervention to preventative dental health.



### STEPS Group Australia: Pathways Area of Learning – increasing oral health education in an assisted living environment

Individuals with a disability are more likely to suffer from lower levels of oral health care.<sup>4</sup> STEPS Group Australia works to deliver supportive learning environments to increase oral health literacy of individuals living with developmental and intellectual disabilities. The 2016 grant will help educate peer health coaches and dental ambassadors who support people living with developmental and intellectual disability. Through oral health education and hygiene instruction, they can help increase the oral health literacy of individuals, aiming to increase their ability to live independently.

## University of Melbourne: Dental screening for vulnerable children

University of Melbourne's Dental School has a long history of providing oral health promotion across the community. It has witnessed first-hand the need for screening and referral programs to be introduced to at-risk and disadvantaged communities. With grant funding, the Melbourne Dental School will provide dental screening and oral health education to metropolitan Victorian primary school children, specifically of multi-cultural backgrounds. The dental screenings and oral health education sessions will encourage children to take control of their oral health from a young age.



## Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service: Supporting Strong Smiles

As a prior grant recipient, Supporting Strong Smiles will expand on previous projects to provide oral health education to an additional 800 primary school children in disadvantaged areas in Queensland. The grant will help them to establish positive oral hygiene and dietary practices early in life. Students of three local primary schools from predominantly disadvantaged and Indigenous backgrounds will be educated, so that they will carry the lessons of good oral health care as they grow older.



## University of Melbourne: Powering Future Smiles

This project run predominantly by dental student volunteers aims to provide oral health education to primary school students from diverse backgrounds in metropolitan Victoria, through interactive and age-friendly activities. With dental decay high among Australian children, this project hopes to instil positive oral health habits in these children from a young age that will serve them well throughout their lives.



## 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 more than 25 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.

For more information on the Wrigley Company Foundation and ADAF Community Service Grants program visit [www.extraoralhealthcareprogram.com.au](http://www.extraoralhealthcareprogram.com.au)

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014. Canberra: AIHW.

2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016. Oral health and dental care in Australia: key facts and figures 2015. Dental statistics and research series. Canberra: AIHW.

3. Bishop, L.M. and Laverty, M.J. (2015): Filling the gap: Disparities in oral health access and outcomes between metropolitan and remote and rural Australia. Canberra: Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia.

4. J. Owens, T.A. Dyer & K. Mistry (2010): People with learning disabilities and specialist services BDJ 208 pp. 203-205.