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Sunshine Coast dental wait lists continue to improve

When Gwen Tremlett visited the Kawana oral health clinic for a dental check-up, she was very impressed with the service.

Mrs Tremlett was one of the 39,234 patients of all ages who received publicly-funded dental care within the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) in 2014/15.

SCHHS provides a range of publicly-funded oral health services to residents who meet eligibility criteria for public dental services.

Mrs Tremlett said the oral health clinic staff provided her with an excellent level of care.

“I have never been to such a helpful and caring dentist in my 76 years,” Mrs Tremlett said.

“My husband has many costly dental issues and having access to this free public dental service means a great deal to us, and has been a great help to us financially,” she said.

Since May 2014 there have been no patients waiting on the general care waiting list for longer than two years.

The health service has five adult oral health clinics which provide general and emergency dental care and also school dental clinics and vans throughout the region for all students in prep through to Year 10.

SCHHS Director of Oral Health Dr Elaine Mawdsley said a number of initiatives had contributed to the improved waiting times.

“Patients who are identified as in need of more urgent care are assessed at our oral health clinics and provided with the right care in a timely manner,” Dr Mawdsley said.

“In addition to the treatment provided by oral health staff at our clinics and mobile dental vans, the dental voucher scheme offers emergency patients the opportunity to see a private dentist, thus enabling public dentists to devote more of their time to treating patients from the waiting lists.

“It also allows patients to have a check-up or have dentures made by a private dental practitioner.”

(Continued over page.)
During the 2014-15 financial year, the following patient care was provided:

- 2,178 adult patients received dentures at the oral health clinics or at a private prosthetist.
- 14,528 adult patients received emergency dental care at the oral health clinics or at a private dental practice.
- 9,445 adult patients received a general check up and all treatment required at the oral health clinics or at a private dental practice.
- 3,069 children aged 0-15 received treatment.

Chief Executive, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Mr Hegarty said the SCHHS was committed to ensuring eligible local residents continue to have access to oral health services when and where they need it most.

**Eligibility**

For adults to be eligible for publicly funded oral health care they must be a Queensland resident and where applicable, in receipt of benefits from either a:

- Pensioner Concession Card issued by the Department of Veteran's Affairs
- Pensioner Concession Card issued by Centrelink
- Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- Queensland Seniors Card.

For residents issued with these cards and currently receiving benefits, eligibility is extended to their dependents named on the card.

People not fitting the criteria listed above must seek dental care from a private dental practitioner.

Oral health service eligibility for children was extended by the state government in January 2014 to include children aged 2 – 17 who receive the federal government’s Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Even if your child is not eligible for this schedule they still receive dental care at no charge with the SCHHS oral health service until they complete year 10.

To find out if your child is eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, contact Medicare on 132 011 or look online at myGov: [https://my.gov.au/](https://my.gov.au/)

**For enquiries about free oral health services, phone 1300 300 850.**

**ENDS**

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