

The National Dental Foundation is a charitable organisation that facilitates the provision of pro bono dental treatment to those in our society who cannot access timely dental care.

History

The National Dental Foundation was created and founded in October 2004 by Mervin Saultry and funded by his company, Dental Innovations Pty Ltd, from 2004 through to 2012. The NDF was incorporated on 14th October 2004 with the assistance of Freehills. Freehills assessed the merit of the volunteer dental program plan and agreed to provide extensive pro bono legal services.

The NDF has been alleviating pain and restoring smiles since 2005. The volunteer dental program started in February 2005 in Victoria and grew to a nationwide organisation with State Coordinators across most states. In 2006, Dr David Digges, who was involved with a charity caring for street kids and homeless people, was approached and invited to join as State Chairman for NSW. Dr Digges assisted in overcoming the fragmentation of volunteer dental work making it more efficient and attracted resources to support large scale charity work by dentists. He achieved this and also progressed to become the Chairman of the Board.

In 2012, following recognition by the Federal Government of the value provided by the Foundation in delivering treatment to disadvantaged people across Australia, the Foundation received a 3-year grant to enable it to expand its activities.

In 2015, Pacific Smiles Group was proud to announce it had become the Major Sponsor of the National Dental Foundation for three years, ensuring that the Foundation was able to continue coordinating much needed pro bono dental treatment to those who may not otherwise be able to access dental care. To date, over 5,000 patients have benefitted from the NDF's initiatives, with dental practices, practitioners and staff volunteering their facilities, equipment and time to assist those who need it most.

Structure

The National Dental Foundation has received ATO Endorsement as a Public Benevolent Institution and is a Registered Charity in all States.

Each state has a part time State Coordinator working under the supervision of the National Coordinator, who reports directly to the Board.

Delivery of services is directed by State Advisory Committee Members under the direction of a State Chairman. Each State Chairman is a Director and a Board Member.

The Chairman of the NDF is Dr David Digges.

Objectives

The objectives of the National Dental Foundation are:

- To harness the fellowship and goodwill of all dental teams and associated dental industry in Australia to provide pro bono dental services to the under privileged members of our society through donation of equipment, materials and personal endeavour.
- To assist all dental groups working in areas of need by engaging in fundraising activities and collating and distributing the donation of resources.
- Providing an ongoing repository for the knowledge and experience gained in performing dental charitable activities.
- Facilitating the work of dental industry volunteers with that of established charitable organisations already engaged and working long-term with those in genuine need.

Our Work

Dental treatment is delivered to deserving patients by working closely with many Australian charities to identify those in our communities who will benefit from a positive dental intervention. The Foundation provides a well organised and efficient platform to enable volunteer dental professionals, including dentists, dental assistants, hygienists, oral health therapists, dental technicians and specialists, to deliver free dental treatment.

The NDF harnesses the support of the wider dental industry to enable dental teams across Australia to help those in need.

The NDF offers volunteers a great degree of flexibility in how they can be involved. Practice owners are encouraged to volunteer their practices for use in a Dental Rescue Day, when local charities refer their clients for basic dental treatment. Dentists, hygienists, oral health therapists and dental assistants can offer their services to work in a volunteering practice.

Alternatively, a dentist may choose to adopt a patient who has extensive dental needs and may need multiple appointments to achieve a desirable outcome. There have been many cases where continuity of treatment has dramatically changed the life of the patient by giving them the self-esteem and confidence to move to a positive future.

Supporters

Being an all-inclusive charity the NDF has been able to win the support of the ADIA, the peak business organisation representing manufacturers and suppliers of dental products. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Australian Dental Association, both nationally and in the state offices, which provides invaluable support to our State Coordinators.

The Major Sponsor of the NDF is [Pacific Smiles Group](#), which has funded operations since 2015.

[Southern Cross Dental](#) labs provide pro bono lab services to our volunteer dentists when treating referred patients.

[Henry Schein Halas](#) provides materials to volunteer practices to assist with the provision of treatment.

[Praktika](#) donated use of its cloud based practice management software, which allows the Foundation to accurately record treatment and report on outcomes.

Other supporters have included – Colgate, Dentavision, Dental Care Australia, SDI, Alldent, Sirona, Gunz Dental, Dentsply, Ivoclar Vivadent, Dental Deals, BOQ Specialist Banking.