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NATIONAL DENTAL FOUNDATION TO USE ORAL HEALTH GRANT TO ASSIST VULNERABLE AUSTRALIANS

*Volunteer dental program helps restore confidence and self-esteem
among vulnerable Australians*

As part of the Australian Dental Association's Dental Health Week 2011 (August 1 – 7), the National Dental Foundation (NDF) NSW, will receive a grant from the Australian Dental Association (ADA) and The Wrigley Foundation, to support its upcoming Dental Volunteer Day.

Nearly 40 per centⁱ of Australians cannot access basic dental care when they need it, with many of the worst affected coming from low-income or homeless communities, where poor oral health is widespread and waiting lists are often measured in years.

Dr. David Digges, NDF Federal Chairman and dentist at Bellevue Hill Dental, said that a growing number of Australians cannot access quality dental care due to a lack of financial means.

"The National Dental Foundation provides an opportunity for dental professionals and their staff to donate their time to provide care to those that would struggle to access care independently," said Dr. Digges. "Poor dental health can negatively impact your speech, presentation and appearance, resulting in low self esteem; this can be a real barrier for people that are working to become productive and self-supporting members of the community again.

"Twice a year the NDF runs Dental Volunteer Days in NSW, where we connect patients from local charities with dentists that volunteer to open their surgeries to provide treatment for these vulnerable people. "The Wrigley grant will have an enormous impact on our patients – the care they receive through our Dental Volunteer Days provides patients with the confidence they need to rebuild their lives, seek employment and return to an active community life."

NDF NSW Dental Volunteer Days are run in collaboration with charities including: Youth off the Streets, Barnardos, Phoebe House, Salvation Army, St Vincent's de Paul, the Marian Centre and nearly 50 other charities nationwide.

The grant will help the NDF transport patients to the volunteer dental surgeries and provide dental materials across 20 practices, including restorative materials, anaesthetic gloves, masks and general dental disposable items.

NDF NSW was one of seven grassroots community service dental projects to receive a US\$5,000 Wrigley ADA Community Services Grant.

Robert Boyd-Boland, CEO of the ADA, praised the NDF NSW for its commitment to community oral health and volunteerism: "Ensuring access to dental care to all Australians should be a priority, which is why it is so pleasing to see the number and quality of applications that we received in the pilot year of our partnership with The Wrigley Foundation.

"The NDF is a remarkable organisation that has created a model that makes a real difference to the community, with minimal interruption to its volunteers' daily routines – which in turn fosters further volunteering. It is this kind of clever, simple solution to a long-standing issue that I believe has the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of some of our most at-risk communities."

The Wrigley Foundation ADA Community Service Grants program is designed to help improve access to oral health and oral health education for some of our neediest communities. This year's grants will be used to help a number of programs focussing on the oral health of Indigenous, special needs and homeless or low income communities.

"I know that the NDF's Dental Volunteer Days are making a real difference to the oral health of people that often 'slip between the cracks'," said Hamish Thomson, Wrigley Pacific Managing Director. "Since 2007, NDF NSW dental volunteers have more than quadrupled, and last year 50 NGO's and 120 Case Workers were involved in the program, which is a huge effort.

Wrigley is proud of its long relationship with Australian dentists and we firmly believe that we can help make a real difference to some of our most disadvantaged communities via our grassroots community grants program."

ADA Dental Health Week
www.dentalhealthweek.com.au

ENDS

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National Dental Foundation

National Dental Foundation (NDF) NSW Dental Volunteer Program was established in 2007 following a pilot in 2006. NDF NSW provides a mechanism of oral health professionals to give their time to provide care to vulnerable persons that have difficulty accessing dental care independently. It is targeted specifically at people working towards becoming productive and self-supporting members of the community again, where dental treatment might improve dental health, speech, presentation and self esteem.

www.nationaldentalfoundation.org.au

Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company Foundation

The Wrigley Company has a rich history of giving back to the communities where we live and work. Established in 1987 to formalise the giving of grants and donations, the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company Foundation has distributed more than USD\$47 million to non-profit organisations around the world. The mission of the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company Foundation is to improve the health of people and our planet through sustainable initiatives focused in oral health and environmental stewardship as well as local needs that ensure a healthy community. Wrigley provides support not only with financial resources, but with the care and compassion of their 16,000 associates who have a passion for service and are provided opportunities throughout the year to exhibit their generous spirit. www.wrigley.com.au

Australian Dental Association (ADA)

The Australian Dental Association is an organisation of dentists which has as its aim the encouragement of the health of the public and the promotion of the art and science of dentistry. There are Branches of the Association in all States and Territories with over 90% of dentists in Australia as members. For further information about the ADA, dental hygiene or oral health, please visit the ADA at www.ada.org.au

ⁱ *Fair Dental Care for Low Income Earners: National report on the state of dental care*, Australian Council of Social Service, Information Paper, 2006. Available at http://acoss.org.au/images/uploads/1562_Fair_dental_care_final.pdf