

MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE DAY Friday 14th August 2009

THEME:

OLDER AUSTRALIANS - DENTAL HYGIENISTS CARING FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

Australian dental hygienists are joining with their international colleagues to celebrate the valuable contribution dental hygienists provide to the health and well being of our older citizens through the provision of preventive oral care services.

Good oral health is an integral part of overall general health and the dental hygienists' of Australia are committed to improving the oral health of older Australians whether they are living independently in their own home or community dwelling or in a nursing home or supported facility.

The needs of older Australians differ from those of other age cohorts and dental hygienists are specifically trained to provide preventive oral care and advice to assist the older Australian to achieve and maintain good oral health and a functioning dentition throughout their life.

The Dental Hygienists' Association of Australia encourages older Australians to visit their dental surgery for regular checkups and their dental hygienist for regular preventive care. Early recognition of dental disease and early intervention is the most effective way of ensuring a high level of oral health and quality of life is maintained.

Older Australians living in nursing homes or supported facilities can also access regular preventive care as dental hygienist services are not restricted to a dental practice setting. Dental hygienists visit nursing homes to provide preventive services to residents as well as education to carers including families and nursing home staff.

As oral health professionals the dental hygienists' of Australia welcome the Federal Government initiative to screen and monitor the oral health status of nursing home residents. Due to their specific training in aged care dental hygienists are the preferred professional to provide preventive care to older Australians and coordinate and run education workshops for carers of the elderly.

Sue Aldenhoven

President DHAA Inc.