

# Special Needs Grants for Dental Treatment – Improving Adequacy and Accessibility

## Wellbeing Budget 2022

**The Government is investing \$125.804 million to increase the support available to beneficiaries and low-income families for immediate and essential dental treatment.**

From December 2022, the limit to Special Needs Grants for dental treatment will increase from \$300 to \$1,000. This is non-recoverable so it doesn't need to be paid back. In addition to this, the requirement for the need to have arisen from an emergency will be removed.

This will help 40,000-50,000 people each year receive the dental treatment they need without being put into debt. People will also be able to receive this treatment before their issue significantly deteriorates or begins causing them pain.

- This initiative will improve both oral health and wider health outcomes and will reduce debt for those on low incomes.
- The \$300 limit has not been increased for 25 years, meaning many low-income people have not been receiving enough help with dental treatment. During 2021, approximately 40,000 people received an Advance Payment of Benefit to fully meet their emergency dental costs, at an average cost of \$870.
- The requirement for the treatment to have arisen from an emergency situation means that people are not eligible unless they are in pain, which means they must wait until their issue significantly deteriorates before receiving treatment. This change will allow people to receive treatment before they reach this point.
- There is no longer a limit on the number of Special Needs Grants for dental treatment a client can access in a 52-week period. People who require multiple treatments to treat an issue will be able to do so, up until they have reached the \$1,000 maximum limit.

Costs (operating) \$m	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 and outyears	TOTAL
	-	18.090	33.713	35.874	38.127	<b>125.804</b>