

25 June 2020

## Australian Dental Health Foundation

# MEDIA RELEASE

### 2020 Indigenous dental hygienist and oral health study grant recipients announced

The Australian Dental Health Foundation (ADHF) and Dental Hygienists Association of Australia (DHAA) are delighted to announce the awarding of three study grants to support Indigenous undergraduate dental hygienist and Indigenous oral health therapy students in their studies.

Now in its seventh year, this year's successful study grant recipients will receive \$5,000 each plus mentoring services by DHAA, with each grant offering funding that may be used to cover costs of dental equipment, textbooks and financially support students while they are on placements or living away from home.

The ADHF and DHAA are proud to announce the successful students for 2020 are:

- Taneecia Walker, University of Sydney
- Kellie Gleeson, University of Newcastle
- Jasmine Miller, University of Melbourne

ADHF Chairman Dr Rick Olive AM RFD, extended his congratulations to the three recipients, saying that "all of our successful recipients are passionate about enhancing the oral health of the Indigenous and wider community.

"The Foundation hopes that the grants will provide recipients with valuable assistance to help them complete their courses so they can embark on delivering care which reduces the inequality that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

"We know that the delivery of dental care to Indigenous Australians is enhanced if that care is provided by a professionally qualified Indigenous practitioner."

Aboriginal health reports have found that Indigenous Australians are more likely than other Australians to have multiple caries and untreated dental disease, and less likely to have received preventive dental care. <sup>1</sup> The oral health status of Indigenous Australians, like all Australians, is influenced by many factors including a tendency towards unfavourable dental visiting patterns associated with accessibility, cost, and a lack of cultural awareness by some service providers. <sup>2 3</sup>

DHAA CEO Bill Suen also congratulated the recipients, saying: "The DHAA is proud to be able to help fund study grants and mentoring support to these undergraduate students during their university journey.

"It is very important to have close linkage between the university and the profession. The DHAA mentoring will provide the link to support the recipients in developing their leadership skills in preparation for their entry to the oral health workforce. I look forward to getting to know them better through this part of the award."

**Interviews available with:**

Dr Rick Olive, AM RFD, Chairman, Australian Dental Health Foundation 0427 155 702

Mr Bill Suen, CEO, Dental Hygienists Association of Australia 0412 831 669

Australian Dental Association Media Advisor Jenny Barlass 0484 869 086

**Note to Editors:**

The ADHF's mission is to address the inequality between those Australians who can access the dental care they need, and those who can't. We want better access to quality dental care for all Australians regardless of their financial, geographic or social situation.

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> AHMAC (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council) 2017. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2017 Report. Canberra: AHMAC cited in AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2019. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/den/231/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/summary>

<sup>2</sup> COAG (Council of Australian Governments), Health Council 2015. Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015-2024. Adelaide: South Australian Dental Service cited in AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2019. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/den/231/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/summary>

<sup>3</sup> NACDH (National Advisory Council on Dental Health) 2012. Report of the National Advisory Council on Dental Health 2012. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing cited in AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2019. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/den/231/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/summary>