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## SA-developed oral health range hits local shelves

All proceeds from a South Australian-designed and developed toothbrush and toothpaste range will be reinvested in the Australian Dental Foundation's oral care and education programs.



Australian Dental Foundation chairperson Dr Greg Miller. Photo: Australian Dental Foundation.

Nearly 10 years after the Australian Dental Foundation became a registered charity, the organisation's SA-based chair has launched a new range of toothbrushes and toothpaste, with proceeds to support efforts to improve oral health outcomes nationally.

The range, which includes three toothbrushes for different ages and a variety of toothpaste flavours, is available at Woolworths stores in Adelaide as well as some specialist dentists across the state. Toothbrushes cost \$2.20, while the toothpaste is \$4.40.

It's part of chairperson Dr Greg Miller's plans to distribute three million toothbrushes to those in need and to support the charity's goals of democratising oral healthcare services.

For Dr Miller, it's the next stage in his 15-year journey to make dentist services more accessible to Australians who otherwise cannot afford to see oral health specialists.

It's something he realised after visiting a nursing home and discovering oral health neglect in older clients.

"There's this big misapprehension that everyone brushes their teeth twice a day and that everyone has access to toothbrushes and toothpaste. That actually isn't the case," Dr Miller told *InDaily*.

"There's large swathes of the population that...don't have access to toothbrushes and toothpaste.

"We had two goals – to raise funds for our operations and to get toothbrushes and toothpaste out to people because we know if they have them, if they're taught to use them, then there's a good chance that we can eliminate disease. These are the biggest preventable diseases in the world."

Though Dr Miller has been running outreach programs to underserved communities for about 15 years, the ADF was only registered as a charity in 2015. The organisation now runs a suite of oral health programs, including aged care outreach services, the My School Dentist program for onsite oral healthcare and education and a 24/7 hotline for emergency dental concerns.

The [ADF](#) is now Australia's largest dental charity, and has clocked more than three million hours of free dental checks and procedures.

The toothbrushes and toothpaste are the next piece of the puzzle for the ADF, and follow a two-year journey to design the products according to Dr Miller who said the "new partnership with Woolworths will allow us to grow and expand".

"We'd approached Woolworths and said 'we're a bit like Cancer Council sunscreen and we think we've got a spot to play in the market'," he said.

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"There's the big incumbents – your major brands – and they take a really big slice of the market both in toothbrushes and toothpaste, and they're multinationals, their money is going overseas.

"We're niche. We can offer a product that is cheaper, and that's going to fuel our operations."

Distribution plans also include giving the brushes to at-risk children for free, who have a "high decay risk".

“We’d really like the public to get behind the product and start supporting it, because the more they support it the more they can help us and we really want to go national,” Dr Miller said.

He told *InDaily* that “historically, people have fallen through the cracks and nobody has noticed”.

“There’s a need for programs like ours to be better supported. At the moment we get no federal or state government support,” he said.

“If you look at the at-risk cohort in kids, we see kids below the age of six having holes on their teeth, and a lot of the children that had holes on their baby teeth as they get to 12 they then have one or more holes on their adult teeth.

“They unfortunately get caught in this spiral of disease, decay, and don’t understand they need to get a dental service.”