



# Become a dental champion with the OneOneTwelve initiative

By (Hon) A/Prof Mina Borromeo

The OneOneTwelve initiative ([oneonetwelve.org](http://oneonetwelve.org)) is raising awareness and tackling the oral health of Australians with disability. We have partnered with the ADAVB to find dental champions to take part in this exciting initiative, which is supported by a range of relevant CPD activities. The campaign will be launched with a 24-hour track run on 11 and 12 March 2023 to encourage you to accept the challenge: One person with a disability to be managed by One dental health practitioner for Twelve months pro bono!

The Victorian State Disability Plan (2022-2026)<sup>1</sup> estimates that 17% of Victorians live with a disability, a third of whom also require support with daily self-care, such as their oral hygiene. Unfortunately, 13% of the 4.4 million Australians with a disability are on public dental waiting lists and 28% either don't go to a dentist or delay treatment because they simply cannot afford it. The significant lack of trained oral health clinicians to manage the ongoing and sometimes complex needs of these people is concerning<sup>2</sup>. There are only 24 registered specialists in special needs dentistry (one specialist per 183,333 people with a disability). However, in our view, there are 24,180 registered oral health practitioners who have a unique opportunity to become dental champions in the disability space!

The sad truth is that even today, many Australians with disability still don't receive the care they deserve. I was involved in a case where a young individual with autism had 16 extractions under general anaesthetic because his referral letter read "difficult to manage in the dental chair". It was clear when speaking to his family that this young person did not wish to have any teeth extracted. He went from a buzzing young man with ambitions, to someone who dropped out of school and refused to leave his bedroom. The tragedy of this

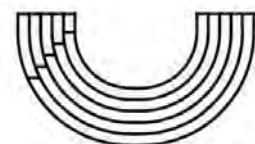
case alone highlights that a seismic shift is required. We have moved away from a medical model of healthcare to a relational, human rights model that recognises dignity, acknowledges the interdisciplinary environment and web of relationships around a person with disability, assumes capacity first (rather than incapacity) and centres on a concept of inclusive equality. As a profession, we are uniquely placed to make a real difference in the lives of people with disability.

We understand that many of you will come with different experiences in the disability space. Some will have lots, while others may have none. Some will have uncertainties based on past experiences. This is why we've partnered with the Disability Oral Health Collaboration to develop CPD sessions to support you through the 12-month challenge. The CPD will bring you up to date with the disability sector, including learning from those with lived experience, understanding the roles of allied health professionals, navigating the NDIS, steps to follow when engaging with supporters and existing support plans, and more. It will kick off with a chance to meet like-minded champions who've signed up and those who have experience caring for people with disabilities from both within and outside the dental profession. The support will be ongoing and will provide

opportunities for mentoring to assist you in working with the person with disability with whom you have been matched.

In short, make sure you sign up ([oneonetwelve.org](http://oneonetwelve.org)) and join us at the launch on 11-12 March 2023 at the Box Hill Athletics Club. Clinicians and people with a disability can sign on, as can those who wish to come and join us on the day. You can come at any time over the 24-hour period – come in your PJs and do some night laps! Dust off your running shoes and run or walk with me so we can, as a collective, remove the 'us' and 'them' from the disability conversation and become a 'we'!

1. State Government of Victoria, 2002, Inclusive Victoria – State disability plan 2022-2026, Victorian Government, accessed 28 October 2022, [vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan](http://vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan)
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022, Oral health and dental care in Australia, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 07 July 2022, [aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/introduction](http://aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/introduction)



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