

# Organisations in limbo as they await funding news

by SIMON GARNER

ORGANISATIONS providing vital support to homeless seniors in Victoria fear a bleak future.

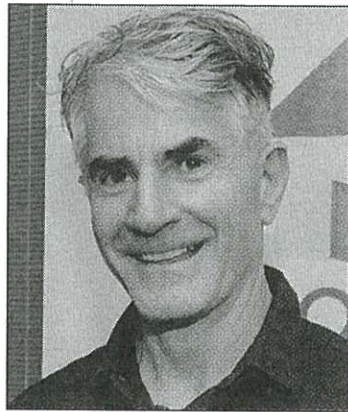
It is uncertain whether the state government will extend Department of Human Services funding for Homelessness Innovation Action Projects.

Seven projects were funded in the previous government's 2014-15 budget, but there is no indication from the new government whether support for the projects will continue.

One of those funded until June 30 this year is Regional Outreach for Elderly Homeless, undertaken by Wintringham Specialist Aged Care.

Chief executive officer Bryan Lipmann said the project was running very effectively.

"We reproduced a successful city model to regional areas to



JEFF FIEDLER

provide people with support," Mr Lipmann said.

"It's one of the most exciting projects for us in the past 20 years. It's extraordinarily cost-efficient and has had wonderful results.

"It's providing a service in the bush that didn't exist."

Services offered to homeless men and women over 50 include assessment, referral, advocacy, assistance with day-to-day living and linking into community groups, recreational activities or arranging transport.

"We haven't been told there is no funding, we are just not sure," Mr Lipmann said.

Jeff Fiedler from Housing for the Aged Action Group, whose Home at Last project is funded under the program, said the uncertainty meant cutting off new enquiries at the end of March.

"We have a substantial case-load of more than 300 people," he said.

"Even for those we are taking on now, three months is stretching it to provide the support they need.

"We have been trying to meet with Martin Foley but haven't been able to as yet."

Home at Last is a free, confidential housing service for homeless people, offering information, support and referral, outreach care and housing, tenancy support and retirement housing options.

"We don't see it as a funding fault of the current government. Unfortunately the previous government didn't put in place an ongoing plan beyond June 30 this year," Mr Fiedler said.

Minister Martin Foley said the projects were being independently evaluated.

"I appreciate the valuable work done by projects like Home at Last and Regional Outreach for the Elderly Homeless, which have helped older Victorians at risk of homelessness," he said.

"The Housing for the Aged Action Group ... and Wintringham ... are actively involved in this (evaluation) process."

## Association puts bite on govt for age dental scheme

AN oral health scheme aimed specifically at age pensioners is the focus of the Australian Dental Association's 2015-16 federal pre-budget submission.

The association proposes a scheme modelled on the Child Dental Benefits Scheme, which continues to grow as it enters its sec-

ond year of operation.

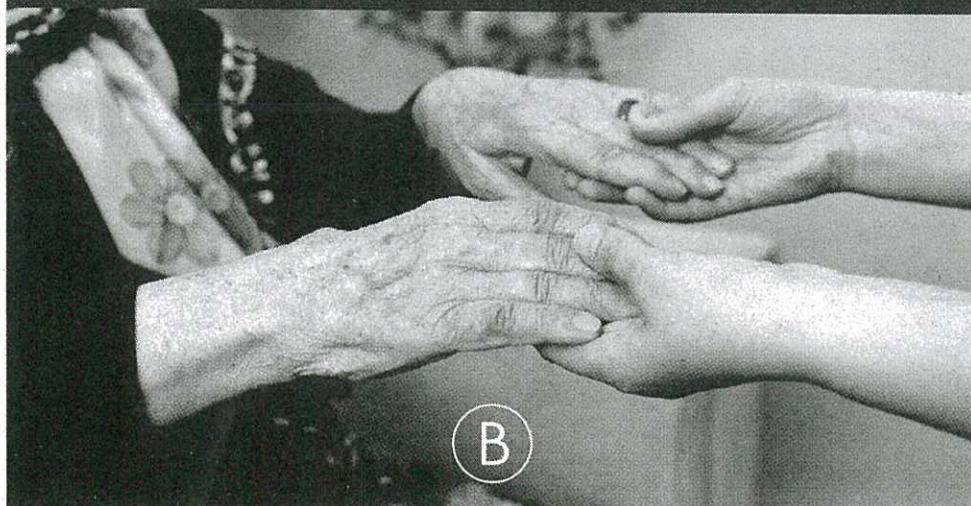
Association president Dr Rick Olive said the prevalence of oral disease among people aged 65 and over was significantly higher than for the general population.

It has raised particular concerns about worsening oral health in residential aged

care, where high levels of plaque accumulating on teeth and dentures put residents at risk of aspiration pneumonia, which in turn necessitates transfer to an acute care facility.

The association proposes a scheme to provide pensioners with a \$1000 allowance every two years for dental services.

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Do you know these  
Alzheimer's disease

- At age 65, there's a 1 in 8 chance of Alzheimer's disease (AD)
- That risk increases to a 1 in 3 chance by age 85
- There is no cure for AD and symptoms

There is, however, a way to gain the overall understanding of the disease. The TOMMORROW study is a research project seeking healthy senior participants aged 65 and 83 to help us understand the early phase of AD.