



Private Provider Dental Schemes Information Handbook

April -2025



**Government
of South Australia**

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1 Introduction

SA Dental is the main provider of public dental services in South Australia.

With the on-going cooperation of the private dental sector, SA Dental administers a range of government-funded schemes for the treatment of eligible clients by private dental service providers. The various dental schemes assist SA Dental to manage waiting times and to provide dental care to clients.

This document aims to provide participating dental service providers with the information needed to foster a collaborative, efficient and rewarding working relationship with SA Dental. This information should be read in conjunction with the **Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items, Fees & Guidance** booklet that provides further information regarding each scheme type. The schedules are available on the SA Dental Internet (details below).

Dental Schemes Unit staff are ready to assist with further information or advice. Please contact them via email at healthSADSSchemesUnit@sa.gov.au

1.1 Terminology

1.1.1 Client

The term ‘client’ is used to describe the people eligible to receive care via these Schemes. While the term ‘patient’ is used on schemes forms and in the clinical environment, *client* and *patient* have the same meaning in this information book.

1.1.2 Dental Service Provider

‘Dental service provider’ is the term used in reference to the private dental practice and/or the individual qualified professional employed by the practice to deliver dental care to clients.

1.2 Dental Schemes Unit contact details

Email: healthSADSSchemesUnit@sa.gov.au (preferred contact method)

Phone: (08)7117 0117 for urgent matters. If staff are unavailable, please leave a message and your call will be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Postal address: Dental Schemes Unit, SA Dental, GPO Box 864, Adelaide, 5001

Statewide Lead Clinician: (via the Dental Schemes Unit as above)

For general information about SA Dental, visit our website at- www.dental.sa.gov.au

Dental Schemes information, including this book, schedules, vendor form etc. is available on our website. Click on ‘Health Professionals > Partnerships > Dental Schemes (Private Providers)

Please regularly check that site for updates to Schemes documentation

1.3 Types of schemes available

The schemes mirror the range of services available at SA Dental clinics. Note that the Schemes available may change from time to time.

The standard Schemes in which most private dental practices can participate are:

- Emergency Dental Scheme (EDS)
- General Dental Scheme (GDS)
- Public Denture Scheme (PDS)
- PDS Repairs Scheme
- Aboriginal Dental Scheme (ADS). *The ADS is a remote area program only*

There are also **Special Programs and Specialist Schemes** in which participation is subject to approval and agreement by the relevant scheme or program manager – these are listed below. Only specifically approved practices or practitioners may participate in these Schemes:

- Remote Child Dental Scheme (designated and approved dental practices more than 90km from nearest SA Dental clinic)
- Child Country Emergency Dental Scheme (when local SA Dental clinic is temporarily closed)
- Homelessness Oral Health Program
- Supported Residential Facility (SRF) Program
- Crown & Bridge Dental Scheme
- Specialised Dental Schemes (Endodontic, Orthodontic, and Oral Surgery)

A client can only access these Schemes if in receipt of a current authorising form/voucher. The form serves several functions – acting as an offer of care to the client, a record of treatment provided to the client once treatment is complete and a tax invoice to enable the provider of that treatment to claim from SA Dental for the services provided. Only *original* schemes claim forms can be accepted by the Dental Schemes Unit for processing for payment. Treatment may not commence without the relevant schemes form or approval/voucher number.

Each type of scheme is described in more detail later in this book but please continue to read other important information below that applies to the schemes.

1.4 Period for which a Scheme Authority form is valid

It is important that treatment is provided in a timely manner. Schemes forms are only valid for a limited time. The period for which a scheme form is valid is specified on the form and is calculated from the time the scheme was *issued* by the SA Dental clinic or Schemes Unit. **Completed claim form must be received at the Dental Schemes Unit within two weeks of the expiry date.**

In extenuating circumstances, expiry extensions may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with approval from either the SA Dental clinic that issued the scheme form or from the Dental Schemes Unit. Ideally this would occur before the scheme form expires. Where an extension is authorised, write the approver's name and date approved on the top of the form and ensure that the claim form is received at the Dental Schemes Unit within two weeks of the approved extended expiry date.

Examples of circumstances likely to receive favourable consideration of extension might include client illness that disrupts the scheduled treatment plan or client failure to attend their last appointment to complete the course of care and sign/certify the Schemes form. Administrative oversights by the private practice would not usually be regarded as extenuating circumstances.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Dental service provider participation

Participation in the standard schemes is open to all dental practitioners including dentists, dental therapists, oral health therapists, dental hygienists, dental prosthetists and dental specialists registered with the Dental Board of Australia (the Board). Of course, providers may only provide those dental services in which they are educated, trained and competent.

- To participate, dental service providers must complete a Supplier Creation/Maintenance form so that payment for services can be processed by the Dental Schemes Unit. The form can be downloaded from the SA Dental [website](#) or by emailing the Dental Schemes Unit.

For **Special Programs and Specialist Schemes** (see 1.3 above), providers must also be registered with the relevant SA Dental manager of the relevant Program or Scheme (click [here](#) for more information – Section 16).

2.2 Client Eligibility - adults

To receive treatment under the Schemes, a client must be registered with an SA Dental Community Dental Service (CDS) clinic AND meet the eligibility criteria.

Adults are required to have a current Commonwealth Government issued Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) and live in South Australia. The card must be in their name. Further, an adult dependant (18 to 21 years of age) whose name is listed on the card as a dependant, can access dental care.

The partner of a person with a current card **cannot** access SA Dental care **unless** they have their own HCC or PCC (i.e. they must be a cardholder in their own right).

Holders of a DVA card that is not a PCC, for example a Gold, White, or Orange *Health Card* are not eligible. Holders of a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card are not eligible.

Please see our Website for more information regarding eligibility at Adults >

2.2.1 Checking client eligibility before starting treatment

Eligibility must be confirmed by the dental service provider by viewing the client's current PCC or HCC before dental treatment starts as the card may have expired after the form was issued and before the first appointment. Claims will not be paid for treatment completed on non-eligible clients.

IMPORTANT:

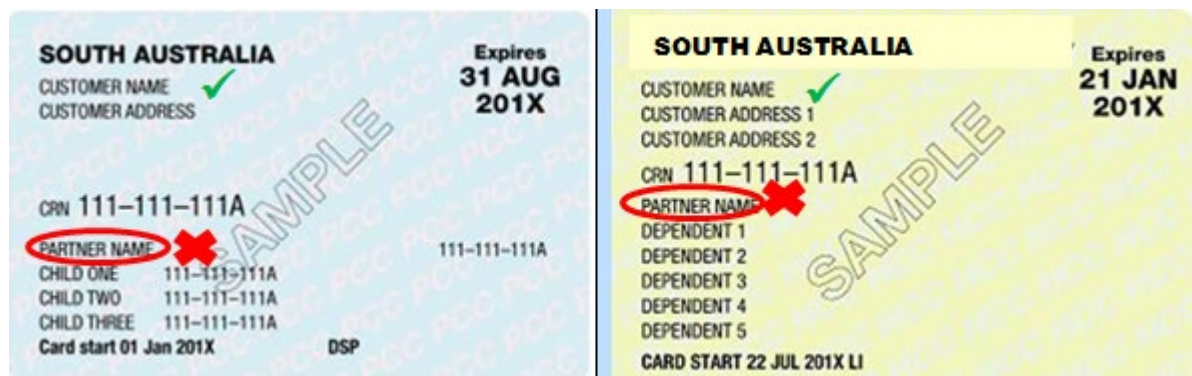
It is vital that the client is the cardholder or an adult dependant (18 to 21 years of age) whose name is listed on the card as a dependant where that card isn't in their name.

While the partner of a cardholder may be listed on a client's card, the partner is **not** eligible for care unless they have a card in their own name (i.e. they must be the cardholder themselves).

If there is any doubt about eligibility, please always check with your local SA Dental clinic before providing care.

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Eligible clients and ineligible partners, are indicated by the green tick and red cross as illustrated below:



Where a client presents to the dental service provider without a current eligibility card, the provider can, with the consent of the client, contact Centrelink directly to verify eligibility details.

- If eligibility expires part way through a Course of Care (CoC) – i.e. after the first appointment - that CoC may be completed.
- Special Programs and Specialist Schemes often have additional eligibility criteria for providers and clients. Information will be provided by the relevant Program or Scheme manager and in the *Schedule of Fees* for those schemes.

2.2.2 Waiting lists

- Waiting lists for general care apply. A client must have their name on only one general waiting list at any given time. For clients with natural teeth, their conservative treatment is completed first. When their conservative treatment is completed, if a denture may be required, they will be assessed and, if clinically appropriate, will be issued with a PDS form.

2.3 Children

Children under 18 years of age who are registered with SA Dental and are not eligible under the Child Dental Benefit Schedule (CDBS) may receive care. Click [here](#) for more information (Section 15).

2.4 Visiting Interstate eligible adult clients

Visiting eligible interstate adult clients may access emergency care only, for example treatment for trauma, swelling, etc. and emergency denture repairs

3 Fees and Payments

All fees for schemes are based on the Australian Government Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Fee Schedules of Dental Services for Dentists and Dental Specialists and Dental Prosthetists.

SA Dental schemes fees are updated periodically, usually in April each year.

In most cases, clients contribute by paying a client fee - either a set amount (e.g. EDS), or a percentage of the cost per claimable item (e.g. GDS) (excluding patient *fee free* items), with limits to the amount payable by the client and with the larger portion of total fees paid by SA Dental, up to a maximum fee payable for a particular scheme. The actual fees are detailed in [the Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items, Fees & Guidance booklet](#). It is the dental service provider's responsibility to collect the client contribution as determined by the relevant Schedule. SA Dental pays the dental service provider on receipt of an *original* schemes claim form. Specific clients are not required to contribute a co-payment toward their care (e.g. Aboriginal clients, clients with independently assessed financial hardship) and, in those cases, SA Dental staff will annotate the form accordingly when it is issued, and SA Dental will pay the full amount of all approved care to the provider. There may be occasions when SA Dental staff inform the private practice by telephone that a client is not required to contribute, in which case private practice staff will be asked to annotate the form prior to sending it to the Schemes Unit for processing.

3.1 Client under/over charge

If the wrong fee is charged to the client, for example as a result of the incorrect schedule being applied, the dental service provider must either reimburse or seek further payment from the client to correct the error. Usually, acknowledgement or evidence of reimbursement for over-payment by the client will be required by the Dental Schemes Unit before the invoice is paid.

3.2 Financial Hardship

If a client claims that they cannot contribute to the cost of dental treatment due to severe financial hardship, they should be directed to contact their local SA Dental clinic to discuss options.

4 Treatment services available via SA Dental

Schedules of items and associated fees for the range of treatment services able to be provided under each Scheme are published on the SA -Dental [website](#). The Schemes offer a range of dental services catering for many, but not all dental treatment needs, in accordance with public dental health principles.

Clients requiring or preferring dental care not provided under a scheme can elect to obtain that care as a private patient at their own expense or contact a local SA Dental clinic to clarify what is available through public dental services.

5 Clinical freedom under schemes

IMPORTANT:

Dental service providers are expected to provide treatment for the most significant oral health challenges of a client before addressing matters of lesser impact or priority. This includes but is not limited to management of acute dental infection and removal of non-restorable teeth or teeth with poor long-term prognosis.

The aim is to minimise the impact of dental disease on oral and general health. Prioritising the most important care makes it more likely that clients on low incomes will be able to attend appointments for, afford, and receive more critical care before receiving care which is less vital to their oral health status.

When a dental service provider commences providing treatment under a Scheme, they implicitly agree to comply with the guidelines, rules and procedures relating to that Scheme, as outlined in the **Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items Fees & Guidance** booklet and in any other associated SA Dental documentation regarding the Schemes.

As registered dental professionals provide treatment under the Schemes, it is expected that all treatment will conform to acceptable standards of care, including principles of informed consent and infection control measures.

Treatment services to be provided and the associated costs to the client should be agreed upon by both the dental service provider and the client before any treatment commences. This can only occur if the client has a clear understanding and appreciation of the treatment options, costs and the likely treatment outcomes for each option.

When a dental service provider wishes to convey additional information or recommendations to SA Dental in the interests of the client's oral health, please attach a note to the Schemes form or email either the client's local SA Dental clinic or Schemes Unit.

5.1 Treatment considered to have poor prognosis

Where a client insists on treatment that the dental service provider considers has a poor prognosis, the provider may, of course, with client consent, elect to provide the treatment at the client's own expense with no SA Dental funding support, taking into account the risks of doing so (for example, unfavourable treatment outcome).

Alternatively, the private dental service provider may decline to provide the requested treatment and suggest the patient return to the local SA Dental clinic for assessment/management.

Only treatment provided in accordance with the published guidelines and business rules for the Schemes will be claimable from SA Dental.

Also refer to [section 7](#) Repeat or remedial treatments.

5.2 Specialist treatment

The schemes rarely cover specialist dental treatments. When non-urgent specialist care is recommended by the dental service provider (including an extraction), the client should be referred to their local SA Dental clinic for assessment.

6 Dental trauma - urgent assessment

For urgent assessment and management of *severe dental trauma/infection* or *suspected oral pathology* cases only, dental service providers can refer adult clients directly to the Adelaide Dental Hospital (include relevant x-rays). In these cases, the provider should also inform the client's local SA Dental clinic.

- Adelaide Dental Hospital, open M-F, 8:45am – 5:00pm: ☎(08) 8222 8223
- After hours contact the Royal Adelaide Hospital on ☎ (08) 7074 0000

7 Repeat or remedial treatments

Repeat or remedial treatment provided by the same dental service provider/practice within a three-month period of the initial treatment cannot be claimed on the same or a subsequent invoice.

Repeat or remedial treatments include situations where a tooth is treated but is subsequently extracted within three months.

8 Complaints, queries and changes to schemes

When a claim requires clarification with a provider or a complaint is lodged regarding Schemes, an SA Dental Statewide Lead Clinician (or Delegate) will advise the provider of procedures used to resolve the situation.

In the first instance, please direct queries about payments to the Dental Schemes Unit.

9 Administration

SA Dental uses the definitions for item numbers as they appear in the Australian Dental Association (ADA) publication titled *The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary* as available on the ADA website to describe the item numbers used in the Schemes.

In addition to the information provided in this Handbook, guidelines and business rules are included with the **SA Dental Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items, Fees & Guidance** booklet that apply to each Scheme.

Where further clarification of any aspect of the schemes is needed, dental service providers should contact the Dental Schemes Unit.

9.1 Processing schemes claim forms for payment

The Dental Schemes Unit aims to process payment for received claim forms within 15 days of receipt. Please allow at least this 15 day period before enquiring about an individual invoice that was sent to the Dental Schemes Unit – time spent answering those emails reduces the time available to pay other invoices.

Your cooperation by ensuring claim forms are fully and accurately completed in blue or black pen and sent to the Schemes Unit at the end of the course of care and within the time limit applicable to the Scheme is greatly appreciated.

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All payments will be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Payments are made to the business entity named in the Vendor section of the form. Please ensure the business name corresponds with the ABN. Administrative procedures for Dental Schemes require that vendor details, which facilitate payment, must be completed by the vendor (see example below).

TOTAL FEE FOR SERVICES PROVIDED **281.00**

LESS

AMOUNT CLAIMED FROM SA DENTAL

Please complete all sections of the vendor

Use black or blue pen to complete form

The vendor name, address and ABN are mandatory and must be completed by the vendor (dental practice). Dental Schemes Officers are not permitted to complete this section on behalf of the vendor

Invoice Date: 02 / 03 / 16

Vendor Number: 12345

Vendor Name: Adam Dentist

Address: Shopping Centre Road
Broadwater SA 5123

ABN: 123456789012345

Customer Name: SA DENTAL SERVICE
GPO BOX 864 ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dental Schemes Officers check all received Schemes claim forms to ensure they have all the necessary information in accordance with the guidelines and business rules that govern the Schemes. SA Dental will not pay for treatment services claimed outside the guidelines and business rules of the various Schemes.

Dental Schemes Officers, in consultation with the Statewide Lead Clinician (or Delegate), decide on appropriate payment in cases where no specific business rule is apparent.

Where a claim form is not completed with sufficient detail or where some aspect of the claim is unclear, a Dental Schemes Officer will either return the form with a note asking for more information or contact the dental service provider by email or telephone to seek clarification.

Where a claim has been returned to the dental service provider for follow up action, the onus is on the provider to return the corrected form to the Schemes Unit within 14 days.

Processing of recently expired claims will usually occur. The Schemes Officer will apply discretion when considering if the time delay is reasonable under the circumstances. A forgotten or misfiled claim form submitted well past the allowable timeframe is unlikely to be paid.

Timely communication between dental service providers and the Schemes Unit about claim form queries/problems helps to facilitate positive outcomes.

Scanned/copied/faxed claim forms **will not** be processed for payment.

ONLY original claim forms will be accepted by SA Dental Schemes unit as per auditors' requirements.

Original claim forms are to be posted to:

**Schemes Unit
SA Dental
GPO BOX 864 Adelaide SA 5001**

10 Emergency Dental Scheme (EDS) - Adults

The EDS enables emergency dental care for eligible adult clients with natural teeth at a private dental practice when their local SA Dental clinic is not able to offer emergency treatment within 10 business days or sooner if warranted. The client must first contact their local SA Dental clinic to have their treatment needs assessed. Note that prosthetic services are **excluded** under EDS.

Usually, the client must attend the SA Dental clinic to verify their personal and eligibility details and collect the EDS form. In exceptional circumstances, SA Dental clinic reception staff may issue an approval/voucher number for a patient to attend at a private dental practice for treatment via the EDS without the need for the client to attend in-person at the SA Dental clinic (e.g. mobility issues, distance issues). Private practices are supplied with a small number of non-completed EDS forms for this circumstance and private practice staff are required to enter the Approval/Voucher Number on the EDS form so the claim can be paid.

Clients are advised by SA Dental staff that, when making contact with a private practice to arrange care, they should notify the dental service provider that they are seeking emergency care under an SA Dental Scheme.

10.1 EDS treatment and claim period limits

- Treatment under the EDS must commence within seven (7) calendar days from the date of issue, and care must be completed no later than 28 days from date of issue of the form.
- EDS claims must be received by the Dental Schemes Unit for processing within six (6) weeks of the issue date.
- If it becomes clear that treatment cannot be completed and certified (signed) by the client within one month from the date of issue of the EDS form, contact the issuing clinic in the first instance or email the Dental Schemes Unit to discuss the option of an extension and/or advice.
- Claims received later than six (6) weeks after the issue date of the EDS form are considered to have expired and would only be paid in extenuating circumstances.

10.2 Clients requiring further treatment after EDS

The purpose of an EDS is to only provide treatment for a clinically urgent dental problem. Other dental care will be provided when the client's name comes to the top of the waiting list and a general offer of care is made. If further urgent treatment is needed after an EDS course of care, the dental service provider should advise the client to contact their local SA Dental clinic for advice. Dental service providers are encouraged to suggest to clients attending with EDS forms that, if they do not already have their name on an SA Dental general dental waiting list, they contact their local SA Dental clinic to arrange that.

10.3 EDS in remote areas

In locations with a private dental service provider more than 90kms from the nearest SA Dental clinic, eligible adults can contact a participating dental service provider and be offered emergency care under the EDS if the provider considers that urgent care is needed, e.g. facial swelling, severe tooth ache, broken front tooth (aesthetics) and unusual growths/suspected pathology. For any other care, clients must have their name on the SA Dental Remote General Dental Waiting List administered by the SA Dental Schemes Unit and can obtain waiting list addition forms for that purpose from the remote dental service provider or complete the [webform online](#).

Remote dental service providers are supplied with EDS and other relevant forms or templates.

Each eligible client may receive SA Dental funded emergency care up to a maximum of two times per calendar year. Where emergency care is sought for a third or subsequent time in a calendar year, the following is required:

- The client's name must be on a waiting list for general care with the Schemes Unit and;
- The client's need for emergency care must be assessed by a SA Dental clinic using the Relative Needs Index assessment tool that was developed with the Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health (ARCPOH). The assessment can be carried out over the telephone by staff at any SA Dental adult clinic. Contact details for all of our clinics are in the **-Find a clinic** section of the [SA Dental website](#).

10.4 Endodontic treatment under EDS

Endodontic or Root Canal Therapy (RCT) may be started (i.e. Extirpation) under an EDS for pain relief but may not be completed under that EDS. The client should then be referred to the local SA Dental clinic (usually the SA Dental clinic that issued the EDS form) for an assessment of suitability for completion. A copy of relevant radiograph/s and clinical notes from the dental service provider will be appreciated and may be requested.

IMPORTANT: RCT is not supported in some situations – please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for more information.

The information at Appendix 1 should inform in-part the dental service provider's discussion with the client about consent to proceed with emergency endodontic treatment under the EDS as it may influence the client's decision to opt for extraction vs extirpation.

In Remote areas, where RCT is started under an EDS, the treating dentist should contact Schemes Unit staff for advice regarding completion of the RCT. Ideally, this contact should be by email with accompanying radiograph/s, Clinical Notes and advice about whether the endodontic treatment is consistent with SA Dental criteria for completion of endodontic treatment.

11 General Dental Scheme (GDS)

The GDS enables routine dental care for some eligible adults with natural teeth whose names have reached the top of their local SA Dental clinic waiting list.

Occasionally a GDS authorisation is issued for a specific treatment only. In those instances the authorised treatment will be specified on the form.

Clients are advised by SA Dental staff that, when making contact with a private practice to arrange care, they should notify the dental service provider that they are seeking care under the GDS. The range of treatment available under the GDS is described in the **Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items, Fees & Guidance** booklet (GDS section). Treatment should first address the client's key oral health issues. Relatively minor ancillary matters should be addressed only if they are within the GDS cap.

- Remember to check concession card eligibility before starting treatment (refer [2.2](#) above)

While a private practitioner and client may agree on adding the client's name to the practice's recall system, please make the client aware that any expense incurred in a recall event and treatment without a valid, current GDS Authority will be at the client's expense with no SA Dental funding support.

People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin in remote areas can access the Aboriginal Dental Scheme (ADS) immediately instead of placing their name on a waiting list.

11.1 GDS treatment and claim period limits

- The GDS form has printing on both front and back page. The front page has client details, date of issue and general information about the Scheme. The back page functions as the Claim section where details of treatment provided and the private practice's information is added by practice staff. On completion of care, the back page is to be signed by both client and practitioner and is then posted to the Schemes Unit for processing and payment on the claim
- Treatment via the GDS must be completed within three (3) months of the date of issue unless otherwise a time extension has been granted.
- GDS claims must be received by the Dental Schemes Unit for processing within two (2) weeks of the expiry date.
- If treatment has commenced and for any reason it becomes evident that the treatment cannot be completed within three (3) months, contact the issuing clinic in the first instance or the Dental Schemes Unit to discuss options.
- Claims received later than three (3) months and two (2) weeks after the issue date of the GDS form are considered to have expired and would only be paid in extenuating circumstances.

11.2 Endodontic treatment under GDS

Generally, Endodontic or Root Canal treatment (RCT) will not be approved on 2nd and 3rd molars (7s and 8s); however, if the treating private practitioner considers there is a valid reason for that treatment, prior approval is to be sought from the Schemes Unit.

RCT on teeth with good prognosis that are assessed as satisfactory against **SA Dental Service criteria to assist in deciding whether to commence Root Canal Treatment** (see [Appendix 1](#)) may be included within a treatment plan under a GDS if all the needed care does not exceed the GDS fee cap. If the planned RCT will see the GDS fee limit exceeded, the RCT should not be undertaken until all planned treatment in the GDS course of care (**including the planned RCT**) is approved (see [Section 11.3](#)). Alternatively, the client should be advised to contact their local SA Dental clinic to arrange an assessment for further treatment options regarding the RCT.

11.3 GDS exceeding the cap

At the treatment planning appointment (exam appointment), if it is anticipated that the planned care will exceed the usual GDS claim cap, the private provider is strongly encouraged to review the treatment plan to ensure the addressing of priority treatment and care remaining under the claim cap. This will assist with access equity issues for other public dental patients awaiting offers of care. If, after review of the treatment plan, it remains anticipated that planned treatment will exceed the usual claim cap, approval to exceed the cap must be sought **before** providing any further care. **PLEASE NOTE: treatment for Relief of Pain, Facial Swelling and Uncontrolled Bleeding can be provided while awaiting review by the Dental Schemes Unit.**

The private provider must email the Dental Schemes Unit at HealthSADSSchemesUnit@sa.gov.au to request approval for additional care and supply the required items (clinical notes, odontogram, relevant radiographic images [BWs, PAs, OPG] and clinical photographs, if any) along with the completed form titled [Request to provide further treatment under General Dental Scheme \(GDS\)](#). The request will be considered by a designated senior SA Dental dentist.

NOTE regarding planning RCT or Extraction:

If the submitted [Request to provide further treatment under General Dental Scheme \(GDS\)](#) includes either RCT or Extraction Items, we require a recent full-tooth radiographic image of any tooth planned for those procedures. The radiographic image may be a PA or OPG type. Obviously if there are multiple such procedures planned in different sextants, an OPG will be more appropriate. If opting for an OPG, ideally obtain via one of the private medical imaging providers. This will see the examination Bulk Billed to Medicare, preserving the fee otherwise to be claimed from SA Dental to be directed to more client dental care. It is understood country/remote clients and those with mobility issues may be best to have radiography at the private dental practice.

Client maximum co-payment expected:

When an extensive treatment plan exceeding the usual GDS claim cap is approved, the client is **not to be charged more than the current maximum GDS client fee**. SA Dental will pay the full fee for all approved treatment Items in excess of the usual claim cap.

Please Note:

SA Dental is likely to only approve treatment for the client's key oral health issues; and

Requests made after completion of the 1st GDS will not be considered. Of course, the client may elect to receive the additional treatment as a private patient at their own expense with no SA Dental funding support.

11.4 GDS in remote areas

In locations with a dental service provider more than 90kms from the nearest SA Dental clinic, an eligible adult client may request that their name is added to the SA Dental **Remote** General Dental Waiting List administered by the Dental Schemes Unit. Clients can obtain waiting list addition forms for that purpose from the remote dental service provider or complete the webform on the SA Dental website. When an Offer of Care is made to the client, the client may contact a participating dental service provider and be offered general care under the GDS.

There is no Client Fee for treatment via the SA Dental **Remote** General Dental Scheme. SA Dental will pay the full value of approved treatment items.

NOTE: Restrictions on Total Fees to be incurred under this Scheme are the same as those under the non-Remote Area GDS - refer to Section [11.3](#) GDS exceeding the cap

11.5 Referral for prosthetic services after a GDS

If the treating private practitioner considers that a client requires prosthetic services after a GDS, the client is to be directed to contact the local SA Dental clinic for assessment.

In Remote Areas, the treating private dental practitioner may assess the prosthetic requirements of the client and submit the Public Denture Scheme application for addition to waiting list form to the Schemes Unit for a PDS Authority to be issued.

12 Public Denture Scheme (PDS) new dentures and repairs

The Public Denture Scheme (PDS) enables denture treatments including new dentures, relines and repairs through private dentists and dental prosthetists for eligible adult clients.

Eligible adults must attend a SA Dental clinic for assessment of their denture needs (except patients in Remote Areas – see [Section 11.5](#)). For clients with natural teeth, conservative treatment is usually completed before the client is assessed for dentures at their local SA Dental clinic.

In Remote Areas, the treating private dental practitioner may assess the prosthetic requirements of the client and submit a completed **PDS Application for Addition to Waiting List** form to the Schemes Unit.

The prosthetic care that is approved for an individual client is detailed on the PDS Authority form (see below for Restrictions on prosthetic treatment). As part of the fee paid under PDS arrangements, prosthetic service providers must provide follow-up care for clients with new dentures for up to six months.

IMPORTANT: Remember to check concession card coverage before starting treatment – refer to [2.2](#) above.

12.1 PDS treatment and claim period limits

- Treatment under the PDS for a **NEW** denture must be completed within four (4) months from the date of issue.
- Treatment under the PDS for a denture **REPAIR** must be completed within one (1) month from the date of issue.

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- PDS claims (for both **NEW** dentures and denture **REPAIRS**) must be received by the Dental Schemes Unit for processing within two weeks of the expiry date.
- If treatment to provide a **NEW** denture has commenced and it becomes evident that the treatment cannot be completed within four (4) months from the date of issue, contact the issuing SA Dental clinic in the first instance or the Dental Schemes Unit to discuss options.
- If treatment to provide a denture REPAIR service has commenced and it becomes evident that the treatment cannot be completed within one (1) month from the date of issue, contact the issuing SA Dental clinic in the first instance or the Dental Schemes Unit to discuss options.
- Claims for NEW denture provision received later than four (4) months and two (2) weeks after the issue date of the PDS Authority form are considered to have expired and would only be paid in extenuating circumstances.
- Claims for denture REPAIR services received later than one (1) month and two (2) weeks after the issue date of the PDS Repair Authority form are considered to have expired and would only be paid in extenuating circumstances.

12.2 Restrictions of prosthetic treatment under the PDS

The dentist or prosthetist is authorised to only provide the denture services specified on the PDS form. If the provider has any concerns about the appropriateness or limits of the specified services, advice should be sought from the SA Dental clinic at which the client was assessed.

Regarding NEW Dentures

- The PDS for new dentures does not include nor fund soft/resilient linings, mesh strengthening, cast metal frames or patient-requested characterisations.
- Denture adjustments for a six (6) month period post-insertion are to be provided at no cost to the client or SA Dental.
- Generally, SA Dental does not approve immediate dentures. This is due to the likely need for relines and remakes after the initial healing of the soft and hard tissues resulting in lower success rates and resultant further expenditure of limited public dental funding versus those dentures made after a suitable period of healing.
- Generally, SA Dental does not approve bilateral free-end saddle Partial Lower Dentures as they are frequently problematic, routinely abandoned and considered a poor use of limited public dental funds. The Shortened Dental Arch status will generally give acceptable function and aesthetics and, if dietary and hygiene habits are modified, will serve the client for a good period.

12.3 Conservative treatment prior to prosthetic care

Conservative treatment is expected to be completed before a client receives a PDS authority form; however, if the condition of any remaining natural teeth subsequently changes and non-denture related dental care is required before proceeding with provision of new denture(s), the client should be referred back to their local SA Dental clinic for assessment. Alternatively, the client can elect to have indicated conservative treatment provided as a private patient at their own expense. For Remote clients, the treating private practitioner should contact the Schemes Unit to seek advice on how to proceed.

12.4 Denture repairs and relines

Regarding Denture REPAIRS:

The following are NOT available via PDS Repairs:

- soft/resilient linings, mesh/metal strengthening and patient-requested characterisations
- repair services to secondary dentures (i.e. 'backup' dentures)
- repairs to chrome dentures

exception: tooth addition/repair to acrylic component can be claimed

Post-repair adjustment visits are to be provided at no cost to the client or SA Dental.

Soldering of chrome dentures and addition of a strengthening lingual bar/wire/mesh is not claimable via PDS repairs. If required, this needs to be discussed between the private provider and client and the client will need to pay privately for this service.

If more than 3 teeth are to be added to a denture via PDS Denture Repair, the patient is to be directed to their local SA Dental clinic for a review of their denture needs.

Where multiple breaks to a base of a denture occur only one repair is claimable.

In the infrequent situation of an Immediate denture being approved for supply via the PDS by SA Dental, a reline subsequent to its insertion may be claimed using a PDS Repair claim form following an appropriate time to allow for healing and bone remodelling and within 12 months of insertion. **The private provider should contact the Dental Schemes Unit to confirm the client's entitlement to receive the reline before proceeding with the treatment.**

12.5 Fees and payments under PDS

In addition to information provided under [section 3](#) Fees and Payments, and [section 7](#) Repeat or remedial treatments, the following rules apply:

For new denture and relines:

- the PDS fee is all-inclusive incorporating a consultation/examination, all stages involved in the construction of a denture, materials used in denture construction, laboratory fees, and post-insertion denture treatments (e.g. adjustments) for six (6) months.

For denture repairs:

- The fee is all-inclusive incorporating a consultation/examination, all stages involved in the repair process, materials used in the repair, laboratory fees and immediate post-delivery-of-repair adjustment.

12.6 PDS treatment provided under the Aboriginal Liaison Program (ALP)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients may receive a PDS authorisation via the SA Dental Aboriginal Liaison Program. Click [here](#) for more details about the ALP scheme.

12.7 Complaints under PDS

Where a client lodges a complaint with either the dental scheme provider or a SA Dental clinic about denture care, it is expected that the client and the dental scheme provider will attempt to resolve any issues occurring within 6 months of denture insert. If the dental service provider feels unable to satisfy the client's concerns, the client is to be referred to the SA Dental clinic that provided the PDS Authority for review utilising the PDS Treatment Review Protocol. If the client was treated at a designated remote private practice, the provider should contact the Schemes Unit for advice).

13 Aboriginal Liaison Program (ALP)

The ALP is one component of the Aboriginal Oral Health Program that aims to increase the number of eligible Aboriginal clients who access mainstream dental services in metropolitan and rural areas.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients may receive an EDS, GDS or PDS authorisation on the standard scheme forms which will be clearly labelled with an Aboriginal Liaison Program sticker, stamp, or hand-written on both sides of the form (see graphic examples below).

No client fee applies for services under the ALP. The full amount is paid by SA Dental. Usually the client fee column of the authority form is crossed out in red pen.

Priority and free access applies to ALP clients for routine care under this program (i.e. no waiting list).

Note that this program does not apply in remote areas. Remote areas are covered by the [Aboriginal Dental Scheme \(ADS\)](#).



13.1 ALP Client without schemes authority form

If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait client eligible under this program presents to a dental service provider without a Scheme form, the provider should contact the local SA Dental clinic in the first instance or direct the client to the SA Dental clinic for approval to proceed with treatment. Treatment must not commence without authority.

When approval is given by the SA Dental clinic, it is important to clearly mark the scheme form as ALP in red pen across the top of both sides of the form and cross through the client/patient fee column.

The SA Dental clinic staff may ask that the client attend the SA Dental clinic for treatment in some circumstances .

14 Aboriginal Dental Scheme (ADS)

The ADS enables Emergency, General and Prosthetic dental care for eligible adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients living in remote areas where there is an available dental service provider located more than 90kms from the nearest SA Dental clinic.

14.1 Fees and payments under ADS

No client fees apply under the ADS. The full amount is paid by SA Dental.

14.2 ADS and ALP treatment and claim period limits

The valid to period for treatment under these schemes is the same as for other EDS, GDS and country PDS schemes. Please refer to the relevant schemes program above for more information.

14.3 Emergency care under ADS

Clients eligible under the ADS who present for emergency treatment should be offered a full general course of care, in which case the services allowable on the GDS schedule are used and claimed.

If the client does not wish to undertake a full GDS course of care, only one (1) appointment should be provided to treat the primary problem under an EDS.

The maximum of two emergency courses of care may be provided per eligible adult in one calendar year as described under [Section 10 EDS](#).

14.4 General (GDS) or prosthetic (PDS) treatment under the ADS

For PDS treatment, the private provider must complete an *ADS Approval for Dentures* form and post or email the form to the Dental Schemes Unit. Construction of the denture/s can occur after the client has received their *Approval for Denture Treatment* form. If the dentist/prosthetist would like to discuss PDS authorised denture services they should contact the [Dental Schemes Unit](#).

14.5 Clients requiring further treatment under the ADS GDS

At the treatment planning appointment (exam appointment) if it is anticipated that a client will exceed the cap for treatment provided under a GDS, the private provider must email the Schemes Unit at healthSADSSchemesUnit@sa.gov.au to request approval for additional care and supply the clinical notes, odontogram (charting), relevant radiographic images (BWs, PAs, OPG) and clinical photographs, if any, along with the completed form titled ***Request to provide further treatment under General Dental Scheme (GDS)*** for consideration by a designated senior SA Dental dentist. This is to occur immediately after the initial examination and **before** treatment commences.

Note that SA Dental is likely to only approve treatment for the client's key oral health issues. Requests made after completion of the 1st GDS will rarely be considered. Alternatively, the client may elect to receive the additional treatment as a private patient at their own expense.

15 Services for children

Please note that children who are eligible for dental care under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) administered by Medicare are not eligible under the following service arrangements.

15.1 Child Country Emergency Dental Scheme (CCEDS)

In circumstances when a country SA Dental clinic is not operational, for example during school holiday periods or staff conference days, SA Dental requests the assistance of local dental service providers for emergency dental care for children enrolled with SA Dental.

The current guidelines and fees for the SA Dental Child Country Emergency Scheme are included in the schedule of items distributed separately to country private dentists. SA Dental staff will contact local private dentists to invite participation in this scheme when circumstances arise.

15.2 Remote Child Dental Scheme

Remote Child Dental Scheme arrangements pay for dental care to be provided by a local dental service provider to children in remote areas of South Australia who do not have easy access to an SA Dental clinic. Dental services are provided under agreements with specific dental practices on a fee for service basis to registered children.

Enquires about this Scheme can be directed to the [Dental Schemes Unit](#).

16 Restricted Participation Programs/Schemes – client and/or provider

SA Dental aims to support access to timely dental care for clients who experience difficulty accessing care via mainstream dental pathways.

Resourcing for the programs and schemes listed below is limited and subject to funding availability. These programs and schemes are specifically designed to meet the needs of the particular target group of eligible clients.

Information regarding each program and scheme including client eligibility criteria and the applicable *Schedules of Items and Fees* is provided by the program manager to participating dental service providers on registration.

The information below provides a brief summary of Special and Specialist programs and schemes:

Homelessness and Oral Health Program

The Homelessness and Oral Health Program enables access to conservative and prosthetic dental care for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. No client fee applies to this program.

Supported Residential Facility Program

The Supported Residential Facility (SRF) program enables access to conservative and prosthetic dental care for residents of licenced *pension only* Supported Residential Facilities. No client fee applies to this program.

Community Aged Care Program (CACP)

This program aims to improve the independent living capacity of community living older people by providing priority access to general and prosthetic dental care. Client fees apply.

For more information about the above programs, contact:

Service Planning Program Managers: ✉ HealthSADSServicePlanning@sa.gov.au, or ☎ 7117 0056 or 7117 0058

Crown and Bridge Dental Scheme

This scheme enables indirect restorative treatment as prescribed by the Specialist Restorative Unit (SRU), Adelaide Dental Hospital.

For more information about this scheme, contact: Dr Michael Bradley, ✉ michael.bradley@sa.gov.au

Specialist Dental Schemes - Oral Surgery, Orthodontic, and Endodontics

These schemes enable specialist dental treatment as prescribed by the specialist units at the Adelaide Dental Hospital. Private providers must be a registered specialist in the relevant field to be eligible for participation in these schemes.

For more information about Specialist schemes, contact: Dr Michael Bradley, ✉ michael.bradley@sa.gov.au

Appendix 1: Endodontics

A set of principles and criteria underpin the SA Dental assessment protocols regarding endodontic treatment. This information is also available in the Private Provider Dental Schemes Schedules – Items, Fees & Guidance, containing endodontic service codes.

When assessing a tooth for RCT the ‘individual tooth’ decision needs to be made in context with the client’s full dentition, oral health and medical status as outlined in the criteria below:

| SA Dental criteria to assist in deciding whether to undertake Root Canal Treatment | Action required |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NOTE: If the tooth is a 7 or 8, PRIOR APPROVAL from Schemes Unit is required | Use Request to provide further treatment under the General Dental Scheme (GDS) form |
| <p>Generally, Endodontic Therapy IS offered if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tooth is an abutment tooth for a prosthesis, or is critical for function and/or aesthetics AND has good prognosis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extraction is contraindicated e.g. due to a particular medical history <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintenance of an intact arch and/or shortened dental arch (excludes second and third molars) | <p>Under an EDS or if part of outstanding treatment after a GDS please forward a copy of relevant radiographs and client treatment details to the CDS clinic so the case can be re-assessed and follow-up care provided.</p> <p>For Special Program & specialist schemes, check with the schemes Project Manager</p> |
| <p>Endodontic Therapy is NOT offered if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The tooth has limited / no functionality (e.g. unopposed 2nd molar) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to achieve either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moisture control using rubber dam • good access • appropriate radiographs • placement of permanent functional restoration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patient demonstrates either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor oral status (e.g. rampant caries) • poor level of cooperation or interest • inability to tolerate long & multiple appointments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • periodontal support or • restorability, inadequate tooth structure, subgingival caries • pulpal morphology / periapical pathology (size of radiolucency, complex root canal morphology, retreatment) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restorability is compromised and a crown is required for long term success <i>A crown <u>may not be possible</u> via SA Dental Service, patient needs to consider affordability as a private expense</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence of previous root filling in one or more canals (i.e no endodontic retreatment) | <p>If any of these criteria apply, RCT is not offered through SA Dental & the client should be offered an extraction</p> <p>if the client does not agree to proceed with an extraction and insists on having a RCT, where possible the tooth can be “dressed” to relieve pain. The client MUST be advised that any further care on that tooth will be at their own expense, and this should be noted on the claim form</p> |