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DENTAL PEAK BODY SLAMS RESERVE BANK CHIEF'S ILL-INFORMED COMMENTS

THE AUSTRALIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION'S new President Dr Scott Davis has hit back at claims by the Reserve Bank Governor in the media today that the cost of dentistry was helping to fuel inflation.

Responding to a comment from Michelle Bullock that “hairdressers and dentists, dining out, sporting and other recreational activities - the prices of all these services are rising strongly,” Dr Davis, who stepped into the peak body top job yesterday, said: “You don’t go to the dentist for economic advice, and the Reserve Bank shouldn’t be handing out healthcare advice.

“You cannot possibly equate hairdressing with dentistry. If you don’t get your hair cut it doesn’t have a serious knock-on effect on the rest of the body. If you ignore your oral health however, for which visiting the dentist is a vital part, then you could be risking a whole range of health complications from stroke to cardiac issues to poor pregnancy outcomes. The two simply aren’t on par.”

The ADA confirms that dental fees nationwide have only increased by 3.7%, less than half the rate of inflation, based on its most recent fee survey (2020-2022) of its 17,500 members.

“Our member dentists have resisted passing on the rising costs of products and services in this inflationary climate, instead absorbing them into the cost of running a dental practice. Dentists are all too aware that patients are struggling to pay for a range of essential services in their day to day lives.

“We want to keep dentistry affordable for millions of Australians.”

Dr Scott Davis’ advice to consumers to make dental visits affordable:

1. Attend the dentist regularly and you’ll be more likely to get a modest bill compared to leaving it years when things have deteriorated and you’re more likely to face a more costly procedure.
2. Think and act preventatively – brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily, and this will go a long way to protecting your mouth health.
3. Ensure you’re not having more than the 24g of added sugar a day in your daily diet, which is the WHO maximum recommended limit. Sugar is a major contributory factor in tooth decay.
4. Save a small amount every week for your dental healthcare instead of buying a private health insurance ‘extras’ policy - that way your savings don’t disappear if you don’t use them, which is what happens at the end of the year if you haven’t used up all your insurance entitlements.
5. If you have children under 17 you may be eligible for the CDBS – only 38% of those eligible actually use this entitlement. Your dentist can help you work out if you’re eligible, and it offers treatments up to \$1,052 in every two-year period.
6. If you’re looking at needing more treatments than just a basic checkup, such as a crown or implant, it helps to get a second opinion.

To interview Dr Scott Davis (pictured), call Federal Media Advisor Jenny Barlass 0484 869 086.