



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/3037  
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

**Title:**  
Statement: Cutbacks to school dental services

Please acknowledge the source as:  
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.  
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/3037

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan



# STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date..... June 3, 1976.....

Embargo.....

State Administration Centre,  
Victoria Square, Adelaide,  
South Australia 5001  
228 4811

## CUT BACKS TO SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICES

The South Australian Premier, Mr. Dunstan, today strongly attacked the Federal Government's decision to cut back on funds for free dental care for school children.

Mr. Dunstan said the Federal Government had unilaterally broken its commitment to the States to fund the school dental care programme, which provides free dental treatment for children in South Australian schools. The Federal Government was threatening to withdraw all funds from the scheme unless South Australia agreed to the cut backs.

"In April the Federal Government told the States that they would now have to pay much more towards the cost of the scheme or funds from Canberra would stop", Mr. Dunstan said.

"The Federal Government told us this new arrangement would start from July 1 this year. In the next financial year this will cost South Australia more than \$800,000.

"The South Australian Government has strongly protested against such an arrogant and arbitrary decision. We have written to the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, calling on him to delay implementing the decision for another year and to prepare a formal agreement for a fixed time such as five years so that planning for dental services can proceed properly.

"The Federal Government just doesn't seem to understand that the South Australian Government has guaranteed jobs for 90 dental therapists now being trained and that we have also substantially increased dental undergraduate studentships to train dentists for the programme.

"We have told these students that there will be jobs for them when they finish their courses. We did so on the basis of a commitment from the Federal Government which we believe must be honoured.

"If Mr. Fraser goes ahead with this breach of faith, not only will the dental therapists and dentists lose their jobs, but the



# STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date..... June 3, 1976.

Embargo.....

State Administration Centre,  
Victoria Square, Adelaide,  
South Australia 5001  
228 4811

## CUT BACKS TO SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICES

The South Australian Premier, Mr. Dunstan, today strongly attacked the Federal Government's decision to cut back on funds for free dental care for school children.

Mr. Dunstan said the Federal Government had unilaterally broken its commitment to the States to fund the school dental care programme, which provides free dental treatment for children in South Australian schools. The Federal Government was threatening to withdraw all funds from the scheme unless South Australia agreed to the cut backs.

"In April the Federal Government told the States that they would now have to pay much more towards the cost of the scheme or funds from Canberra would stop", Mr. Dunstan said.

"The Federal Government told us this new arrangement would start from July 1 this year. In the next financial year this will cost South Australia more than \$800,000.

"The South Australian Government has strongly protested against such an arrogant and arbitrary decision. We have written to the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, calling on him to delay implementing the decision for another year and to prepare a formal agreement for a fixed time such as five years so that planning for dental services can proceed properly.

"The Federal Government just doesn't seem to understand that the South Australian Government has guaranteed jobs for 90 dental therapists now being trained and that we have also substantially increased dental undergraduate studentships to train dentists for the programme.

"We have told these students that there will be jobs for them when they finish their courses. We did so on the basis of a commitment from the Federal Government which we believe must be honoured.

"If Mr. Fraser goes ahead with this breach of faith, not only will the dental therapists and students lose their jobs, but the

children of this State will not be given the free dental care to which they are entitled. Children in country schools in particular will be affected".

Mr. Dunstan said South Australia pioneered the free dental care programme in 1967, and the South Australian scheme had been used as the model for a national school dental care programme from 1973.

"Last year, more than 42,000 children in South Australian schools were given free dental care under the scheme, and more than 170,000 have been treated since 1969", Mr. Dunstan said.

"Modern dental clinics have been built at 54 schools in the State and nine mobile clinics take dental care to children in country areas.

"Over the next two years, the Government planned to spend more than \$1.5 million on sixteen new school clinics and up to 20 extra mobile clinics.

"We have planned our programmes on the basis that agreements between the State and Federal Governments would be honoured irrespective of which party was in power in Canberra or Adelaide. We now find that agreements are to be arbitrarily broken at the whim of the Fraser Government".

Mr. Dunstan said the Federal Health Department had told the States that they must contribute 10 percent of capital and training costs for the programme and that the State commitment to field service costs must be increased from 25 to 35 percent. The Federal Department said that if this was not done Federal funds would stop despite the fact that the State's forward planning meant that present employment and building commitments could not be changed until late 1977 or early 1978.

The free school dental service is one of the major activities of the Department of Public Health.

Starting with 16 dental therapists who completed the first two year training course in 1969 the service has expanded and now employs 30 dentists and 110 therapists in 63 clinics. Forty-two therapists will finish their studies at the end of this year and a further 46 will qualify at the end of 1977.

children of this State will not be given the free dental care to which they are entitled. Children in country schools in particular will be affected".

Mr. Dunstan said South Australia pioneered the free dental care programme in 1967, and the South Australian scheme had been used as the model for a national school dental care programme from 1973.

"Last year, more than 42,000 children in South Australian schools were given free dental care under the scheme, and more than 170,000 have been treated since 1969", Mr. Dunstan said.

"Modern dental clinics have been built at 54 schools in the State and nine mobile clinics take dental care to children in country areas.

"Over the next two years, the Government planned to spend more than \$1.5 million on sixteen new school clinics and up to 20 extra mobile clinics.

"We have planned our programmes on the basis that agreements between the State and Federal Governments would be honoured irrespective of which party was in power in Canberra or Adelaide. We now find that agreements are to be arbitrarily broken at the whim of the Fraser Government".

Mr. Dunstan said the Federal Health Department had told the States that they must contribute 10 percent of capital and training costs for the programme and that the State commitment to field service costs must be increased from 25 to 35 percent. The Federal Department said that if this was not done Federal funds would stop despite the fact that the State's forward planning meant that present employment and building commitments could not be changed until late 1977 or early 1978.

The free school dental service is one of the major activities of the Department of Public Health.

Starting with 16 dental therapists who completed the first two year training course in 1969 the service has expanded and now employs 30 dentists and 110 therapists in 63 clinics. Forty-two therapists will finish their studies at the end of this year and a further 46 will qualify at the end of 1977.