



31 JUL, 2026

Trust a dentist, not AI

Hobart Mercury, Hobart

Trust a dentist, not AI

Warnings on cost of misinformation, treatment delays

Elise Kaine

Tasmanian dentists are warning against delayed care, social media fads and AI misinformation ahead of dental health week.

They are issuing a vital message: prioritise seeing the dentist.

With one dentist warning of the rise in AI diagnoses, another says young people are putting off going to the dentist, and both can lead to more extensive and costly problems in the future.

Dr Bing Lee runs practices in Hobart, Rosny and Launceston that perform around 1000 wisdom tooth extractions each year.

He said AI is creating a dangerous false confidence that can delay treatment and allow dental issues to worsen.

“AI can’t see the crack in a tooth, the infection beneath the gum, a dying nerve or impacted wisdom teeth hidden beneath the bone,” Dr Lee

said. “If you’ve got an infected toenail, you can often see what’s wrong. With dentistry, the biggest problem is usually the part you can’t see.”

Dr Lee said AI can be a useful tool for helping patients understand dental conditions once diagnosed, but it can’t replace the clinical examination.

He says more and more patients are arriving with their minds already made up, convinced they know the diagnosis and treatment before they’ve even sat in the dental chair.

Dr Chris Sanzaro is the Australian Dental Association president and director at The Dental Surgery, Newstead.

He urged young people to prioritise their oral health, and said there were significant risks in delaying dental care and the misleading influence of social media trends.

“We see a lot of people put off dental care for a variety of

reasons, and one of the challenges with this age group is that there’s a lot of life left to run,” Dr Sanzaro said. “Things that they put off and don’t get done then cause bigger problems later in life.”

This often leads to “more extensive and expensive treatment further down the track,” including earlier tooth loss and reduced chewing function, he said, emphasising that most dental work is preventable.

Dr Sanzaro said there was a lot of pressure coming from social media for people to have the “perfect white smile” which can lead people to sacrifice genuine dental health for the sake of appearance.

His patients come in with regret over their “Turkey teeth” after travelling overseas for cheaper or cosmetic dental work, often resulting in life-long complications.

The Australian Dental Association found 60 per cent of Australians aged 18-25 reported social media had influenced their decision to pursue cosmetic dental procedures.

Dr Sanzaro said dentists were aware patients had financial limitations.

“It’s about working in partnership with the dentist to say what can I do given the limitations that I’ve got,” he said.

Dental health week in 2026 is focusing on young people’s dental health with the Australian Dental Association’s 2025 Consumer Survey of more than 25,000 Australians suggesting young Australians are delaying or avoiding dental care due to cost pressures, busy lifestyles and reduced access to support.



Dr Chris Sanzaro



31 JUL, 2026

Trust a dentist, not AI

Hobart Mercury, Hobart



Australian Dental Association
oral health promoter Dr
Monica Farrelly with a
patient. Picture: Australian
Dental Association