

# Service fills the gap



AFTER enduring chronic toothache for many years, Kempsey Aboriginal housing officer John Clancy is smiling again, thanks to volunteer dental service Filling the Gap.

Filling the Gap is a not-for-profit organisation that sends volunteer dentists on short-term postings to assist Aboriginal health services.

At Kempsey's Durri Aboriginal Medical Corporation, Filling the Gap sent locum dentists when the service's only dentist resigned and couldn't be replaced.

Mr Clancy said he had spent six years in constant pain and had multiple courses of antibiotics due to a recurring abscess on a front tooth.

"I work in housing and I need to have a decent smile. I was also thinking about what my kids would think," he said.

"I dealt with pain for years. The infection just kept coming back and one dentist had told me he couldn't fix it so I would have to lose my tooth."

When Mr Clancy finally received root canal treatment through Filling the Gap, the volunteer city specialist saved his tooth.

Lindi Gill, Durri's dental therapist who treats the community's children, said Durri had struggled to maintain an adult dental service.

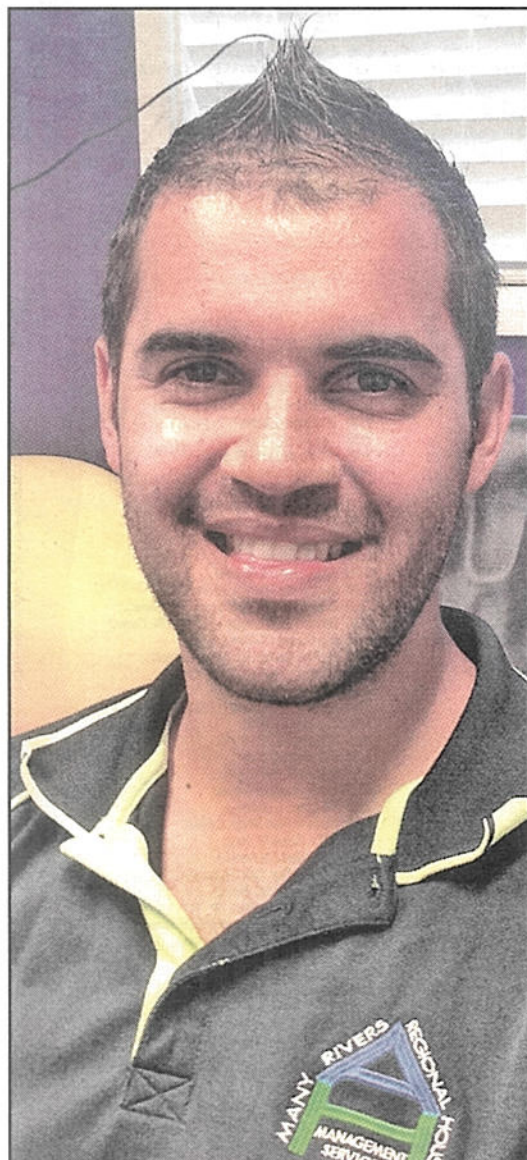
"We'd had a high turnover of dentists, so it was very unstable and then no dentists at all," she said.

"When the first Filling the Gap volunteer locum arrived last year she was very calming and nice and so were all the following locums - they were liked by the community."

The biggest impact of the program, she said, was the reduction in chronic pain from dental problems in the community, plus the willingness of patients to come back for follow-up and preventative dental care.

Durri executive officer for clinical services Leanne Dryden said the community had faced long delays in treatment for people with serious dental problems.

"It is very important to get treatment. We have problems with poor dental hygiene and decay which, if left untreated, can lead to cardiac infections and chronic disease," she said.



Patient John Clancy flashes his new smile.

## Housing officer is all smiles thanks to volunteer dentists

"It's also very important socially and personally to feel comfortable smiling and have self-confidence."

Filling the Gap started in 2006 in partnership with Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns. Recently it has

partnered with Durri in Kempsey and Danila Dilba in Darwin, and has been involved with communities in Boggabilla and Toomelah in northern NSW, setting up a cross-border dental service, based in Goondiwindi,

south-east Queensland.

To find out more about the possibilities of improving dental services through Filling the Gap, email [gael@fillingthegap.com.au](mailto:gael@fillingthegap.com.au) or visit [www.fillingthegap.com.au](http://www.fillingthegap.com.au)

Advertisement



Australian Government

### The Child Care Rebate is NOT income tested



The Australian Government offers two types of financial assistance for child care: the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate.

The Child Care Rebate is not income tested.

It pays up to 50% of your out-of-pocket costs. Up to \$7,500 per child, per year.

The Rebate helps to cover the costs of approved child care, including out of school hours care.

If you use approved child care for work, study or training, you may be eligible.

For more information on what you are entitled to and how to claim, visit [australia.gov.au/mychild](http://australia.gov.au/mychild) or call 13 24 68



**Child Care Rebate**  
Helping families with the cost of child care

Authorised by the Australian Government, Capital Hill, Canberra