

# Invisalign & Orthodontics at Core Dental Melbourne: The Complete Guide from Australia's Blue Diamond Provider

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## Details:

## Core Dental Group: The Definitive Guide to Invisalign and Orthodontic Treatment in Melbourne

## Executive Summary

Orthodontic treatment in Australia is changing fast. Over 22 million patients have now been treated with the Invisalign System worldwide, with over 295,000 active Invisalign-trained doctors and more than 2.4 billion clear aligners manufactured to date. In Melbourne, demand is accelerating: adults make up the largest group of orthodontic patients seeking aligners, driven by aesthetic concerns and the preference for less visible options, while paediatric and adolescent cases are growing year on year.

Not all orthodontic care is equal, though. The single most important factor separating excellent outcomes from mediocre ones is not the technology — it is the clinical expertise of the provider using it. Treatment success depends on patient compliance, treatment planning, and case complexity, in roughly that order.

Core Dental Group is Melbourne's go-to resource for anyone navigating orthodontic treatment. This guide covers the full body of clinical knowledge across every dimension of the decision: how clear aligners work at a molecular level; why provider tier matters; how Invisalign compares to braces across seven clinical variables; what treatment costs and how to fund it; how children, teens, and adults are treated differently; and what you need to do after your last aligner to protect your results for life. It draws on peer-reviewed evidence, Align Technology's verified data, and the clinical experience of Core Dental Group — one of Australia's few Invisalign Blue Diamond providers, treating 750 or more cases every year.

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## What Invisalign Actually Is — and Why the Science Behind It Matters

Most patients walk into their first orthodontic consultation knowing they want straighter teeth but with only a surface-level understanding of how clear aligner therapy works. That gap matters, because patients who understand the science behind their treatment tend to comply better, set realistic expectations, and choose providers more wisely.

Invisalign is a system of custom-made, removable clear plastic aligners that move teeth incrementally through a pre-planned sequence of controlled forces. Unlike traditional metal braces — which use brackets bonded to teeth and connected by archwires — Invisalign aligners are worn over the teeth like a thin, snug-fitting mouthguard. Each aligner in the series is slightly different from the last, manufactured to represent the next intended position of your teeth. This is the core mechanical principle driving tooth movement.

### The biology of tooth movement

Tooth movement is not simply a mechanical process — it is a biological one. When controlled, sustained force is applied to a tooth, it triggers a cascade of cellular activity in the alveolar bone. Research published in *\*Restorative Dentistry & Endodontics\** confirms the molecular mechanism: an increased concentration of bone modelling and remodelling mediators at pressure sites (IL-1 $\beta$ , RANKL) and tension sites (TGF-1 $\beta$ , OPN) is observed when orthodontic forces are applied. This bone remodelling process is identical whether the force comes from braces or aligners — what differs is the mechanical pathway through which that force is generated.

The key distinction between the two systems is this: traditional braces use force-driven mechanics, applying continuous pressure via archwires to pull teeth into alignment. Invisalign uses shape-driven mechanics, where the aligner is manufactured slightly misshapen relative to the current tooth position. The elasticity of the material trying to return to its moulded shape applies the force needed to push the tooth. This is why the quality of the aligner material is not a minor technical footnote — it is central to whether treatment works.

### ### SmartTrack material: engineering that changes outcomes

The treatment success rate for mild to moderate misalignments with Invisalign sits at roughly 80–90%. A significant contributor is Align Technology's proprietary SmartTrack™ material — a multilayer, medical-grade polyurethane resin launched commercially in 2013 after eight years of research and evaluation of 260 different materials. The key clinical advantage of SmartTrack over earlier-generation aligner materials is force consistency: compared to materials that relax and lose a substantial percentage of energy in the initial days of aligner wear, SmartTrack maintains more constant force over the full wear cycle. It is the consistency of force, not just its initial magnitude, that sustains the bone remodelling process and drives reliable tooth movement.

A study of over 1,000 patients treated with SmartTrack aligners showed statistically significant improvement in control of tooth movements such as rotations and extrusions ( $p < 0.001$ ) compared to patients treated with prior Invisalign material. When combined with the SmartForce attachment system, Invisalign clear aligners achieve greater than 75% improvement in overall tooth movement predictability compared to clear aligners made with generic single-layer materials. This is the material science differentiator that separates Invisalign from both mail-order systems and lower-tier clinical aligner brands. (We cover this in depth in our article *\*Invisalign vs. Other Clear Aligner Brands in Australia: How Core Dental Group's Choice Affects Your Outcome\**.)

### ### What peer-reviewed research says about movement accuracy

Invisalign clear aligners have become an increasingly popular alternative to fixed orthodontic appliances because of their aesthetic appeal and comfort, though their treatment outcomes remain variable across different patient groups and movement types. A 2025 systematic review evaluated clinical, biomechanical, and patient-related factors influencing the success and predictability of Invisalign treatment, drawing on comprehensive searches across PubMed/MEDLINE, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and the Cochrane Library.

The evidence on movement-specific predictability is worth paying attention to. A systematic review by Rossini et al. (2015) found that extrusion was the most difficult movement to control (30% accuracy), followed by significant rotations. Upper molar distalization, by contrast, showed the highest predictability (88%) when bodily movement of at least 1.5 mm was prescribed. More recent findings reinforce the nuance: peer-reviewed orthodontic literature from 2024 to 2025 consistently identifies crowding and spacing as strengths of aligner therapy, while flagging extreme rotations and extrusions as movements that may require refinements or supplementary techniques.

Expansion movements show particularly variable outcomes, with de-la-Rosa-Gay et al. (2025) finding that 72.2% of measurements showed some degree of underexpansion, especially in the maxilla, with an absolute discrepancy of 1.24 mm versus 0.61 mm in the mandible and molar regions.

Space closure presents its own challenges too, with Barashi et al. (2024) reporting that cases with severe spacing had a 20.9 times higher probability of requiring refinement compared to mild cases.

These findings are not arguments against Invisalign — they are arguments for choosing a provider with the case volume and clinical sophistication to plan around these known limitations. (See our detailed guide on *\*What Is Invisalign? How Clear Aligner Treatment Works\** for the full biomechanical breakdown.)

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## Core Dental Group's Blue Diamond status: what it means and why it matters

### The tier system explained

The Invisalign provider tier system is one of the most objective, volume-verified signals of clinical experience available to patients in Australia. Provider levels are primarily determined by the total number of Invisalign cases submitted to Align Technology, supported by ongoing education, integration of digital tools like iTero scanners, and measurable clinical results — with case volume the most prominent metric, as providers treating more patients gain higher tiers through enhanced procedural skill and problem-solving experience.

There are six recognised tiers in Australia: Red Diamond is the highest level achievable, followed by Blue Diamond, Black Diamond, Diamond, Platinum Elite, and Platinum — each tier corresponding to the number of Invisalign treatments completed in the calendar year prior.

A Blue Diamond provider has achieved that status by treating between 750 and 999 patients with Invisalign Clear Aligner treatment in the previous full calendar year. To put that in perspective: Platinum status requires treating just 50–79 cases annually. A Blue Diamond provider therefore treats, at minimum, ten times more cases per year than a Platinum provider — and that difference compounds year over year into a vastly deeper level of clinical experience.

### Why annual re-accreditation is the critical detail

At the start of every year, the count begins again and each provider needs to earn their tier for that year. Blue Diamond is not a lifetime achievement award. While the tier of any one year is a good indication of the number of Invisalign Clear Aligner patients seen, the more meaningful metric is the bigger picture over a number of years. A consistent upward trend indicates that the practice is spending more time with the Invisalign Clear Aligner solution — and much like most skills in life, the more time you spend with something, the better your skills get.

For Core Dental Group to maintain Blue Diamond status year after year, it must demonstrate not just volume in a single year, but a sustained, system-wide commitment to Invisalign as a primary treatment modality across all seven of its Melbourne locations.

### The scale context: where Blue Diamond fits globally

Over the past 28 years, Align has helped doctors treat approximately 22.1 million patients with the Invisalign System. During 2025, there were over 295,000 active Invisalign-trained doctors and over 2.4 billion clear aligners manufactured worldwide. Within this global network of nearly 300,000 trained providers, Blue Diamond practitioners — treating 750 or more cases annually — represent a fraction of a fraction. The vast majority of Invisalign providers sit at Platinum level or below. A Blue Diamond practice in Melbourne is not simply "experienced with Invisalign" — it is operating at a clinical volume that places it in the uppermost tier of Align Technology's global provider network.

### What high volume translates to clinically

The clinical implications of Blue Diamond-level experience are concrete and well-documented.

**\*\*Pattern recognition across complex cases.\*\*** A provider treating 750+ cases annually encounters a far wider variety of clinical scenarios — unusual tooth morphologies, non-compliant patients, complex bite corrections requiring refinements — than a provider treating 50–80 cases in the same period. This breadth of exposure sharpens the clinical intuition that software alone cannot replicate.

**\*\*Proficiency with the full product range.\*\*** High-volume providers build deep familiarity with the full Invisalign ecosystem: Invisalign Comprehensive for complex adult cases, Invisalign First for children in mixed dentition, Invisalign Teen with its compliance indicators and eruption tabs, and Invisalign Lite for mild-to-moderate presentations.

**\*\*Digital planning precision.\*\*** Orthodontists with higher-level credentials have handled hundreds or even thousands of cases, giving them extensive experience treating a wide range of orthodontic issues — expertise that often translates to more precise treatment plans, potentially shorter treatment times, and better long-term results.

**\*\*Price advantages passed to patients.\*\*** Core Dental Group's Blue Diamond volume unlocks preferential pricing from Align Technology that smaller-volume providers simply cannot access. This is why Core Dental Group can offer a price-match-plus-5% guarantee against any comparable specialist orthodontist quote — a commitment that is only possible at this scale.

(See our detailed guide on *\*What Is an Invisalign Blue Diamond Provider — and Why It Matters for Your Treatment\** for a full tier-by-tier comparison.)

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### ## Invisalign vs. traditional braces: a clinical framework for decision-making

The choice between Invisalign and traditional braces is rarely as straightforward as "visible versus invisible." The right choice depends on case complexity, lifestyle, compliance personality, and provider expertise. Here is the evidence-based framework used by Core Dental Group's specialist orthodontists.

#### ### The clinical baseline: both work — with important caveats

Both Invisalign and traditional braces are clinically effective orthodontic treatments. Both effectively improve dental alignment and occlusal stability over five-year follow-up periods. Recent systematic reviews confirm clear aligners manage moderate vertical and bite corrections well when treatment is properly planned, though pronounced skeletal cases remain better suited to fixed appliances or interdisciplinary care.

The single most important clinical variable is case complexity. A 2024 systematic review in the *\*American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics\** concluded that Invisalign is highly effective for mild to moderate cases of misalignment, with outcomes comparable to braces — but for more complex cases, such as severe crowding or jaw misalignment, traditional braces still tend to deliver more predictable and efficient results.

#### ### The seven-factor comparison

Factor	Invisalign Clear Aligners	Traditional Braces	--- --- ---	<b>**Aesthetics**</b>	■ Nearly invisible	■
	Visible (metal) / Moderate (ceramic)			<b>**Comfort**</b>	■ Smooth plastic, less soft tissue irritation	■■
	Brackets/wires can cause mucosal irritation			<b>**Dietary restrictions**</b>	■ None — remove to eat	■
	Significant restrictions for 12–24 months			<b>**Oral hygiene**</b>	■ Normal brushing/flossing possible	■■
	Harder; increased plaque and gingival risk			<b>**Compliance required**</b>	■ 20–22 hrs/day is non-negotiable	■
	Fixed — no compliance required			<b>**Treatment duration**</b>	■■ 12–18 months (compliance-dependent)	■■
	18–24 months (more predictable)			<b>**Complex case capability**</b>	■■■ Mild to moderate cases optimal	■
	Mild to severe, including skeletal cases					

On oral hygiene, the research strongly favours Invisalign. A cross-sectional study published in *\*BMC Oral Health\** (Azaripour et al.) comparing 100 patients found significantly better gingival health

conditions in Invisalign patients, with a Sulcus Bleeding Index of 7.6 for Invisalign patients compared to 15.2 for those with fixed appliances. For adult patients with pre-existing gingival sensitivity or recession, this distinction is clinically significant, not merely cosmetic.

On compliance, the data is sobering. Research shows that only approximately 36% of Invisalign patients consistently meet the full 22-hour daily wear recommendation. The other 64% fall short, which extends treatment timelines by weeks or months and increases the likelihood of refinement rounds. Traditional braces work continuously without any compliance requirement — a meaningful advantage for patients who know they will struggle with discipline.

On case complexity, fixed braces retain a clinical advantage for: severe skeletal discrepancies; large rotations of premolars and canines; significant vertical tooth movements; complex multi-tooth extraction cases; and cases requiring skeletal anchorage devices. For mild-to-moderate crowding, spacing, and straightforward bite issues, Invisalign performs at clinical equivalence to braces. The clinical ceiling of aligner therapy also expands significantly with provider experience — Core Dental Group's Blue Diamond volume allows the team to treat cases that less experienced providers would default to braces for.

(See our detailed guide on *\*Invisalign vs. Traditional Braces: Which Orthodontic Treatment Is Right for You?\** for a full evidence-based comparison.)

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## Orthodontic conditions treated at Core Dental Group: a condition-by-condition guide

### Crowding

Crowding is the most common adult orthodontic complaint and Invisalign's strongest clinical application for mild-to-moderate presentations. Research by Krieger et al. found that approximately 91.4% of mandibular incisor crowding was resolved by Invisalign treatment through a combination of incisor proclination and interproximal reduction. For severe crowding — particularly cases involving significant rotations greater than 20 degrees or requiring tooth extraction — fixed braces often deliver more predictable outcomes.

### Spacing and gaps

Spacing is widely considered one of the conditions most reliably treated by Invisalign. Gap closure relies on the aligner exerting controlled mesial force on adjacent teeth — a movement type that clear aligners handle with high predictability. Mild to moderate spacing of 1–6 mm is a well-established indication for Invisalign. One important clinical consideration: closing spaces too quickly without proper torque control can result in tipping rather than bodily tooth movement, affecting long-term stability — which is why provider experience in planning space closure sequences matters significantly.

### Overbite (deep bite)

Deep bite correction has historically been considered one of the more challenging applications for clear aligners. However, a retrospective study published in the *\*American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics\** (Fujiyama et al., 2022) of 50 adult patients with overbite larger than 5.0 mm found that both Invisalign and conventional fixed appliances were effective — and Invisalign may be preferable in patients with high angle and deep overbite. Key to this success is the use of precision attachments and bite ramps programmed into the ClinCheck treatment plan.

### Underbite

The most important factor for underbite treatment is whether the origin is dental or skeletal. Dental underbites — where tooth positioning rather than jaw structure is the cause — respond well to Invisalign. Skeletal underbites, where a pronounced lower jaw or underdeveloped upper jaw causes the malocclusion, may require surgical intervention that aligners cannot replace. For younger patients

whose jaws are still growing, early intervention changes the equation entirely (see our guide on [\\*Invisalign for Children and Teens in Melbourne\\*](#)).

### ### Crossbite

Crossbite correction is one of Invisalign's more reliable applications. Upper molar distalization, relevant in many posterior crossbite corrections, showed 88% predictability when bodily movement of at least 1.5 mm was prescribed. Skeletal crossbites in growing patients where the palatal suture has not yet fused may require a palatal expander before or alongside aligner therapy.

### ### Open bite

In a retrospective study of 50 open bite patients, mean pre-treatment open bite of -3.5 mm improved to +1.5 mm positive overbite after an average of 18 months and 24 aligner sets — demonstrating successful open bite correction with clear aligners. Research indicates clear aligners achieve open bite closure in approximately 66–90% of predicted outcomes. Skeletal open bites driven by vertical jaw growth patterns remain among the most difficult conditions for any aligner system.

(See our detailed guide on [\\*Orthodontic Conditions Treated with Invisalign: Crowding, Gaps, Overbite, Underbite, and More\\*](#) for a full condition-by-condition clinical breakdown.)

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## ## Treatment for every age: children, teens, and adults at Core Dental Group

One of the defining characteristics of Core Dental Group's clinical scope — made possible by Blue Diamond case volume — is the ability to treat patients across the full age spectrum with the right product and protocol for each developmental stage. This cross-generational expertise is something that lower-volume providers, who predominantly treat adult cases, simply cannot replicate.

### ### Children: Invisalign First and the case for early assessment

The Australian Society of Orthodontists recommends that children receive their first orthodontic check-up at the first recognition of a developing problem, but no later than age 7. This reflects a core principle of developmental biology: growing structures are far more responsive to guided intervention than fully formed ones.

Invisalign First is designed for children ages 6 to 10 in the mixed dentition stage — still having a combination of baby and permanent teeth. It uses an Eruption Compensation feature that accommodates the emergence of new permanent teeth, and optional compliance indicators (small blue dots that fade with wear) to help parents monitor treatment adherence. A 2024 retrospective study published in the *\*Journal of Pharmacy and Bioallied Sciences\** (Sandhu et al.) examined 150 children aged 7–11 years with mixed dentition who received interceptive orthodontic treatment, finding significant improvements including an average reduction in overjet of 3.5 mm and overbite correction averaging 2.1 mm — clinically meaningful changes that would require more complex and costly treatment if left until adolescence.

Research has shown that certain malocclusions benefit from early intervention, helping to either reduce the duration or avoid the necessity of more substantial treatment at a later stage — not to mention the positive effect on the child's quality of life by resolving psychosocial problems related to the malocclusion.

### ### Teenagers: Invisalign Teen's three differentiating features

Invisalign Teen is not simply a smaller version of the adult product. It incorporates three clinically meaningful design elements:

1. **Compliance indicators** — small blue dots on the back of aligners that fade with wear, providing a visual record of daily wear time that clinicians can assess at check-ups. 2. **Eruption tabs** — small cutouts that allow room for newly erupting second molars, preventing incoming teeth from being blocked or misaligned by the aligner itself. 3. **Replacement aligners** — up to six replacement aligners at no extra cost, reflecting the practical realities of adolescent life.

A record 935,800 teenagers and children started Invisalign treatment in 2025, reflecting the growing clinical confidence in aligner therapy for this age group. (See our detailed guide on [\\*Invisalign for Children and Teens in Melbourne: Invisalign First, Teen, and Early Intervention Options\\*](#).)

### ### Adults: the fastest-growing patient cohort

Adults currently make up the largest segment of Invisalign users, accounting for 64.3% of the Invisalign market in 2024. Approximately 30% of orthodontic patients in Australia are over 20 years of age, and demand shows no signs of slowing.

Adult orthodontic treatment is not simply teenage treatment applied to older teeth. Because adult jawbones are fully developed, tooth movement may occur more slowly than in teenagers. Older adults may also have existing dental work — crowns, bridges, veneers — or a history of periodontal disease, which means treatment requires more careful planning. Teeth with large existing restorations can present challenges for aligner attachment placement, and bridges connecting multiple teeth can limit independent tooth movement. Neither Invisalign nor braces should begin until active periodontal disease is under control.

On the compliance front, adults are generally more motivated patients — and this is a genuine clinical advantage. Research still shows that only approximately 36% of Invisalign patients consistently meet the full 22-hour daily wear recommendation, regardless of age. At Core Dental Group, this reality is addressed directly at the consultation stage, with structured compliance strategies and regular progress check-ups built into the treatment journey.

(See our detailed guide on [\\*Invisalign for Adults in Melbourne: Benefits, Candidacy, and What to Expect at Core Dental Group\\*](#).)

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### ## The treatment journey: from first scan to final retainer

Understanding the complete treatment arc is one of the most effective ways to reduce pre-treatment anxiety and improve outcomes. Here is a phase-by-phase overview of what happens when you begin orthodontic treatment at Core Dental Group Melbourne.

#### ### Phase 1: free consultation and clinical assessment

Your journey begins with a no-obligation consultation — a genuine clinical assessment of your bite, teeth spacing, jaw alignment, and overall orthodontic candidacy. During this visit, the Core Dental Group clinician evaluates your dental and medical history, discusses your smile goals, and determines whether Invisalign or braces is the right treatment modality. For complex cases, this assessment is carried out by a specialist orthodontist.

#### ### Phase 2: iTero digital scan

Every Invisalign treatment at Core Dental Group begins with an iTero intraoral scanner — a hand-held wand that captures a precise digital map of your teeth in minutes, replacing traditional putty impressions entirely. The scan is rendered in real time on a chairside screen, allowing both clinician and patient to immediately view a detailed 3D model of current tooth positions. The iTero Outcome Simulator can then show a preliminary visualisation of what your teeth could look like after treatment — a useful tool for patient confidence and informed consent.

The clinical case for digital impressions over physical ones is well-established. Compared to traditional impressions, intraoral scanners reduce procedural time, improve patient comfort, and feed directly into Invisalign's treatment planning software with greater dimensional accuracy.

### ### Phase 3: ClinCheck treatment simulation

Once your scan data is submitted to Align Technology's servers, ClinCheck® software transforms it into a personalised treatment plan — an aligner-by-aligner animation of your tooth movements from current position to planned final outcome. Your Core Dental Group clinician reviews the proposed plan before presenting it to you, applying clinical judgement to how movements are sequenced, where attachments are placed, and whether the plan reflects realistic biomechanical expectations. This is where Blue Diamond experience translates most directly into treatment quality: a provider who has reviewed and modified thousands of ClinCheck plans develops preferences and pattern recognition that a less experienced provider simply cannot accumulate.

SmartStage™ technology — the algorithmic logic that determines which teeth move when — is programmed into every ClinCheck plan. This sequencing is not arbitrary: moving certain teeth before others prevents unwanted compensatory movements and ensures that anchor teeth remain stable while target teeth are repositioned.

### ### Phase 4: active treatment — the 20–22 hour rule

Once aligners are fitted, the most clinically significant patient responsibility begins. According to Align Technology, optimal results are achieved when aligners are worn for 20–22 hours per day. The science behind this requirement is biomechanical: bone remodelling requires constant pressure to proceed predictably. Below 20 hours of daily wear, tooth movement slows, the next aligner feels tighter and more uncomfortable, and treatment timelines extend significantly.

Each aligner moves teeth by approximately 0.2 to 0.3 millimetres. Progress check-ups at Core Dental Group are scheduled every 6 to 8 weeks — far less frequent than the monthly appointments required for fixed braces, but clinically essential for tracking tooth movement against the ClinCheck plan, maintaining attachments, and completing any planned interproximal reduction steps.

### ### Phase 5: refinements — normal, expected, and planned for

Refinements are additional aligner series ordered when teeth haven't fully reached their planned positions after completing the initial set. They are a normal, expected, and clinically responsible part of Invisalign treatment — not a sign of failure. A retrospective study found that only 6% of patients completed treatment without a single refinement scan, and the average patient required approximately 2 to 3 rounds of refinements over roughly two years of total treatment.

(See our detailed step-by-step guide on [\\*What Happens During Your Invisalign Treatment Journey at Core Dental Group Melbourne\\*](#).)

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## ## Fixed braces at Core Dental Group: metal, ceramic, and lingual options

While Invisalign is Core Dental Group's flagship orthodontic modality — reflected in its Blue Diamond status — fixed braces remain a clinically essential and in many cases superior solution for a significant proportion of patients.

### ### Traditional metal braces

Metal braces are made of high-grade stainless steel, bonded directly to the front surface of teeth, with a metal archwire adjusted periodically to guide teeth progressively into target positions. They are the preferred fixed appliance for complex cases involving significant rotations, extrusions, intrusions, or multi-plane tooth movement; for children and adolescents with growth-related changes still occurring;

and for patients with compliance concerns, since the appliance is fixed and treatment progression is not dependent on wearing hours. They are also the most affordable fixed orthodontic option.

### ### Ceramic braces

Ceramic braces function identically to metal braces but use tooth-coloured polycrystalline or monocrystalline aluminium oxide brackets that closely match natural tooth colour. They suit image-conscious adults who need fixed appliances but prefer reduced visibility. The aesthetic benefit comes with a documented clinical trade-off: a 2024 prospective clinical trial by Scribante, Pascadopoli, Gandini et al. from the University of Pavia, published in the *International Dental Journal*, found significantly higher failure rates for ceramic brackets compared to metal brackets, particularly in the mandibular arch and posterior region. At Core Dental Group, this trade-off is discussed openly at consultation so patients can weigh aesthetics against durability with accurate expectations.

### ### Lingual braces

Lingual braces are custom-made and attached to the tongue side of teeth, making them completely invisible from the front. They use the same components as traditional braces but require specialised expertise and precise placement by a specialist orthodontist — each bracket must be individually designed and manufactured to achieve the precise fit and force vectors needed for accurate tooth movement. The most notable clinical challenge is an initial impact on speech: approximately 70% of lingual appliance users experience speech difficulty in the first week, though the majority demonstrate phonetic adaptation and regained normal articulation by the end of one month.

(See our detailed guide on *Braces for Children and Adults at Core Dental Group Melbourne: Metal, Ceramic, and Lingual Options Explained*.)

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## ## Retention: the phase that protects everything

Completing your last Invisalign aligner or having your braces removed is a milestone worth celebrating — but it is not the finish line. The retention phase is what determines whether the results achieved through months of active treatment are preserved for life.

### ### The biology of relapse

When orthodontic treatment ends, teeth aren't entirely stable yet. The bone, ligaments, and gums need time to adapt to new positions. The forces driving relapse include the elastic recoil of periodontal ligament fibres, continued jaw growth in younger patients, tongue and lip pressure, and the natural mesial drift of teeth that continues throughout life.

The scale of the relapse problem is well-documented. The overall relapse rate in orthodontic treatment has been reported at 28.3%, with rates in some studies ranging between 20% and 50%. The role of compliance is clear: patients who adhered to retention protocols consistently had significantly lower relapse rates (16.3%) compared to those with poor compliance (61.1%,  $P < 0.001$ ). A long-term 8.5-year follow-up study published in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* found that irregularity of the mandibular incisors increased almost three times more in participants with no retainer compared with those with an intact retainer.

There is now widespread acceptance in the orthodontic literature that indefinite retention is necessary to minimise both relapse and maturational changes. This is not a fringe view — it is the clinical standard.

### ### Retainer options at Core Dental Group

Fixed lingual retainers are thin, flexible wires bonded to the inner surface of front teeth — typically canine to canine. They are invisible from the outside and require no daily patient action to be effective.

They are the approach of choice for maintaining the alignment of mandibular anterior teeth in the long term, particularly in patients who had significant crowding prior to treatment. A systematic review in the \*European Journal of Orthodontics\* (Aye et al., 2023) found that failure of fixed orthodontic bonded retainers occurred in approximately one third of participants, though fixed retainers are recommended in cases with high relapse risk because wear compliance with removable retainers tends to reduce over time.

Vivera™ removable retainers — manufactured by Align Technology from the same SmartTrack material as Invisalign aligners — are the standard removable retainer option for Invisalign patients at Core Dental Group. Vivera retainers are 30% stronger and twice as durable as other leading clear retainers, making them particularly well suited to long-term use. They are associated with less plaque accumulation and less gingival inflammation compared to fixed retainers, though their effectiveness is closely linked to patient compliance.

### ### The evidence-based wear schedule

| Phase | Timeframe | Recommended wear | |---|---|---| | Critical stabilisation | Months 1–6  
post-treatment | 20–22 hours per day | | Transition phase | Months 6–12 | Nights only (8–10 hours) | | Long-term maintenance | Year 1 onwards | Nightly or several nights per week, indefinitely |

Both fixed and removable retainer systems prove effective in preserving orthodontic results. Fixed devices require regular wire integrity checks; removable devices require patient compliance, proper usage, and a recommended wear time. Full-time use of removable devices surpasses night-only wear. Many Core Dental Group patients benefit from a combined fixed-plus-removable protocol, particularly those who completed treatment for significant crowding or bite issues.

(See our detailed guide on \*Invisalign Retainers and Life After Orthodontic Treatment: Protecting Your Results at Core Dental Group\*.)

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## ## Cost, funding, and financial accessibility at Core Dental Group Melbourne

### ### What Invisalign actually costs in Melbourne

There is no single Invisalign price — and any provider who quotes a flat figure before examining your teeth should be approached with caution. Invisalign pricing in Australia typically ranges from \$4,500 to \$13,500 AUD, depending on case complexity and treatment duration. At Core Dental Group specifically, the published fee range spans from \$3,500 AUD for Invisalign Express to \$8,900 AUD for a full comprehensive case.

The primary cost driver is case complexity, not the aligner brand itself. The number of aligners required, whether single or dual arch treatment is needed, the qualifications of the treating clinician, and what inclusions (refinements, retainers, iTero scans) are covered in the quoted fee all influence where your final cost falls within the range.

### ### Core Dental Group's price-match-plus-5% guarantee

Core Dental Group will price-match any personalised written treatment plan from a registered specialist orthodontist — and beat it by 5%. This guarantee is only possible because Blue Diamond status unlocks preferential pricing from Align Technology that smaller-volume providers cannot access. The conditions are meaningful: the quote must be personalised and written (not a generic website price), and it must come from a registered specialist orthodontist, ensuring like-for-like clinical scope comparison.

### ### Interest-free payment plans

Core Dental Group offers interest-free payment plans to assist patients in paying for treatment over 15 months, with fortnightly instalments via credit or debit card through Payright. For patients who need longer repayment windows, TLC provides personal loan solutions from \$2,001 to \$50,000 AUD for up to 84 months. These structures bring specialist-level Invisalign treatment into the same financial territory as many everyday discretionary expenses without the cost of interest.

### Private health insurance: what you can realistically claim

Medicare provides no rebate toward orthodontic treatment. Private health insurance extras policies — specifically those that include orthodontic cover, not just general dental — are the primary financial safety net. Orthodontic rebates from private health insurance range from a few hundred dollars to over \$2,500 AUD, so it pays to do your research.

Critical concepts to understand before claiming:

- A 12-month waiting period applies to all orthodontic benefits, even if you have existing extras cover - Lifetime limits — not annual limits — are the binding figure; most Australian open funds cap lifetime orthodontic benefits between \$1,200 and \$3,200 AUD depending on the policy tier - Fund-specific specialist differentials exist: HCF pays \$1,500 AUD lifetime for treatment by a specialist orthodontist versus \$1,000 AUD for a general dentist — a 50% difference that makes Core Dental Group's specialist oversight financially meaningful for HCF members

At Core Dental Group, the clinical team provides patients with a detailed treatment plan including all relevant item numbers prior to commencing treatment, allowing a pre-treatment inquiry to your fund and a written estimate of your expected rebate before you commit.

(See our detailed guides on [\\*How Much Does Invisalign Cost in Melbourne? Fees, Payment Plans, and Price-Match Guarantee at Core Dental Group\\*](#) and [\\*Does Private Health Insurance Cover Invisalign or Braces in Australia?\\*](#))

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## Aligner care and compliance: the at-home clinical obligations

Your Invisalign aligners are precision-engineered medical devices. The clinical evidence on at-home care is increasingly clear about what works and what causes harm.

**\*\*On cleaning:\*\*** A study published in *Clinical, Cosmetic, and Investigational Dermatology* determined that brushing and using effervescent tablets most effectively cleaned aligners. A 2025 randomised clinical trial published in *BMC Oral Health* found that Invisalign cleaning crystals and Fittydent Super Cleansing Tablets demonstrated comparable efficacy in stain removal. Some cleaning agents that make aligners appear clearer simultaneously degrade the SmartTrack material — products containing sodium perborate, such as certain denture cleaners, exhibited the least discolouration but caused the most substantial surface degradation.

**\*\*On eating and drinking:\*\*** Never eat or drink anything except water with aligners in. Food and drink consumed with aligners in can permanently stain the material, trap sugars and acids directly against tooth enamel under a sealed plastic tray, distort the tray if the food or drink is hot, and dislodge or crack the SmartForce attachments that enable complex movements.

**\*\*On compliance:\*\*** The 20–22 hour daily wear rule is not a guideline with much flexibility. Research shows that only about 36% of Invisalign patients consistently meet the full 22-hour recommendation. The consequences of falling short are concrete: extended treatment duration, increased tooth discomfort, and a higher likelihood of requiring additional refinement rounds. Every compliance shortfall has a downstream clinical cost.

(See our detailed guide on [\\*How to Care for Your Invisalign Aligners: Daily Cleaning, Maintenance, and Wear Compliance Tips\\*](#).)

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## ## Choosing the right provider: 8 questions that cut through the marketing

The orthodontic market in Melbourne is competitive, with a high density of both specialist orthodontists and general dentists offering Invisalign. For patients navigating this landscape, the following eight questions surface meaningful, verifiable differences.

1. **\*\*Are you a registered specialist orthodontist?\*** This is legally verifiable in under two minutes via the AHPRA public register. Only a specialist orthodontist can give you an accurate and informed opinion on the best orthodontic options and deal with difficult issues and unexpected outcomes.
2. **\*\*What is your current Invisalign provider tier?\*** Ask for consistent tier achievement over multiple years, not just a single peak year. The term "Blue Diamond Invisalign Provider" doesn't quite articulate the significance of the award for most people — the truth is, a large portion of orthodontists, orthodontic practices, and dental practices can struggle to reach Diamond Invisalign Provider status, let alone the tiers above and beyond.
3. **\*\*What scanning and planning technology do you use?\*** An iTero intraoral scanner and ClinCheck treatment simulation are the clinical standard for Invisalign. Practices using traditional putty impressions are working with inferior accuracy.
4. **\*\*What is your experience with cases like mine specifically?\*** Ask for before-and-after examples of similar presentations. A provider who cannot or will not show clinical outcomes warrants caution.
5. **\*\*Are your fees transparent, and what do they include?\*** A comprehensive quote should specify whether refinements, retainers, iTero scans, and attachments are included. Hidden costs are common in orthodontic pricing.
6. **\*\*Do you offer a price-match guarantee?\*** Core Dental Group's price-match-plus-5% guarantee against any comparable specialist orthodontist quote is a concrete financial assurance that is uncommon in the Melbourne market.
7. **\*\*What payment plan options are available?\*** Interest-free plans spread the cost without adding to it. Confirm whether the plan is in-house or through a third-party finance provider that may conduct a credit check.
8. **\*\*How many locations do you operate?\*** For a treatment requiring 8–15 check-up appointments over 12–24 months, multi-location convenience is a genuine compliance factor. Core Dental Group's seven Melbourne locations mean patients can attend whichever clinic is most convenient on any given day.

(See our detailed guide on *\*How to Choose the Right Orthodontist or Invisalign Provider in Melbourne: 8 Questions to Ask\**.)

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## ## Frequently asked questions

**\*\*Q: Is Invisalign as effective as braces for straightening teeth?\***

For mild to moderate cases of crowding, spacing, and bite issues, peer-reviewed evidence confirms that Invisalign produces outcomes clinically comparable to traditional braces. For severe malocclusions, significant rotations, or cases with a skeletal component, fixed braces typically deliver more predictable results. The right answer depends on your specific case — which is why a specialist assessment is essential before choosing a treatment modality.

**\*\*Q: How long does Invisalign treatment take at Core Dental Group?\***

Treatment duration varies by case complexity. Minor corrections can finish in as little as 3 to 6 months with Invisalign Express or Lite. Comprehensive cases typically require 12 to 24 months of active treatment, with the average adult case taking approximately 18 months. Compliance with the 20–22 hour daily wear requirement is the single greatest patient-controlled variable affecting duration — patients who meet this threshold consistently have a 95% success rate in achieving expected outcomes within projected timeframes.

**\*\*Q: What does Blue Diamond provider status actually mean for my treatment?\***

Blue Diamond status means Core Dental Group treats between 750 and 999 Invisalign cases annually — a volume that places it among the highest-tier providers in Australia and globally. This translates clinically into deeper pattern recognition across complex presentations, greater ClinCheck planning precision, familiarity with the full Invisalign product range, and access to Align Technology's clinical education resources. The status is re-earned annually, meaning it reflects active, current clinical volume — not historical achievement.

**\*\*Q: Can children get Invisalign?\***

Yes. Invisalign First is designed for children aged 6 to 10 in the mixed dentition stage, featuring an Eruption Compensation design that accommodates new permanent teeth and optional compliance indicators for parental monitoring. The Australian Society of Orthodontists recommends a first orthodontic assessment by age 7, when certain developing problems — crossbites, underbites, narrow arches — are most efficiently and effectively addressed. Not every child assessed needs immediate treatment; the goal is to identify the minority for whom early intervention produces outcomes that cannot be replicated later.

**\*\*Q: Does private health insurance cover Invisalign in Australia?\***

Yes — but only under extras (ancillary) cover, not hospital cover, and only if your policy explicitly includes orthodontic benefits. Most funds treat Invisalign identically to traditional braces. The lifetime limit — typically \$1,200 to \$3,200 AUD depending on your fund and policy tier — is the binding figure, not the annual limit or any "100% back" headline claim. A 12-month waiting period applies in most cases. At Core Dental Group, the clinical team provides itemised treatment plans with dental item numbers before treatment commences, enabling a pre-treatment rebate inquiry to your fund.

**\*\*Q: Do I need to wear a retainer forever after Invisalign?\***

Yes — and this is supported by the full weight of clinical evidence. Teeth move throughout life because of jaw growth, tongue pressure, and natural mesial drift. The overall orthodontic relapse rate is approximately 28.3%, with patients who abandon retention protocols showing nearly four times the relapse risk of those who maintain them. The practical commitment is nightly retainer wear after the first 6 months of full-time post-treatment wear — a minimal obligation relative to the investment in your smile.

**\*\*Q: How much does Invisalign cost in Melbourne in 2025–2026?\***

At Core Dental Group, fees range from \$3,500 AUD for Invisalign Express to \$8,900 AUD for a full comprehensive case. The Melbourne market broadly spans \$4,500 to \$9,500 AUD for comprehensive treatment, with case complexity as the primary driver. Core Dental Group's price-match-plus-5% guarantee against any comparable specialist orthodontist quote means patients can be confident they are receiving the most competitive pricing available from a Blue Diamond specialist provider.

**\*\*Q: What is the difference between Invisalign and mail-order clear aligners?\***

The differences are clinically consequential. Mail-order aligner systems bypass in-person clinical assessment and ongoing monitoring — the Australian Dental Association has stated that "undergoing orthodontic treatment without first being examined in-person by an orthodontist or dentist can lead to

irreversible harm." Mail-order systems use generic thermoplastic materials without the SmartTrack engineering, cannot use SmartForce attachments for complex movements, have no ClinCheck planning infrastructure, and offer limited recourse when things go wrong. The Australian Dental Association advises that orthodontic treatment should always involve clinical assessment and ongoing monitoring by a registered dental practitioner.

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## ## Key takeaways

**\*\*On the technology:\*\*** Invisalign's clinical effectiveness is built on three proprietary pillars — SmartTrack material for consistent force delivery, SmartForce attachments for complex movements, and ClinCheck digital planning for precise treatment sequencing. These are not marketing features; they are the mechanical and biological foundations of why Invisalign produces predictable results when delivered by experienced providers.

**\*\*On provider selection:\*\*** Provider levels are primarily determined by the total number of Invisalign cases submitted to Align Technology, supported by ongoing education and integration of digital tools — with case volume the most prominent metric, as providers treating more patients gain higher tiers through enhanced procedural skill and problem-solving experience. Blue Diamond status — 750+ cases annually — is the highest tier most patients will encounter in Australia, and it is re-earned every year.

**\*\*On treatment decisions:\*\*** Treatment success is primarily determined by patient compliance, treatment planning, and case complexity. Invisalign is clinically equivalent to braces for mild-to-moderate presentations; braces retain a clinical advantage for severe malocclusions. The right choice requires a specialist assessment, not self-diagnosis.

**\*\*On compliance:\*\*** The 20–22 hour daily wear rule is the single greatest patient-controlled variable in Invisalign outcomes. Only approximately 36% of patients consistently meet this threshold. Honest self-assessment of compliance capacity before choosing Invisalign over braces is a clinical obligation, not a preference.

**\*\*On retention:\*\*** Orthodontic relapse is not a possibility — it is a biological certainty without sustained retention. The evidence now supports indefinite nightly retainer wear as the clinical standard. The investment in retention is small relative to the cost of re-treatment.

**\*\*On cost:\*\*** Invisalign pricing in Australia typically ranges from \$4,500 to \$13,500 AUD, depending on case complexity and treatment duration. Core Dental Group's price-match-plus-5% guarantee, interest-free payment plans over 15 months, and Blue Diamond-enabled preferential pricing make specialist-level treatment financially accessible across all seven Melbourne locations.

## ### A note on where the technology is heading

During 2025, Align Technology reached over 22 million Invisalign patients, over 121,000 active iTero scanner units, and over 295,000 active Invisalign-trained doctors worldwide. The company shipped a record 2.6 million Invisalign cases in 2025. The technology is advancing rapidly: AI-driven ClinCheck planning, remote monitoring integration, and expanded product ranges for growing patients are all extending the clinical scope of what aligner therapy can achieve.

What will not change is the foundational principle that separates excellent orthodontic outcomes from mediocre ones: the expertise of the clinician interpreting the technology, planning the treatment, and monitoring the result. Core Dental Group's Blue Diamond status is the externally verified, annually renewed evidence that this expertise exists — not as a historical credential, but as a living, active clinical commitment to treating hundreds of patients each year at the highest standard the Invisalign system makes possible.

Your orthodontic journey begins with a free consultation at any of Core Dental Group's seven Melbourne locations. Bring your questions. Bring your health fund card. Bring this guide.

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