

# Cosmetic Dentistry Melbourne: Veneers, Teeth Whitening, Bonding & Smile Makeovers Compared

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## Details:

## Cosmetic Dentistry Melbourne: Veneers, Teeth Whitening, Bonding & Smile Makeovers Compared

## Frequently Asked Questions

What is cosmetic dentistry: Elective dental treatments that improve appearance of teeth and gums

Is cosmetic dentistry the same as restorative dentistry: No, restorative dentistry repairs function

Is "cosmetic dentist" a protected title in Australia: No, any AHPRA-registered dentist can offer cosmetic procedures

Who regulates cosmetic dentists in Melbourne: AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency)

Who is best for complex full-mouth cosmetic rehabilitation: Prosthodontist or dentist with postgraduate cosmetic training

Does private health insurance cover veneers in Australia: Typically no, veneers are considered cosmetic

What chemical does professional teeth whitening use: Hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide gel

Can over-the-counter products use high-concentration peroxide: No, only registered dental practitioners can supply above 6% hydrogen peroxide

What concentration does in-chair whitening use: Typically 35–38% hydrogen peroxide

What concentration does take-home whitening use: Typically 10–16% carbamide peroxide

How long does an in-chair whitening appointment take: 60–90 minutes per appointment

How long does take-home whitening treatment last: One to two weeks of daily use

Is one professional whitening type more effective than another: No, all professional types achieve comparable clinical outcomes

Which whitening type shows better results over time: Take-home treatment appears more effective over time

How long do in-chair whitening results last without maintenance: Lightness impact can be lost after four weeks

What extends in-chair whitening results: Whitening strips used as follow-up maintenance

Does teeth whitening work on dental crowns: No, crowns do not respond to peroxide

Does teeth whitening work on porcelain veneers: No, veneers do not respond to whitening

Does teeth whitening work on tetracycline staining: No, not for moderate to severe cases

Does teeth whitening work on fluorosis white spots: No

Does teeth whitening work on trauma-darkened teeth: No

What are the most common whitening side effects: Transient tooth sensitivity and soft tissue irritation

Are whitening side effects permanent: No, they typically resolve within days

Does whitening reduce enamel microhardness: Yes, but changes are mostly reversible

What new technology reduces whitening sensitivity: Hybrid LED/laser lights

In-chair whitening Melbourne CBD cost range: \$600–\$1,000 AUD

Take-home whitening kit from dentist cost range: \$350–\$600 AUD

Over-the-counter whitening product cost range: \$30–\$80 AUD

What is dental bonding: Composite resin applied to teeth to fix chips, stains, or gaps

How many visits does dental bonding require: Usually one visit

Is dental bonding reversible: Yes, it is a lower-commitment cosmetic option

Is dental bonding suitable for bruxism patients: No, resin is susceptible to fracture under grinding

Is dental bonding suitable for large surface coverage: No, composite or porcelain veneers are more appropriate

Dental bonding starting cost for a single surface: From \$198 AUD

Dental bonding cost per tooth range: \$100–\$600 AUD

Typical dental bonding cost per tooth: \$300–\$600 AUD

How long does composite bonding last: Average 4–8 years with proper care

What are veneers: Thin shells bonded to the front surface of teeth

What is the 10-year survival rate of porcelain veneers: 95.5% estimated cumulative survival rate

What is the 20-year survival rate of porcelain veneers: Approaches 95% in some studies

How long do porcelain veneers typically last: 10–20 years when properly maintained

Are porcelain veneers reversible: No, enamel removal makes them a permanent commitment

Do porcelain veneers stain: No, the non-porous ceramic surface resists discolouration

How many appointments do porcelain veneers require: 2–4 appointments

Do porcelain veneers bond better to enamel or dentin: Enamel bonding shows higher survival rates

How long do composite veneers last: Average 5–7 years

Are composite veneers more stain-resistant than porcelain: No, composite is more susceptible to staining

Can composite veneers be applied in one visit: Yes, often in a single visit

Are composite veneers cheaper than porcelain veneers: Yes

Is there a cosmetic difference between composite and porcelain veneers: Some studies show no significant statistical difference in perceived improvement

Composite veneer cost per tooth in Melbourne: \$400–\$1,200 AUD

Porcelain veneer cost per tooth in Melbourne: \$1,400–\$3,000 AUD

Does bruxism affect veneer survival: Yes, significantly higher complication rates in bruxism patients

How much higher is veneer debonding risk in bruxers: Nearly three times higher than non-bruxers

How much higher is fracture risk without a night guard: Up to eight times higher than compliant patients

Should bruxism be treated before veneers: Yes, managed with a custom occlusal splint

What is a gum lift: A cosmetic procedure removing excess gum tissue to reshape the gum line

What is another name for a gum lift: Gingivectomy

What defines a gummy smile clinically: Excess gum tissue covering more than 3–4mm of tooth structure

Does whitening fix a gummy smile: No, it is ineffective for this concern

What tool is used in laser gum contouring: A low-frequency laser

Does laser gum contouring require stitches: No

How long is initial healing after a gum lift: 1–2 weeks

Does surgical crown lengthening also remove bone: Yes

Who typically performs surgical crown lengthening: A periodontist

Gum lift cost per tooth in Melbourne: Approximately \$200 AUD per tooth

What is a smile makeover: A coordinated plan combining two or more cosmetic procedures

What is typically done first in a smile makeover: Teeth whitening to establish the target shade

Why is whitening done before veneers: Veneers are colour-matched at placement and cannot be whitened after

Does composite bonding respond to teeth whitening: No

Should whitening be done before or after bonding: Before, so resin is matched to the whitened shade

Minimum smile makeover cost in Melbourne: Under \$2,000 AUD for whitening plus minor bonding

Maximum smile makeover cost in Melbourne: \$25,000 AUD or more for full-arch porcelain with gum contouring

What is the single most underreported risk factor in cosmetic dentistry: Bruxism (teeth grinding)

Do budget clinics sometimes use offshore laboratories: Yes, which can affect appearance and longevity

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## Cosmetic Dentistry Melbourne: Veneers, Teeth Whitening, Bonding & Smile Makeovers Compared

Melbourne patients searching for a better smile run into a frustrating problem pretty quickly: most clinic websites push their own preferred treatments without giving you an honest look at the alternatives.

Someone with mildly stained teeth and a chipped incisor might get steered toward an eight-veneer smile makeover when dental bonding and professional whitening could get them to a comparable result

at a fraction of the cost. On the flip side, a patient with severe discolouration might spend money on repeated whitening cycles that will never touch the intrinsic staining behind their concern.

This guide takes a different approach. It's a clinical, evidence-grounded comparison of the most popular cosmetic dental treatments available in Melbourne — porcelain veneers, composite veneers, professional teeth whitening (in-chair and take-home), dental bonding, gum lifts, and full smile makeover packages — examined across the dimensions that matter most to patients: aesthetics, durability, candidacy, invasiveness, and realistic cost ranges.

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## ## What is cosmetic dentistry? A working definition for Melbourne patients

Cosmetic dentistry covers elective dental treatments that primarily improve the appearance of teeth, gums, and smile, as distinct from restorative dentistry, which repairs function, and general dentistry, which maintains oral health. That distinction matters in Melbourne because it affects AHPRA registration requirements, private health insurance coverage, and the clinical pathway you follow. (For a full map of how cosmetic dentistry relates to general, restorative, and specialist care, see our guide on [\\*Types of Dental Services in Melbourne\\*](#).)

In Australia, "cosmetic dentist" is not a protected title. Any AHPRA-registered general dentist can offer cosmetic procedures. That said, complex full-mouth rehabilitations, cases involving significant gum surgery, or treatments requiring laboratory-fabricated restorations are often best handled by practitioners with postgraduate cosmetic training or specialist registration in prosthodontics. Checking credentials before committing to major cosmetic treatment is essential — a point covered in detail in our guide on [\\*How to Choose a Dentist in Melbourne\\*](#).

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## ## Professional teeth whitening: in-chair vs. take-home

### ### How teeth whitening works

Tooth whitening treatments use hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide gels to restore the natural colour of teeth by removing intrinsic and extrinsic stains. In Australia, only registered dental practitioners are legally permitted to supply bleaching agents above 6% hydrogen peroxide concentration, a regulatory line that separates clinical whitening from over-the-counter products.

### ### Comparing in-chair and take-home systems

Research indicates that all professional whitening treatment types effectively achieve the desired clinical outcomes, with no single method proving more effective than the others. The choice between in-chair and take-home systems still carries some meaningful practical differences, though:

**\*\*In-chair (in-office) whitening\*\*** uses high-concentration hydrogen peroxide gel (typically 35–38%) applied chairside over one or two appointments of 60–90 minutes each. Results are immediate and visually dramatic. Patient satisfaction remains highest with in-office treatments, likely because of the immediate and noticeable results that patients are after when they opt for professional whitening.

**\*\*Take-home whitening\*\*** uses custom-fitted trays loaded with lower-concentration carbamide peroxide gel (typically 10–16%), worn for one to two weeks. Bleaching is an effective treatment for colour change regardless of the type used, although at-home treatment appears more effective over time.

**\*\*Combined protocol:\*\*** Many Melbourne clinics now offer in-chair activation followed by a take-home maintenance kit. In-office treatment with 37.5% hydrogen peroxide increases lightness immediately, but if whitening strips are not used as follow-up, the lightness impact can be lost after four weeks. Whitening strips are a valid and effective option in combination with in-office treatments to extend the whitening effect over time.

### ### Sensitivity and safety

Transient tooth sensitivity and oral soft tissue irritation are the most common side effects, usually mild and resolving within days. Studies have shown that bleaching agents, particularly those with high hydrogen peroxide concentrations, can reduce enamel microhardness, though most of these changes are reversible and don't lead to long-term damage.

Newer in-office systems use hybrid LED/laser lights, which can reduce treatment time and minimise dentinal sensitivity while maintaining the same efficacy in colour change.

### ### Who whitening actually works for

Whitening works best for extrinsic staining from coffee, tea, red wine, and tobacco, and for mild intrinsic yellowing associated with ageing. It does not work on: - Dental crowns, porcelain veneers, or composite restorations (which don't respond to peroxide) - Tetracycline-stained teeth (moderate to severe cases) - Fluorosis-related white spot lesions - Teeth darkened by internal trauma or root canal treatment

### ### Melbourne cost range: teeth whitening

In-chair whitening at Melbourne CBD clinics typically runs \$600–\$1,000 AUD. Take-home kits from a dentist range from \$350–\$600 AUD. Over-the-counter products (whitening strips, paint-on gels) are available from around \$30–\$80 AUD but use lower-concentration formulas and deliver more modest results.

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## ## Dental bonding: the underrated entry-level cosmetic treatment

### ### What dental bonding is

Composite bonding involves a dentist applying layers of composite resin to a tooth to fill in minor chips or cracks, or to cover stains and other imperfections. The material is similar to what's used in a filling, colour-matched to the surrounding tooth and polished after it hardens for a seamless finish.

Unlike porcelain veneers, which require lab work and multiple visits, composite bonding is usually done in a single appointment, making it a practical option for patients who want quick results.

### ### When bonding is the right choice

Dental bonding works well for small chips or cracks on anterior teeth, closing minor gaps between front teeth, reshaping slightly misshapen or short teeth, covering isolated stains that whitening can't address, and patients who want a reversible, lower-commitment cosmetic option.

It's not ideal for patients with heavy grinding (bruxism), since the resin is susceptible to fracture, or for significant colour change across multiple teeth, where whitening or veneers are more appropriate. For large surface coverage, a composite or porcelain veneer is clinically superior.

### ### Melbourne cost range: dental bonding

The cost of composite bonding depends on how much restoration needs to be done, starting from \$198 AUD for a single surface chip on one tooth. For more involved work, costs range from \$100 to \$600 AUD per tooth, with most patients paying between \$300 and \$600 AUD depending on complexity and location. Composite resin restorations typically last 4–8 years with proper care before needing replacement, and may require minor repairs along the way.

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## ## Composite veneers vs. porcelain veneers: a clinical comparison

Veneers are thin shells bonded to the front surface of teeth to improve colour, shape, length, and alignment. Porcelain veneers offer excellent aesthetic results and predictable longevity. Composite veneers are a more conservative option, though with less durability.

### ### Porcelain veneers

A systematic review published in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* analysing 6,500 porcelain laminate veneers found a 95.5% 10-year estimated cumulative survival rate, with some studies reporting survival rates approaching 95% at 20 years.

Key characteristics:

**\*\*Aesthetics:\*\*** Porcelain offers superior translucency and colour stability, making it the better choice for patients who want the most natural and long-lasting cosmetic result.

**\*\*Stain resistance:\*\*** The non-porous ceramic surface resists discolouration from foods and beverages.

**\*\*Longevity:\*\*** Porcelain veneers typically last 10–20 years when properly maintained, with survival rates often exceeding 90%.

**\*\*Irreversibility:\*\*** Tooth preparation permanently removes enamel, so veneers require lifelong maintenance. This is a commitment worth thinking through carefully before proceeding.

**\*\*Bonding substrate matters:\*\*** Ceramic veneers bonded to enamel show higher survival and success rates, with lower complication rates, than those bonded to dentin or teeth with existing composite resin restorations.

**\*\*Process:\*\*** Porcelain veneers require 2–4 appointments covering the initial consultation, tooth preparation, temporary veneers while the lab fabricates the finals, and the bonding appointment.

### ### Composite veneers

Composite veneers, made from tooth-coloured resin, are more conservative, cost less, and can often be applied in a single visit with minimal tooth reduction. They have a shorter lifespan, averaging around 5–7 years, and are more susceptible to staining and chipping.

Within the limitations of clinical retrospective study data, ceramic veneers show higher longevity than direct resin composite veneers. Both treatments deliver high survival rates and are clinically legitimate options.

One point that often gets missed in promotional content: some clinical studies show no significant statistical difference between porcelain and composite veneers in terms of perceived cosmetic improvement, with p-values indicating comparable results. This makes composite veneers a genuinely reasonable choice for patients who prioritise lower upfront cost and reversibility.

### ### The bruxism variable

In a long-term clinical evaluation of porcelain laminate veneers, patients diagnosed with bruxism showed significantly higher complication rates. Veneer debonding was nearly three times more likely in bruxism patients than in non-bruxers. Patients who needed an occlusal splint (night guard) but didn't consistently use one showed fracture risks up to eight times higher than compliant patients.

This is a candidacy factor that many cosmetic dentistry websites underreport. Active bruxism is a relative contraindication for both veneer types and needs to be managed with a custom occlusal splint before or alongside veneer placement.

### ### Melbourne cost range: veneers

Composite veneers in Melbourne typically run \$400–\$1,200 AUD per tooth. Porcelain veneers run \$1,400–\$3,000 AUD per tooth. Costs in metropolitan Melbourne are generally higher than in regional

areas, reflecting overheads, property costs, and local demand.

Most Australian private health insurance policies don't cover veneers, since they're considered cosmetic rather than medically necessary. Out-of-pocket expenses are the norm.

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## ## Gum lifts (gingivectomy): the overlooked smile frame treatment

Many Melbourne patients focus exclusively on tooth colour and shape while overlooking the gum line. A gummy smile, where excessive gum tissue covers more than 3–4mm of tooth structure, can make otherwise healthy teeth appear short, uneven, or immature. No amount of whitening or veneering will fully address this without first correcting the gum architecture.

A gum lift (gingivectomy) removes a small amount of excess gum tissue and reshapes the gum line to create better proportions between gums and teeth.

There are two approaches. Laser gum contouring uses a low-frequency laser to reshape and remove excess gum tissue, increasing the amount of tooth structure exposed. Performed under local anaesthetic, it's minimally invasive with quick healing, no stitches required, and usually no bruising or swelling. Surgical crown lengthening, which also removes underlying bone, is required when the gummy smile is driven by altered passive eruption or excess alveolar bone. This procedure is typically performed by a periodontist.

Initial healing occurs within 1–2 weeks, with full tissue healing continuing over several weeks.

### ### Melbourne cost range: gum lifts

In Melbourne, gum lift costs sit at around \$200 AUD per tooth. Total treatment costs vary based on the number of teeth treated and whether bone removal is required. For patients where gum disease is a contributing factor, a periodontist referral may be warranted — see our guide on *\*Specialist Dentistry in Melbourne\** for more on when periodontal specialist involvement is appropriate.

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## ## Smile makeovers: when multiple treatments are combined

A smile makeover is a coordinated treatment plan combining two or more cosmetic procedures to achieve a comprehensive aesthetic result. In Melbourne, a typical smile makeover might include:

1. **Teeth whitening** (performed first, to establish the target shade)
2. **Composite or porcelain veneers** (colour-matched to the whitened shade)
3. **Gum contouring** (to correct asymmetry before veneer placement)
4. **Dental bonding** (for isolated chips or gaps not requiring full veneers)
5. **Orthodontic pre-treatment** (if significant misalignment exists — see our guide on *\*Orthodontics in Melbourne\**)

Sequencing matters here. Teeth whitening should be done before veneers if only some teeth are being treated, since non-veneered teeth need to be whitened first so everything matches. Veneers are colour-matched at placement and can't be whitened afterwards.

The same logic applies to bonding. Composite resin doesn't respond to whitening the way natural teeth do, so whitening should be completed before any bonding work. That way, the resin can be matched to the brighter, whitened shade.

### ### What drives smile makeover cost variation in Melbourne?

Total costs can range from under \$2,000 AUD (whitening plus bonding on one or two teeth) to \$25,000 AUD or more (full-arch porcelain veneers with gum contouring and orthodontic pre-treatment). The main drivers of cost variation are the number of teeth treated, material choice (composite vs. porcelain),

need for preparatory treatments such as a gum lift or restorative work, dentist experience and postgraduate cosmetic training, and laboratory quality. Budget clinics may use offshore laboratories or lower-grade materials to reduce their per-tooth price, which can affect the natural appearance, colour stability, and longevity of the result.

For a broader overview of dental costs across all treatment categories in Melbourne, see our guide on [\\*Dental Costs in Melbourne: How Much Does a Dentist Cost in 2025?\\*](#)

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### ## Side-by-side comparison: which cosmetic treatment fits your concern?

| **\*\*Smile concern\*\*** | **\*\*Best-fit treatment\*\*** | **\*\*Alternative\*\*** | **\*\*Avoid\*\*** | |---|---|---|---| | Yellow/stained teeth (extrinsic) | Professional whitening | Take-home trays | OTC strips only | | Intrinsic staining (tetracycline, fluorosis) | Porcelain veneers | Composite veneers | Whitening alone | | Single chipped or cracked tooth | Dental bonding | Composite veneer | Porcelain veneer (over-treatment) | | Multiple chips + discolouration | Composite veneers | Porcelain veneers | Whitening alone | | Permanent colour change + longevity | Porcelain veneers | Composite veneers | Bonding only | | Gummy smile / short-looking teeth | Gum lift (gingivectomy) | Veneers (adjunct) | Whitening (ineffective) | | Minor gaps between teeth | Bonding or composite veneers | Invisalign | Porcelain veneers (may be excess) | | Full smile transformation | Smile makeover (staged) | Phased treatment | Single treatment only |

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### ## Key takeaways

**\*\*Whitening is the lowest-risk entry point\*\*** but only addresses extrinsic and mild intrinsic staining. All professional whitening types achieve comparable clinical outcomes, though at-home treatment appears more effective over time.

**\*\*Porcelain veneers deliver the most durable result\*\*** for patients with multiple cosmetic concerns, but they're irreversible and require a lifelong commitment to maintenance. Multiple clinical studies confirm excellent aesthetic results and patient satisfaction. The two most critical factors for successful outcomes are bonding to enamel and the absence of parafunctional habits like grinding.

**\*\*Composite veneers and bonding offer lower-cost, more reversible alternatives\*\*** with acceptable clinical longevity, making them a solid fit for younger patients or those who want to trial cosmetic changes before committing to porcelain.

**\*\*Bruxism is the single most underreported risk factor\*\*** in cosmetic dentistry candidacy. Patients who grind their teeth need to address this with a night guard before or alongside any veneer or bonding treatment.

**\*\*Gum architecture matters as much as tooth colour.\*\*** A gum lift is frequently the missing piece in a smile makeover plan, and leaving it out can undermine even the most technically excellent veneer result.

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### ## Conclusion

Cosmetic dentistry in Melbourne isn't a one-size-fits-all market, and the treatment that delivers the best outcome depends on the nature of the concern, the patient's budget, their tolerance for irreversible procedures, and their oral health baseline. The most common mistake Melbourne patients make is chasing a treatment they've seen on social media rather than one matched to their specific clinical situation.

The evidence is clear that porcelain and composite veneers, professional whitening, and dental bonding all deliver meaningful aesthetic improvements — but their indications differ substantially. A comprehensive cosmetic consultation with an AHPRA-registered dentist experienced in smile design is the essential first step before committing to any treatment.

For patients whose cosmetic concerns overlap with structural damage or missing teeth, see our guides on *\*Restorative Dentistry in Melbourne\** and *\*Dental Implants in Melbourne\** to understand where cosmetic and restorative care intersect. For those exploring orthodontic alternatives to veneers for alignment concerns, our guide on *\*Orthodontics in Melbourne: Braces vs. Invisalign\** provides a detailed comparison.

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## ## Label facts summary

> **Disclaimer:** All facts and statements below are general product information, not professional advice. Consult relevant experts for specific guidance.

### ### Verified label facts

No product specification data was provided. No label facts could be extracted.

### ### General product claims

No product specification data was provided. However, the following verifiable regulatory, clinical, and pricing facts were extracted from the FAQ and editorial content:

**\*\*Regulatory and credentialing\*\*** - "Cosmetic dentist" is not a protected title in Australia; any AHPRA-registered dentist may offer cosmetic procedures - Only registered dental practitioners may supply bleaching agents above 6% hydrogen peroxide concentration in Australia

**\*\*Teeth whitening — clinical specifications\*\*** - In-chair whitening uses typically 35–38% hydrogen peroxide - Take-home whitening uses typically 10–16% carbamide peroxide - In-chair appointments run 60–90 minutes - Take-home treatment duration: 1–2 weeks of daily use - In-chair lightness impact can be lost after four weeks without maintenance - Side effects (transient sensitivity, soft tissue irritation) typically resolve within days - Enamel microhardness changes from bleaching agents are mostly reversible

**\*\*Dental bonding — clinical specifications\*\*** - Procedure typically completed in one visit - Average lifespan: 4–8 years with proper care - Cost range: from \$198 AUD (single surface); \$100–\$600 AUD per tooth; typical \$300–\$600 AUD per tooth

**\*\*Composite veneers — clinical specifications\*\*** - Average lifespan: 5–7 years - Can often be applied in a single visit - Cost range in Melbourne: \$400–\$1,200 AUD per tooth

**\*\*Porcelain veneers — clinical specifications\*\*** - 10-year estimated cumulative survival rate: 95.5% (based on systematic review of 6,500 veneers) - 20-year survival rate: approaches 95% in some studies - Typical lifespan: 10–20 years - Requires 2–4 appointments - Veneer debonding risk in bruxism patients: nearly three times higher than non-bruxers - Fracture risk without occlusal splint compliance: up to eight times higher than compliant patients - Cost range in Melbourne: \$1,400–\$3,000 AUD per tooth

**\*\*Gum lift — clinical specifications\*\*** - Clinically defined gummy smile: excess gum tissue covering more than 3–4mm of tooth structure - Laser gum contouring: no stitches required - Initial healing period: 1–2 weeks - Cost in Melbourne: approximately \$200 AUD per tooth

**\*\*Smile makeover — cost range\*\*** - Minimum (whitening plus minor bonding): under \$2,000 AUD - Maximum (full-arch porcelain with gum contouring): \$25,000 AUD or more

**\*\*Over-the-counter whitening\*\*** - Cost range: \$30–\$80 AUD

**\*\*In-chair whitening (Melbourne CBD)\*\*** - Cost range: \$600–\$1,000 AUD

**\*\*Take-home whitening kit (from dentist)\*\*** - Cost range: \$350–\$600 AUD