

Submission
No 112

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation:

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Theme:

Summary

Natasha OConnor - Inquiry - NSW Dental Health - Lightning Ridge

From: "hardy akkaopal" <hardy akkaopal@bigpond.com>
To: <jan.burnswoods@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 6/06/2005 11:38 AM
Subject: Inquiry - NSW Dental Health - Lightning Ridge

I am aware that the closing date for submission has now ceased, but I hope you view this information.

Preventive Dental Treatments

Lightning Ridge is a remote community in N.S.W within the Walgett Shire. We have presented our local council with a petition and numerous individual letters were sent opposing fluoridation of our water supply at Lightning Ridge. Walgett council ignored these, which is under a administrator

Under section ^A of the Fluoridation of Public Water Act 1957 Walgett Council referred the issue of fluoridation to the N.S.W Department Health who will decide if our water is to be fluoridated. There has been no community consultation or public forum in Lightning Ridge. Walgett Councils reply to this was " An information session was not held in Lightning Ridge as all submissions received from that area have been in opposition to fluoridation". The people did not vote these Administrators in, they have full power of council and the people have no power of say under this system of governing. What happened to a faire say for all.

Our water supply comes direct from the Great Artesian Basion, which already has a natural fluoride content of 0.05m/l coupled with other sources of fluoride eg brushing teeth we obtain our fluoride naturally. As we reside in a temperate climate our fluoride level would be low if administrated by the Health department. This low dosage could not possibly be justified in terms of N.S.W Department of Health infrastructure costing for a fluoridation plant and the on going cost to the ratepayer to fluoride.

Quality Care Received in Dental Services in Walgett Shire**Walgett Aboriginal Medical Center**

Has been without a dentist for over a year. There is no private or public dental facilities in the town of Walgett.

Collarenebri

There are no dental facilities in this town

Lightning Ridge

It has been many years since there was a dentist in this town. Now we have 2 dentists 1 practices 1 day a week while the other practices 2 days a week. There is a waiting time to see these dentists.

Dubbo Public Dental Clinic

This clinic is over 700 km return trip from Walgett Shire. There is currently a two and a half year waiting list to see a dentist.

Dental Van

Due to funds being cut this service is no longer available to rural children.

SOCKS

1998 or so was the last time this program was initiated in this shire.

In Conclusion

The Walgett shire has a population of over 8400 people with a large percentage of aboriginal people with their own serious problems with dental health.

Studies by the University of Canberra found that the area had the highest amount of residents living below the poverty line and were on some form of social benefits.

How can the N.S.W Department of Health and for that matter Walgett Shire Council justify spending over a million dollars (and the ongoing costs to rate payers) for fluoridation when the cause of dental problems is not due to lack of fluoridation in these towns, but a lack of dental health services.

Fluoridation will not assist our children with dental disease, but the return of community based dental programs to combat dental problems will.

N.S.W Health fluoridation plants is a band-aid solution. The dollar amount to be spent on these plants could just as easily be spent on child dental health for Walgett Shire Area and the surrounding smaller towns.

I have read numerous reports regarding rural health. Just a few there are many:

N.S.W Health and Equity Statement 2001

National Rural Health Alliance Election Charter 2001

Australian National Oral Health Plan 2004 – 2013 (ADA) This actually states that fluoridation is not the sole answer to improved oral health.

Healthy Horizons 2003 – 2007

Look through any of the above reports or the multitude of reports concerning rural health by Federal or State departments is just a paper trail that leads to no better conditions for rural community. Why are these departments in operation if they cannot follow through with their printed concerns? The money spent on these paper departments would be better spent on dental assistance for rural communities such as Walgett. The Federal Government and now N.S.W Health are turning their backs on rural N.S.W dental assistance in real terms of providing services to Australian people, especially our children. Providing dental services and community education on dental issues **now** will see the benefits in years to come. By providing fluoride the same dental problems will exist in years to come with higher costs to our health systems.

Thank You
Lisa Kihlstrom