

Submission  
No 136

## INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Ms Paula Ewings

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 7/06/2005

---

**Theme:**

**Summary**

3 June, 2005

The Standing Committee On Social Issues  
Legislative Council, NSW Parliament  
Macquarie St, NSW 2000

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

7 JUN 2005

RECEIVED

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: The Inquiry By The Standing Committee On Social Issues Into Dental Health**

As a citizen of NSW, I am very concerned about the state of dental health, service and education. I have been informed there is to be an Upper House Inquiry into this seemingly neglected area of health care.

I am aware of many people who suffer significant pain and discomfort from poor dental health as their economic circumstances do not allow them to afford dental care for themselves and their family. I also know several people who developed endocarditis as a result of their dental care or rather lack of dental care. I also have a friend in her early 60's who is receiving a disability pension. She is awaiting a permanent filling in her tooth and has been told it will be approximately a 2 year wait.

I understand that there is a connection between general and dental health, so that poor dental health is making our community sicker in more ways than one. This will result in more health dollars and indeed huge costs being spent for some patients e.g. my example above with cardiac surgery for endocarditis patients, ICU bed, CCU bed, etc. etc.

I believe that there is a shortage of trained dental clinicians, with significant shortfalls predicted by 2010. The workforce shortage appears to be due to a lack of sufficient training positions for dentists, as well as dental therapists, hygienists, technicians and prosthetists. It worries me that despite the fact that there are many young people who would love to enter these professions, and the significant community need, the necessary training positions have not been created. I also hear that the educational staff in the training institutions are working in difficult circumstances. I am worried that if this is not reversed the dental workforce will be further degraded.

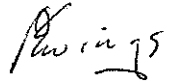
I have also been informed that public dental services are patchy, with some areas receiving comparatively good care while most of the eligible population is unable to access routine dental care in a reasonable time. I am also informed that people living in rural areas are often unable to find a dentist, despite being able to pay for the service.

Finally, I am concerned that despite there being many internal and external reports of these problems to both State and Federal governments, including a Senate Inquiry in 1998, very little seems to have been done to prevent the current and developing dental crisis. I believe that despite an increase of about one billion dollars for NSW Health in the recent budget, no new funding for dental health has been allocated.

1...2

I trust that the current enquiry results in positive action being taken to address these concerns. Will the State Government accept its responsibility for ensuring adequate dental health services and education for NSW?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula Ewings', written in a cursive style.

Paula Ewings