

Submission
No 59

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation: Pensioners & Superannuants Association

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Theme:

Summary

Committee Social Issues - dental inquiry

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To: <socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
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Subject: dental inquiry

This comes rather late as, having been a trifle off following a stroke, I had missed the details of the criteria and the closing date, and beg your forbearance on both counts.

Dental Problems:

The inability of pensioners and other lower income people/families/children, to secure dental treatment at reasonable costs, and within a decent time frame, is causing -

- * infections which spread throughout the body
- * bad nutrition because of an inability to eat solids and having to exist on pap.
- * inferiority and lack of self esteem because bad teeth are often unsightly.
- * the indignity of being refused help because of lack of money

And these problems are magnified in the rural areas where cost of travel, and lack of transport, compounds the issues.

And often those who cannot afford treatment are also the working poor, those with two incomes to cover mortgages and the cost of educating and feeding children. They are just as badly off.

But the truly poor, pensioners and those who are inept and cannot budget well, are becoming desperate.

And those who are on disability pensions, the kids who cannot find jobs in the rural areas or outer city areas, the single mothers (deserted, divorced and through death, without those who are actually single) these are the ones who are suffering.

And it is time the Government, State AND Federal, did something about this. There is something terrible about Governments which spend millions on shooting brumbies; building prisons etc. and yet cannot see that this money could be far better spent on Dental and Health Care.

How is it that Medicare covers every part of the body except the teeth.

And how is it that the cost of shoes, tennis racquets, health clubs etc. are covered by the Health organizations, but not teeth.

I ask that the Inquiry take into consideration that many of today's young people would feel better about themselves, take a different path, grow to be decent people, if their teeth could be repaired; if they could have braces to alter the ugliness of their smile; if they could have decent teeth to enable them to eat decent food.

The members of the Griffith branch of the Pensioners & Superannuants Association has authorised me to write this on their behalf and I state that it is our will that the members of Parliament take steps to remedy the iniquities of the health system and to include decent dental care for all.

Incidentally, I think it is time that the Dental Inquiry also looked into the danger posed by the use of fluoride in the water - a residual poison, fluoride may well be placed in the water at the right amount per X of water, but this amount is compounded by the fact that water is used

- * to drink
- * in beer
- * in cordial
- * in tea
- * in coffee
- * in ice-cream
- * in all things such as tinned peas, jams, fruit etc etc.

then common sense says that we are receiving way and above the so called safe amount of fluoride. Has

any member of the Committee taken that into consideration? I bet the dentists haven't.

In simple terms, I feel that dental problems contribute to many of the general ill health of today - loose dentures are also a cause of bad nutrition as well as face pain.

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