

Submission
No 133

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

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Theme:

Summary



Our mission is to create, develop and maintain a network of support and services for people who have a disability in the Macarthur Region of NSW through a partnership between families and professionals using a whole of life approach

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SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

7 JUN 2005

RECEIVED

6th June 2005

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

RE: The Inquiry by the Standing Committee On Social Issues Into Dental Health

Dear Sir/Madam

As a community based group advocating on issues affecting people who have a disability and their families, we have long been concerned about the degrading state of dental health, service and education, and welcome the Upper House Inquiry into this neglected area of health care.

We are aware of many people who suffer significant pain and increased impairment from poor dental health, and are dismayed by the lack of adequate services to relieve their pain and restore their lives to normal function. This is especially so within the Macarthur region of Outer South West Sydney which has a low level of service provision but a high proportion of young children and adolescents in its current and future population.

Tooth ache is not only intensely painful, but also prevents consumption of a normal diet essential for good health, as does the lack of proper dentures for those missing teeth. Also, in a society where personal appearance is considered important, badly degraded teeth cause great psychological pain for many. I understand that there are further links between general and dental health, so that poor dental health is making our community sicker in more ways than one.

The self esteem of young people who have a disability is a major issue for them as they grow up and seek greater independency and social interaction. Like many other young people the way they look is important to them and dental and related health issues impact upon their opportunities to participate in community life.

Finally, we are 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. It is of note 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.

We hope that the current inquiry results in positive action being taken to address these concerns, and expect the State Government to accept its responsibility for ensuring adequate dental health, services and education for NSW.

Yours in Partnership

Bob Lester
Community Development Coordinator