

Submission  
No 22

## INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Mr Colin Ball

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 16/05/2005

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

Colin Bull

14 May 2005

The Committee Secretariat  
Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to make a submission to the Inquiry into dental services in NSW. I am a retired school teacher and have found that I am unable to afford treatment by private dentists. Different local dentists I attended often charged five or six times the rebate I was receiving from my health fund. As I have been experiencing a considerable number of tooth breakages and infections in recent years, I could not afford these charges on a superannuation pension.

When I wrote to my health fund (Westfund Lithgow) about the cost, they suggested I use the fund's dental clinic. I have been attending the clinic for the last two years and have received excellent service. The clinic does not make additional charges for routine treatments such as check-ups and fillings and has considerably reduced charges for extensive procedures such as root canal and crown work. For instance, currently I am being prepared for a crown. So far, I have had over two hours of preparation. When the crown is finally fitted, I will have to pay a total of cost of \$275. This is considerably cheaper than I would have to pay a private dentist.

Unfortunately, my local branch of the Westfund dental clinic at Penrith closed last year because it was financially unviable, according to Westfund. I now have a three hour round trip to Lithgow to continue receiving affordable dental service.

I am concerned that Westfund's remaining dental clinic at Lithgow may also be forced to close as a result of rising costs. This will place me in the same position as many other retired people who are unable to afford dental treatment. Consequently, I ask the Committee to try and ensure that funds are made available so everyone has continued, guaranteed access to affordable dental treatment.

Thank you,

Yours faithfully,  
Colin Bull.

Cc: Combined pensioners and superannuants association.  
Westfund.