

Submission
No 207

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation: Westmead Centre for Oral Health

Name: Ms Susan Clark

Telephone:

Date Received: 29/06/2005

Theme:

Summary

1.
Susan Clark
Senior Therapist
Westmead Centre
for Oral Health
Paediatrics

Re:-

24th June 2005

The Inquiry into Dental Services

Dear Sir/Madam,

As an employee of
NSW State Government I have long
been concerned about the degrading
state of dental health, service and
education.

I am very aware of
many children and adults suffering
significant pain from dental health
waiting weeks and sometimes months
to have their pain relieved and restore
their lives to normal.

Poor Dental health and
missing teeth prevents consumption
at a normal diet and this is linked

closely with general health.

I am aware of the shortfalls of trained dental clinicians in NSW. The workforce shortage appears to be due to the lack of sufficient training positions for dentists, as well as dental auxiliaries. Many young people come to Westmead Paedo for work experience expressing an interest in joining the dental workforce. Most are disillusioned at the prospects of actually being accepted as training positions have been decreased, not increased, over the past 10 years.

I am concerned that people living in rural areas are often unable to find a dentist, despite being able to pay for the services. Dental staff from the metropolitan areas are expected to travel long distances to outreach areas to provide services placing extra load on the staff and funding resources. Young dental graduates are not attracted

to positions within the public health sector due to the travel involved and the rate of pay offered.

working

I am also concerned that after 30 years in the public dental services at Western Sydney there is still a ~~large~~ lack of adequate preventive dental programs and insufficient fluoridation throughout NSW. Prevention of disease seems even more important in the absence of enough dental clinicians to treat existing disease.

As Dental health is linked closely to General health it is of note that despite an increase in the recent budget, no new funding for dental health has been allocated.

I 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 Sincerely

Jusan Clark SENIOR DENTAL THERAPIST