

Submission
No 54

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation:

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Telephone:

Date Received: 27/05/2005

Theme:

Summary

27th May 2005

Dear Sir or Madam

I am a registered dental therapist in NSW and have been practising as a dental therapist for the past three years. In this short time I have noticed there is a great demand for dental services but unfortunately these demands have been unable to be met. This is due to a number of issues including-

- **Low staff rate**
Throughout NSW there is a shortage of Dental Therapist especially in rural areas. This has placed more demand and workload on other Dental Therapists.
The training for Dental Therapists in NSW is now a combined Dental Therapy and Hygiene degree where most graduates will choose to practice Dental Hygiene as their pay rate is much greater than a Dental Therapist, therefore the level of dental therapists practising in NSW will continue to decrease
- **Unequal Pay Scheme**
At present I get paid less or equal than some of my dental assistants yet I have five times the responsibility. A complete review of dental staff pay rates is needed so staff is paid as per their responsibility and duties.

To improve the situation changes need to be made soon these should include-

- **Consistent Qualifications**
Dental Therapists qualifications need to be recognised nationally. This would enable Dental Therapists throughout the nation should be unified and able to work in all areas.
- **Dental Therapists able to practice in both public and private practices**
Allowing Dental Therapists to work in both public and private practice would encourage Dental Therapists to stay in the occupation and encourage others to enter the occupation.
- **Increase the Age Limit of Dental Therapist patient**
Increasing the age limit of dental therapist patients to 25 years. This would leave to a decrease in the demand in adult services in the future.

Dental Therapists only have a minor voice, as we are only a small group of employees, which will continue to decrease if the situation remains the same. Dental Therapist is a valuable dental workforce with similar skills to dentists. These skills should be utilised and developed to ultimately assist in the current critical situation.

Thankyou for listening to our concerns as not many others are willing to help.

Yours truly



Jessica Altimira
Dip Dental Therapy