

## INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

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**Theme:**

**Summary**



Older Women's Network

23 May 2005

The Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Legislative Council of NSW  
Parliament House  
Sydney 2000

Dear Committee Members,

**Re: Inquiry into Dental Services in NSW**

On behalf of the members of the Older Women's Network (NSW) Inc. I am writing to support the submission made to you by the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW, in relation to the above inquiry.

In particular, our Association would like to address the terms of reference outlined in the inquiry:

**Quality of care received in dental services**

At times when temporary measures are taken the delays experienced before receiving appropriate and complete treatment may result in a greater dental crisis than if the matter had been handled with professional efficacy in the first place.

**B) Waiting times for treatment in public services**

We are concerned about access to public dental services and delays in treatment that inevitably impact upon other areas of health.

Poor dental health, leads to poor nutrition, increased chance of secondary infections, greater need for the intervention of antibiotic agents. When the patient is elderly and has their immune system repeatedly compromised through months of delays awaiting treatment, there is an increased likelihood that they may have to seek additional medical services through their family doctor, or at worst, through an admission to hospital.

**C) Impact of Private Health Insurance**

Many of our members simply do not have the financial resources to afford the dental cover that would allow them to pursue private treatment. Even with this cover the waiting periods in these services can take months, and the gap fees may be prohibitive, causing further delays in treatment.

**D) Regional Access**

As with many regional health services, access and availability in rural areas are always an issue. For older people travel and accommodation compounds the difficulty of logistical planning for any surgical procedure, no matter how minor. Delays and rescheduling are costly exercises when you only get four pension travel vouchers per year.

Yours sincerely,

Beth Eldridge  
Coordinator  
Older Women's Network NSW  
Dear Colleague

Older Women's Network New South Wales Inc

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