

Submission  
No 6

## INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

**Organisation:**

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**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 27/04/2005

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

The Chairman,  
Standing Committee on Social Issues,  
Legislative Council,  
Macquarie Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

DENTAL CARE

On ABC Radio this morning I heard a discussion on dental care. The discussion mentioned that people in the 30 to 45 age group were neglecting their teeth and not seeking the care needed.

The two presenters (both probably middle class, high income people) seemed amazed that this was happening and asked for public comment. They gave a number of reasons which might be responsible, but failed to mention the one which is most relevant.

This age group is foregoing dental treatment for the plain and simple reason that they can't afford it. This is the main group bringing up children, paying huge mortgages or paying huge rents. The cost of food is increasing, and in households on limited incomes (many with only part-time work), feeding and clothing their children takes priority over their own dental health. There simply isn't the money to pay the very high price of dental care. There are many more of this type of family, living from week to week in quiet desperation, than the government seems to realize.

Much the same applies to the pensioner age group. Our local hospital's dental clinic has a four year wait for public patients, though they will take urgent cases, so no check-ups or preventive care.

What can be done about this? The answer seems to be to provide more dental clinics in the suburbs (particularly the west) where work can be done free, or subsidized at a minimum cost. I know people can go to the Dental Hospital, but once again there are long waiting lists and the cost of traveling there has to be taken into account.

I trust your Committee will be able to sympathize with the plight of these families, and work out a solution that will help them.

Yours faithfully,

*Elbary East*