

Submission
No 230

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation:

Name: Ms Jill Potter

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Date Received: 1/07/2005

Theme:

Summary

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DENTAL SURGEONS

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5 July 2005

The Inquiry into Dental Services
The Standing Committee on Social Issues
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street,
Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Inquiry into Dental Health

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a dentist in NSW with 30 years experience in both public and private sectors of dental practice, I am concerned that all Australians should have the best opportunity to achieve excellent dental health.

1. Good dental and oral health contributes significantly to overall good health. For instance:
 - a) Broken and painful teeth effect a person's ability to eat a healthy diet
 - b) Dental infections of both teeth and gums are related to the health of other organs – notably the heart
 - c) Broken and missing front teeth cause psychological pain and lack of self esteem and may affect a person's ability to relate to others and get a job
 - d) Painful teeth can cause people to be absent from work
 - e) Young children with poor dental and oral health suffer considerable pain from sore teeth without parents or carers realising the cause of the pain
2. Dental disease (decay and gum disease) is nearly totally preventable. Money would be well spent to promote far reaching preventive programs and to train more dental hygienists and health promotion workers.
3. Many dental personnel (dentists, technicians, and prosthetists) are within 10 years of retirement. In order to increase (or even just maintain) the numbers of a skilled dental workforce I would like to see more training positions for young people to become skilled as dental therapists, technicians and dentists.

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4. I also hear that the educational staff in the training institutions are working in difficult circumstances and I am worried that if this is not addressed the dental workforce will be further degraded.

I hope that the current inquiry will give serious and urgent attention to developing policies and taking ACTION to: -

1. Promote PREVENTIVE strategies for good oral and dental health (education campaigns; fluoride; increase number of health promotion workers).
2. Increase training opportunities for SKILLED DENTAL WORKERS.

I consider training of PEOPLE to address dental health needs is more important than spending huge amounts of money on state of the art equipment and surgeries. I believe there are many empty dental clinics with beautiful equipment but a lack of manpower means these clinics are lying idle.

Yours faithfully,



Jill Potter