



COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Founded 1931.

Serving pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees.

Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003, 2004

MEDIA RELEASE

15 February 2005

Dental health needs serious work

“Dental health needs serious work to get it out of its current state of decay” said Morrie Mifsud, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association Inc (CPSA) State President in response to the front page article in today’s Sydney Morning Herald. This means the Australian and state governments should start taking the problem seriously and fund it appropriately. Despite previous election promises dental health has not been properly addressed.

“According to ABC’s Peter Lavelle, about half a million Australians can’t afford the dental treatment they need and gum disease and tooth decay in this country is at Third World levels. This is outrageous! And it gets worse. The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) estimates one third of public dental services users avoid certain foods due to tooth loss. This in turn leads to malnutrition. And tooth decay is now known to contribute heart disease and other life threatening health problems.

“Partly the problem stems from underfunded dental services. But the main problem is a lack of will on behalf of government. The Commonwealth Dental Health Scheme was abolished by the Howard Government in 1997 without an adequate replacement. State dental health programs do not have enough funds as seen by the long waiting lists.

“To deal with the crisis is easy. Lift the Medicare levy by a small percentage and dental health can be covered. Or at the very least, reinstate the Commonwealth Dental Health Program with appropriate funding that will actually reduce waiting lists” said Mr Mifsud.

Contact: Morrie Mifsud 02 9281 3588.