



NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc.
ABN 82 549 537 349

The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MP
Level 30
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

2 December 2010

Dear Minister Tebbut

The NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. (NSW CAG) is the peak, independent, state-wide organisation representing the views of mental health consumers at a policy level, working to achieve and support systemic change. Our vision is for all mental health consumers to experience fair access to quality services that reflect their needs.

NSW CAG is seeking your commitment to address the unfair state of oral health services for people with a mental illness in NSW.

People with mental health issues are at much greater risk of poor oral health due to low levels of self care, higher rates of co-morbid risk factors, and medication side effects. They also face barriers to accessing appropriate oral health care, including high cost of services; fear and anxiety about dental care; and inadequate knowledge and skills of dental care providers when treating patients with mental health issues.

Simple, practical and achievable measures are required – and they are required now. As the NSW Labor Party develops its priorities for the upcoming State Election, I am seeking your Party's commitment to:

- 1. An oral health policy for NSW**
- 2. Adequate funding for public dental services, workforce development initiatives, and infrastructure**
- 3. Prioritise the needs of low income and disadvantaged groups in the community, including people with a mental illness.**

Specific recommendations on oral health are outlined in the NCOSS 2011 State Election Platform - [Vote 1 Fairness in NSW](#) or the [oral health election factsheet](#).

All people in NSW should have the same opportunities for good oral health, not just those who can afford to pay for private dental treatment.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Karen Oakley
Executive Officer
NSW Consumer Advisory Group - Mental Health Inc.