

Dear Sir,

Here is a copy of a letter I sent to my Federal Member of parliament which I would like to submit to the committee in regard to the senate inquiry into the cost of living for older Australians.

The escalating cost of living is not confined to dental costs. The basic pension needs to be raised to at least 33% of the average male wage to even begin to keep abreast of the current escalating daily cost of living.

Letter to Jason Wood Federal Minister for La Tribe

I am responding to your letter notifying myself and my husband that we are to receive the one-off non taxable bonus payment of \$500 each, which is given in acknowledgement for the valuable contribution that Senior Australians have made in building our strong economy.

Although the \$500 bonus is appreciated perhaps you might like to know how it is being spent. Both my husband and I needed dental treatment. We had our teeth examined, cleaned, and both had two fillings. The bill for the treatment was \$1110.00, which left a short fall of \$110.00 after committing our bonus to pay the dental costs.

Although we are grateful we were able to have the dental treatment, which we couldn't really afford if the bonus wasn't available, we and many of our peers (Seniors Health Card holders) seem to feel that rather than the odd government bonus hand out here and there, it would be more beneficial if the government reintroduced the defunct Commonwealth Government Dental Scheme.

I am sure you are aware (if not you should be) that dental treatment is beyond the means of the average pensioner. A Commonwealth Dental Scheme would ensure that pensioners are able to get the treatment they rightly deserve. Bad dental care leads to bad general health, which in turn costs the government more money through Medicare expenses.

If we Senior Australians are to be *acknowledged* for our valuable contribution in building a *strong economy*, why doesn't the Government recognise the plight of the pensioners who are unable to keep up with the escalating costs of dental treatments and reinstate the C.G.D.S.