

MEDIA RELEASE

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Doctors call for new council Mayors to come clean on fluoride

Mayors recently elected to Councils that do not provide fluoridated drinking water to their communities are being urged to work with Queensland doctors and Queensland Health to find affordable, efficient ways to deliver the vital public health measure to their ratepayers.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia said 19 local government areas did not provide fluoridated water to their communities, despite overwhelming evidence it was a safe and effective way to prevent dental decay.

“There is no coincidence that the 19 councils in Queensland that do not have fluoridated water have corresponding high rates of dental decay,” Dr Dhupelia said.

“With 28% of the Queensland population not receiving fluoridated water, the rates of dental decay, particularly in children, the elderly and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will continue to increase.”

AMA Queensland is calling on all newly elected Mayors to Councils without fluoride to find the most cost-effective, efficient and safe way to deliver fluoridated water supplies to their communities.

“It’s disappointing that these 19 councils have failed to provide this public health measure to their ratepayers, despite its proven benefits,” Dr Dhupelia said.

“One study in the Logan-Beaudesert region found a 19% reduction in decayed, missing or filled teeth in children aged 4 to 9 years following the introduction of fluoride into the water supplyⁱ.”

Dr Dhupelia said the National Health and Medical Research Council has recommended water fluoridation as a safe, effective and ethical way to help reduce tooth decay across the populationⁱⁱ and Queensland Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, has found unnecessary funds are being spent on hospital and theatre resources for extracting decayed teeth in childrenⁱⁱⁱ.

The COAG National Oral Health Plan recognised fluoridated water supplies as one of the most important public health interventions^{iv} and the Therapeutic Goods Administration has also found it to be a safe and effective way to prevent tooth decay in the community^v.

“AMA Queensland is calling on the Mayors of these 19 Councils to commit to the reintroduction of fluoride so their communities can reap the health benefits of drinking fluoridated water throughout their life,” Dr Dhupelia said.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Fran Metcalf, Sequel PR – 0417 627 867 Chiara Lesèvre, AMA Queensland – 0419 735 641

ⁱ <https://ama.com.au/article/2019-ama-report-card-indigenous-health-no-more-decay-addressing-oral-health-needs-aboriginal>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/2017-public-statement-water-fluoridation-and-human-health>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/732794/cho-report-2018-full.pdf

^{iv} <http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Publications/Reports/ArtMID/514/ArticleID/81>

^v <http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Publications/Reports/ArtMID/514/ArticleID/81>