



Queensland Oral Health Alliance - championing dental-care equity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLUORIDE FEARS ARE UNFOUNDED

The Oral Health Alliance is standing behind Premier Anna Bligh's decision to fluoridate Queensland's water supply, saying fears about fluoride are unfounded.

The Oral Health Alliance represents doctors, pharmacists, dentists and public health professionals who are members of the Queensland branches of the Australian Dental Association (ADA), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Pharmaceutical Society (PSA) and the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA).

AMA Queensland President Dr Ross Cartmill said the latest scientific evidence supported the Premier's decision, and there was no medical evidence which demonstrated any causality between fluoride and various diseases.

"In November 2007 the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released findings of a systematic review of all scientific research into fluoride and health," Dr Cartmill said.

"As a result of their investigation, the NHMRC concluded the existing body of evidence strongly suggests water fluoridation is the most effective and socially equitable means of providing community-wide access to the caries prevention effects of fluoride¹.

"I understand people might feel concerned but water fluoridation is not a new concept and it is not untested - the rest of Australia has had fluoridated water for over 30 years," Dr Cartmill said.

"Contrary to what anti-fluoridation lobbyists tell us, we are yet to see whole populations of people living in New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory suffering from bone cancer, fluorosis, or birth abnormalities as a result," he said.

ADAQ President Dr John Wills said worldwide research had proven that optimally fluoridated water, along with regular brushing and flossing, and a healthy diet, provides the best way to reduce tooth decay for people of all ages.

"Fluoridation immediately acts to strengthen the outer surface of teeth - making teeth stronger and more resistant to decay, and there is no doubt that good teeth make you feel better, look better and, more importantly, enable you to live a healthier, happier life," Dr Wills said.

PHAA spokesperson Dr Peter Andersen said water fluoridation was endorsed by health organisations worldwide, including the World Health Organisation, as the safest and most equitable means of reducing dental caries and ensuring adequate oral health across entire populations.

Contd...

¹ NHMRC (2007) *Safety and efficacy of water fluoridation*, www.nhmrc.gov.au

FLUORIDE FEARS ARE UNFOUNDED contd...

"Delivering small amounts of a regulated dose of fluoride via the water supply is a safe and cost effective way to bring positive oral health and social benefits to the whole community," Dr Andersen said.

PSA spokesperson Patty Watson added many water systems are naturally fluoridated and contain fluoride ions present at levels which are considered optimal to assist in the prevention of tooth decay.

"However many water supplies which do not contain fluoride at optimal levels contain at least trace amounts of fluoride," Ms Watson said.

"Standards are set for the addition of fluoride to water and consideration is given to the contribution of fluoride from other sources such as dental hygiene products.

"These standards ensure that optimally fluoridated water is safe for the community and effective to assist in the prevention of tooth decay," she said.

The Oral Health Alliance believes the people of Queensland deserve to be on par with the rest of the country when it comes to rates of oral health, and fluoridation is the solution to ensuring this becomes a reality.

For comment, contact Dr Ross Cartmill on 3872 2221 or 0400 110 565 or Dr John Wills on