

# Fluoride-free tap for Masterton

JACK BARLOW

A new tap has been installed in Masterton with an unusual twist – it's fluoride-free.

The decision to install the tap, which sits in a relatively lightly trafficked area in Manuka St, was made by the Masterton District Council in response to submissions in the 2015-25 long-term plan.

The council spent \$10,000 installing it and hooking it up to the nearby Opaki water supply.

Although new for Masterton, it's not the first time a fluoride-free tap has been installed by a council. In the wake of a heated national debate about the benefits and drawbacks of fluoridation, Hamilton City Council agreed to install two fluoride-free taps earlier this year.

Palmerston North City Council did the same last year.

Masterton council spokesman Sam Rossiter-Stead said it was a cost-effective way to give people an option.

"Following submissions to the draft long-term plan in 2015 concerning fluoridation of water, the council resolved to install this tap to give people a choice.

"After just a few days of operation, it has become popular, particularly with those exercising in the area."

A visit to the tap on Wednesday failed to find anyone

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Sam Rossiter-Stead

using it. Several people in town said they were pleased with it, although they were more excited by its proximity to Manuka Reserve than by its lack of fluoride.

A Ministry of Health spokeswoman said it was aware of councils installing non-fluoridated taps, but the ministry would continue to provide information about the "extensive benefits" of fluoride for oral health.

Featherston resident and Fluoride Free NZ national coordinator Mary Byrne said the tap was not enough.

"Well, I hate to be critical of the council, because I know they're trying to help, but I think they're missing the point," she said.

"It [fluoride] is harmful for people, there's no reason to do it."

Like several other towns and cities, Masterton has recently installed a fluoride-free tap.



## In brief

### DISORDER AT SHOW

Several minor fights occurred as people left during the opening night of the annual Wairarapa A&P Show on Friday night. Three fights broke out simultaneously and were reported to police about 9pm as a group left the show at the Clarendon Complex in Carterton. However when police arrived just before the fights had been broken up. No weapons were believed to be involved and no injuries were reported or arrests made. The show is in its 139th year.

### PARKINSON'S WEEK

Parkinson's Wairarapa volunteers will be out this month raising awareness of the condition that affects more than 10,000 Kiwis. It is Parkinson's Awareness Week and there will be donation and raffle stands in every town, manned by Rotary and Lions clubs and other helpers. "When you have Parkinson's your brain and body don't always connect which can make even the simplest of tasks difficult," Parkinson's Wairarapa coordinator Julia Mahony says. "We connect our members with the best support, education and latest developments in treatment and medication information. These vital connections have a positive impact on people's lives."