

Hamilton councillor blasted for anti-fluoride view

Natalie Akoorie

A first-time councillor has been criticised for lobbying her elected colleagues and the district health board over her anti-fluoride views.

Siggi Henry has reportedly claimed that health experts and "smarty pants" scientists have brainwashed the public with misinformation over fluoride.

In an email seen by the Herald, the long-time anti-fluoride campaigner has urged Waikato District Health Board (DHB) and the council to take up the cause.

It comes after Henry played down her extreme anti-fluoride views during her campaign to become a councillor.

In the email Henry said she did not believe fluoride statistics promoted

by Health Minister Jonathan Coleman and Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne when they announced last week that legislation has been introduced to enable DHBs to decide whether community water supplies are fluoridated, instead of councils.

"Sadly I have seen this kind of 'BS' for far too many years," she wrote to Hamilton councillors.

"I am not talking about Fluoride but Hydrofluosilicic Acid. Tooth decay is not a result of lack of fluoride but a result of too much sugar. And the DHBs should start addressing that issue.

"Maybe our DHB members can ask about Hydrofluosilicic Acid at their next meeting."

But the "extraordinary outburst" is



Councillor Siggi Henry.

another example of why decisions over water fluoridation should be made by district health boards and not local councils, Water NZ says.

Chief executive John Pfahler said most councillors were not qualified to make decisions on fluoride in water because it was a scientific health issue, not an ideological one.

"It is totally preposterous for Hamilton City councillor Siggi Henry to claim that she knows more than scientists do about the benefits and risks of fluoride."

Pfahler said calling scientists and health experts "smarty pants" shows an extraordinary level of childishness and ignorance from an elected representative.

"The facts around fluoride are very

clear. Adding fluoride to drinking water poses no health risks at the recommended level of 0.7 to 1.0 parts per million while the benefits for dental health are irrefutable.

"I would sincerely hope that elected representatives of DHBs will take advice of health experts and the huge body of evidence supporting the case for fluoride in drinking water and that this will result in more communities in New Zealand benefiting from it."

Earlier this year the Government moved to shift responsibility for fluoridating water supplies from councils to DHBs to enable decisions about fluoride to be based on local health priorities.

Last week it introduced a bill to Parliament to effect that transfer of powers.