



MEDIA RELEASE

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Water New Zealand Supports Government Decision on Fluoride

Water New Zealand welcomes the Government decision to transfer decision making about fluoridation of drinking water supplies to District Health Boards.

Water New Zealand Chief Executive John Pfahlert said he was pleased to see that the Government had acknowledged that fluoridation was a public health issue, where the decision on whether or not to fluoridate public water supplies was best made by health professionals, not elected city and district councillors.

“It’s an issue which has traditionally been divisive for local communities to make, where elected council members are required to make judgements on sometimes competing scientific arguments. As an Association, we have long been supportive of health professionals making decisions on health related issues.

The Government proposal will provide an opportunity for the public to have their say by way of making submissions to Parliament when the Bill enabling these changes is introduced.

Mr Pfahlert said that he didn’t expect public opposition to fluoridation to diminish – it will simply move to the DBH decision making process.

“Those opposed do so on philosophical grounds, or because they believe there are adverse effects on human health from fluoride being added to drinking water. However there have never been adverse effects demonstrated where the quantity of fluoride added is within the recommended dosage range.

Water New Zealand produces guidance material for water utilities adding fluoride to public water supplies.

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Water New Zealand

Water New Zealand is an independent not for profit association of approximately 1500 water professionals and organisations, focusing on the sustainable management and development of the water environment. It provides leadership in the water sector, through advocacy, provision of technical advice and professional development. It is the principal voice for the water sector.

Its nationwide network of members represent many disciplines; physical and social sciences, public health, engineering, law and management. Water New Zealand attracts decision makers and technologists from central and local government, industry, the academic and research communities, consultants and service/equipment supply organisations, who exchange information about water and wastes issues.