



Dear Secretariat,

attached please find a copy of a recent submission to the Executive Director, Health Protection Unit, Queensland Health in relation to the above Bill.

Council was unable to meet the original deadline set by Queensland Health and now wishes to provide its stance with regards to the addition of fluoride to the Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton water supplies.

Please accept this as the Tablelands Regional Council submission to your enquiry, pertaining to the amendment of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008.


Regards

Bill Cuthbertson

Manager

Water, Wastewater and Waste Operations Group, Infrastructure and Maintenance Services
Tablelands Regional Council



Phone: 07 4043 4000 | 

Website: www.trc.qld.gov.au

Kowa Street, Mareeba | PO Box 154, Mareeba, Queensland, Australia, 4880

 Go green, keep it on screen - think before you print

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Tablelands Regional Council

Mareeba Service Centre
PO Box 154, Mareeba QLD 4880
Telephone: 1300 362 242

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Water, Wastewater and Waste Operations
Bill Cuthbertson
Manager
Telephone: (07) 4043 4670
Facsimile: (07) 4092 5138
Email: info@trc.qld.gov.au

1 November 2012

File Ref: WAT-ANA-FLU BC:sb
Your Ref: -

Executive Director
Health Protection Unit
Queensland Health
PO Box 2368
Fortitude valley BC
Queensland 4006

Dear Ms Dwyer

WATER FLUORIDATION ACT 2008. WATER FLUORIDATION REGULATION 2008

I refer to your correspondence dated 16 October 2012 and subsequent communication regarding the proposed changes to both the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 and the Water Fluoridation Regulation 2008.

At the Tablelands Regional Council Ordinary meeting held on 4 July 2012 Council resolved to:

1. Defer commissioning of the Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton fluoridation plants and seek clarification of the State Government's intention with respect to the implementation of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008; and
2. Request the CEO forward correspondence to the Premier and the Minister for Local Government requesting that the fluoridation of Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton water treatment supplies be delayed until the State Government states its intention regarding implementation of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008.

Further to this, at the Tablelands Regional Council Ordinary meeting held on 18 July 2012 Council resolved to write to the Minister for Health, The Hon Lawrence Springborg MP, reiterating that Council does not wish to fluoridate the water supplies of Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton due to the additional cost imposition that will be placed on ratepayers.

Council has written to both the Minister for Local Government (29 June 2012 and 12 July 2012) and the Minister for Health (12 July 2012) and to date neither minister has formally responded to the Council. Copies of these letters are attached for your information and it would be appreciated if a formal response from your department could be forwarded to Council.

The proposed changes do not reflect the resolution of Council with regards to the addition of fluoride into the Kuranda and Malanda water supplies, however it is noted that there will be an opportunity for Council to make an application for exemption for both the Mareeba and Atherton water supplies.

Yours faithfully

BILL CUTHBERTSON
WATER, WASTEWATER AND WASTE OPERATIONS

Attachments: Copy of letter to The Hon Lawrence Springborg MP
Copy of 2 x letters to The Hon David Crisafulli MP

Tablelands Regional Council

Atherton Service Centre
PO Box 573, Atherton QLD 4883
Telephone: 1300 362 242

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Office of the Mayor
Cr Rosa Lee Long
Mayor
Telephone: (07) 4043 4100
Facsimile: (07) 4091 4300
Email: info@trc.qld.gov.au

File Ref: WAT-ANA-FLU
Your Ref:

12 July 2012

The Hon Lawrence Springborg MP
Minister for Health
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister

FLUORIDE

With reference to the injection of fluoride into the Mareeba water supply, I advise that since an audit of the infrastructure at this plant in 2009, there has been no fluoride injected into this water system since.

This was due to the infrastructure being outdated and not meeting the requirements of the Water Fluoridation Code of Practice and the Queensland Government's Water Fluoridation Act 2008.

The lowest tender recently obtained by the Tablelands Regional Council to upgrade the Mareeba water treatment plant with fluoride dosing equipment amounted to \$1,056,849, of which the previous Labour State Government committed to paying \$774,553. Other programme delivery costs including programme management and an allowance for project contingency expected to be incurred by Council amount to \$157,842. This leaves a \$440,138 shortfall, the cost of which will have to be borne by a community already struggling with the high cost of living.

As noted in my correspondence of 29 June 2012 to Minister Crisafulli regarding fluoridation of Council water supplies, the Tablelands Region median weekly household income is \$854 compared to \$1,235 for the rest of Queensland. In recognition of this Council is attempting to keep any increases in levies and charges as low as possible.

If Council must re-introduce fluoride into the Mareeba town water supply please advise the State Government's intention. Will you:

- (a) Fund the full cost of the infrastructure upgrade?
- (b) Fund the amount the previous Labour Government committed to?
- (c) Not fund the upgrade and allow Council to not fluoridate the water supply?

Council's preference is that the State funds the infrastructure upgrade in full as the Mareeba water supply was one of the very few fluoridated water supply schemes in the State prior to the enactment of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008, and the community appears to have no issues with the continuation of fluoridation of the water supply.

Please advise at your earliest convenience how you will deal with this matter and should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

CR ROSA LEE LONG
MAYOR

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Tablelands Regional Council

Atherton Service Centre
PO Box 573, Atherton QLD 4883
Telephone: 1300 362 242

Office of the Mayor
Cr Rosa Lee Long
Mayor
Telephone: (07) 4043 4100
Facsimile: (07) 4091 4300
Email: Info@trc.qld.gov.au

File Ref: WAT-ANA-FLU
Your Ref:

29 June 2012

The Honourable David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government
PO Box 15216
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Minister

TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL FLUORIDATION OF WATER SUPPLIES

With respect to our recent telephone conversation regarding fluoridation of the Tablelands Regional Council water supplies, I respectfully request that Council is given permission to not add fluoride to the water supplies of Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton.

Among the reasons for my request is the inability of the community to pay the ongoing maintenance and material costs of fluoridation.

The Tablelands Region is one of lower socio economic status and low median weekly household income compared to the rest of the State, as revealed in the latest census data. Residents are struggling to cope with the high cost of living as a result.

For example, the median weekly household income for Queensland is \$1,235 compared to the Tablelands region of \$854.

The ongoing maintenance and materials costs associated with the imposition of fluoridation will add an unnecessary cost burden to already struggling families and individuals. Council is attempting to keep its overall 2012/13 rates increase as low as possible in recognition of the difficult cost of living burden borne by ratepayers. Having to account for the additional cost of fluoridation will add approximately \$500,000 per annum to the cost of water supplies throughout the region and this will have to be passed on to ratepayers. Council has also experienced strong community representation opposing compulsory fluoridation and does not wish to impose this against the will of the people.

The current situation with respect to the upgrade of water treatment plants is that the fluoridation dosing facilities at the Kuranda and Malanda plants are almost complete, with both facilities due to be commissioned in early July 2012. However, neither of these treatment plant upgrades has been fully funded by the State Government because the State assessed that the upgrades should not have cost as much as they have. Concept designs have been completed for the three (3) Atherton dosing facilities and these are currently being evaluated by the State to determine the level of funding support to be provided. The upgrade of the Mareeba plant has been tendered however Council has not accepted the funding agreement proposed by the State as its assessment of the level of funding required is significantly less than the lowest tender received.

Therefore, in addition to the request to NOT add fluoride to the water supplies of Kuranda, Malanda and Atherton, Council respectfully requests the following:

Atherton Treatment Plants

As noted above concept plans are currently being evaluated by the State to determine the level of funding required. Council seeks the State Government's permission to not proceed any further with the upgrade of these plants at an approximate saving to the State of \$3,185,858.

Kuranda and Malanda Treatment Plants

The State funds the balance of \$333,859 so that the upgrade of the two treatment plants is fully subsidised. The current contractual obligations make the completion of the upgrades impossible to stop at this stage. However once complete Council would not implement the dosing, assuming permission is granted by the State.

Mareeba Treatment Plant

That the State allows Council to proceed with the upgrade of the Mareeba water treatment plant and fully funds the project. The current funding shortfall for this project is \$440,138. The Mareeba water supply was one of the very few fluoridated water supply schemes in the State prior to the State's enacting of the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 and the community has no issues with the continuation of fluoridation of the water supply. Council supports the community's wishes and has no intention of imposing any change to the status of this water supply.

In conclusion, should the State Government agree to Council's requests it will be saving a significant sum of money, reducing the cost of living imposition on the Tablelands Regional Council's community and will not be imposing fluoridation against the will of the people.

Should you have any queries regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Yours faithfully

CR ROSA LEE LONG
MAYOR

Tablelands Regional Council

Atherton Service Centre
PO Box 573, Atherton QLD 4883
Telephone: 1300 362 242

Office of the Mayor
Cr Rosa Lee Long
Mayor
Telephone: (07) 4043 4100
Facsimile: (07) 4091 4300
Email: info@tro.qld.gov.au

File Ref: WAT-ANA-FLU
Your Ref:

12 July 2012

The Hon David Crisafulli MP
Minister for Local Government
PO Box 15216
CITY EAST QLD 4002

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Yours faithfully

CR ROSA LEE LONG
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