

8 November, 2012.

The Research Director  
Finance and Administrative Committee

By email: [fac@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:fac@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Director,

Re: Amendments to the Water Fluoridation Act

Since early 2010, the Bundaberg Regional Council has actively engaged with both the former and current State Governments in an endeavour to exempt this Council from the State Government's legislation to fluoridate its water supply.

Currently Council has 10 public potable water supplies which fall into the criteria under the Water Fluoridation Regulation – and has not yet started construction of the plants required to fluoridate the water supply.

Council also considers that the minimum population levels prescribed for a "relevant public potable water supply" is too low – and should be increased.

As background information, I advise that on 24 July, 2012, the Minister for Local Government, Mr Crisafulli, met with the Mayor, Councillors and Senior Officers of this Council. One of the items discussed was the status of Council's application for the exemption above.

Following these discussions, Departmental Officers have advised Council that:-

- \* the Water Fluoridation Regulation was being amended to remove the "end date" requirement for implementation of water fluoridation, and
- \* the application for exemption was still under consideration, and Council would be advised in the near future.

As Council was proceeding with complying with the previous State Government's requirements to facilitate introduction of fluoride into its water supplies prior to the announcement of the review by the current Government – Tenders had been called for the Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Nine (9) Fluoridation Plants for the Bundaberg Region. Council had negotiated an extension of the Tender acceptance period to 31 July 2012.

After noting the advice given, Council did not proceed any further in awarding the Tenders, which have now lapsed. All Tenderers have been advised accordingly.

The Queensland Capital Assistance Programme has previously advised that it will provide funding towards these installations, but this funding does not meet the total costs of installation.

As fluoridation is a Public Health issue legislated by the State Government, Council is strongly of the view that the State Government should meet all costs associated with installation if required, together with all ongoing costs.

The table below sets out details of the costs, allocated funding and annual operations and maintenance costs:-

Water Treatment Plant	Concept Design Capital Costs	Queensland Fluoridation Capital Assistance Programme Approved Funding	Annual Operations and Maintenance Costs
Branyan	\$838,068	\$691,088	\$60,000
Bundaberg Depot	\$749,066	\$617,950	\$54,000
Dr May's Road	\$722,267	\$591,363	\$51,000
Heaps Street	\$1,125,187	\$944,991	\$66,000
Lovers Walk	\$753,681	\$605,477	\$52,000
Peatey Street	\$720,114	\$591,071	\$50,000
Powers Street	\$660,390	\$535,940	\$48,000
Kalkie	\$706,289	\$606,518	\$55,000
Gregory River	\$655,015	\$559,188	\$48,000
Moore Park	\$855,678	\$713,984	\$54,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,785,755</b>	<b>\$6,457,670</b>	<b>\$538,000</b>

The shortfall in installation funding to Council is \$1,328,185.

The Operations and Maintenance Costs for the first year is estimated to be \$538,000 and with oncosts, brings the total annual recurrent operational and maintenance costs of \$818,000 or a 4% increase in water rates to Ratepayers. This should also be funded by the State Government, not Council or its Ratepayers as it is a Public Health issue.

This Council has consistently written to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Health, and Minister for Local Government, seeking an exemption from the legislative requirements to fluoridate its water supplies. To date no formal advice has been received.

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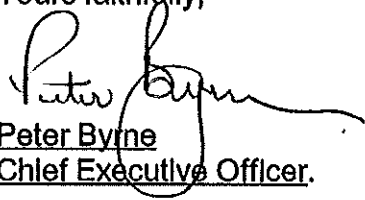
Council considers that an increase in the level of minimum population levels prescribed for a "relevant public potable water supply" set out in the Water Regulation 2010, would assist Council in its exemption application.

Bundaberg Regional Council is in a unique situation whereby its 10 individual public potable water supplies currently service approximately 50,000 people – and an increase in the minimum population levels would result in Council's water supplies falling outside the population limits prescribed in the Water Regulation 2010.

It is respectfully requested that your Committee take into consideration this Council's unique situation – and when reviewing the proposed amendments to the Water Fluoridation Act, increase the minimum population levels where they appear in Section 8(1)(c), 8(1)(d) and proposed new Section 8(1A) – to 60,000 (in lieu of 1,000 and 10,000 respectively).

If you require any further information, please contact me on 4130 4260.

Yours faithfully,



Peter Byrne  
Chief Executive Officer.