

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Doctors advocate against fluoride misinformation

Dangerous misinformation about fluoride in water supplies is causing unnecessary fear and concern in communities about the safety of this naturally occurring mineral and is leading to backlash against medical and health experts who advocate for fluoridation.

“Councils must act in the interests of their community by reinstating water fluoridation to ensure all Queensland communities have health equity. Councils must take on the advice of experts such as doctors and dentist which is scientifically based,” AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

“We commend our doctors for consistently advocating for water fluoridation as a form of preventative health, despite the personal backlash.

“Most recently, we have been working in collaborating with the Australian Dental Association Queensland to advocate for the retention and reinstatement of fluoridation in all LGAs.

“Water fluoridation is one of the safest, easiest and most effective methods to reduce the prevalence and severity of oral disease. It has been described as one of the 10 great public health measures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and actually saves money.

“The arguments against fluoride have been repeatedly disproven and its benefits are clear.

“AMA Queensland has repeatedly called on the state government to reintroduce mandatory fluoridation across the state.

“We encourage curiosity about the contents of the water we drink daily but urge communities to listen to experts.

“Research unequivocally shows that poor childhood oral health leads to poor adult oral health.

“Water fluoridation is supported by a robust and widely accepted body of research dating back to the 1950s that shows it reduces tooth decay by 26 per cent in children and 27 per cent in adults.

“It does this by strengthening tooth enamel and making teeth more decay-resistant, getting rid of early decay before it becomes permanent and stopping bacteria in the mouth from producing acids which lead to tooth decay.

“Currently, one in 10 Queenslanders do not have enough functional teeth to chew food.

“The risk of dental disease is also much higher among disadvantaged populations such as First Nations people and children, many of whom live in regional and rural areas of the state.

“Not only will water fluoridation save the lives of our most vulnerable, but it will save our health system millions of dollars.

“Costing as little as \$1 per person per year, each time a person has a sip of fluoridated water they protect their teeth and reduce their risk of dental decay resulting in the need for medications, antibiotics, medical consultations, or even emergency department visits.

“It is much more reasonable to invest the money now into what we know works at a preventative level than end up with an influx of hospital presentations due to otherwise preventable oral health issues.”

### Background

- Fluoride was first added to Australian water supplies in the 1950s.
- Every other state and territory has enjoyed the benefits of fluoridation for the past 30 years.
- Mandatory water fluoridation was introduced in Queensland in 2008 by the Beattie Labor Government based on research from the 1990s showing Brisbane children had considerably more dental decay than their Townsville counterparts who had had fluoridated water since 1964.
- Cairns Regional Council ceased water fluoridation in 2013 when the then-Newman Government repealed laws mandating this important public health benefit.
- AMA Queensland wrote to Cairns Regional Council in September 2024 following alarming reports from doctors and dentists about increasing rates and severity of oral disease since the change.
- Doctors also expressed alarm that Gympie Regional Council was considering ceasing fluoridation of its water supply following receipt of a 650-signature petition.
- AMA Queensland wrote to Gympie Regional Council urging them to maintain fluoridation the same week.
- Both Councils wrote back to AMA Queensland advising they had not yet made a decision about reinstating fluoridation (for Cairns) or ceasing it (for Gympie).
- [Read more about our calls to ensure community water fluoridation on our correspondence page.](#)

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