

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fluoride decision abandons vulnerable North Queenslanders

The decision by six Cairns councillors to vote against reintroducing fluoride to the local water supply goes against decades of scientific evidence and abandons vulnerable people who cannot afford dental care or healthy food.

"AMA Queensland thanks Councillors Anna Middleton, Trevor Tim and Rob Pyne for their passionate advocacy for this incredibly safe, proven health measure," AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

"Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that is found in all natural water supplies at some concentration. The benefits of adding it to water supplies at about 1 part per million – between 0.6-0.8 mg/litre - have been proven since the 1940s.

"Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay, particularly in children's teeth as they are forming. It helps reduce dental decay in adults.

"Since 2012, when the state government handed responsibility – including financial responsibility – to local councils for fluoridating water supplies, we have seen fluoridation coverage fall from 90 per cent of Queenslanders to just 70 per cent – the lowest in Australia.

"One in 10 Queenslanders do not have enough teeth to chew food.

"This is another case of regional inequity. The 11 council regions in Southeast Queensland have fluoridated water through SEQwater, but regional and remote council areas have stopped fluoridation, mostly as a cost measure.

"It is disappointing to continue to see a healthcare divide between the city and regional areas.

"It is important for elected leaders to make decisions based on scientific evidence and from medical and dental experts.

"The state government should assist councils with the costs of fluoridating their water supplies as a simple preventative health measure."

AMA Queensland and the Australian Dental Association Queensland have written a joint letter to the relevant Ministers and all councils in Queensland, raising concerns about the increasing prevalence and severity of oral disease, particularly among children.

You can read the correspondence and replies [here](#).

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