



15 January 2025

The Honourable David Crisafulli MP
Premier
1 William Street
Brisbane Qld 4001
Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Premier,

We are writing on behalf of the Australian Dental Association Queensland Branch (ADAQ) and Australian Medical Association Queensland (AMAQ) members, to urge you to reconsider your government's position on water fluoridation.

We believe all Queenslanders deserve better oral health.

A preventable disease burden

With strong links to systemic disease including cardiovascular conditions, poor oral health has been shown to increase the overall burden of disease and impacts strongly on public health costs. For example, potentially preventable hospitalisations related to dental care in Queensland grew from 12,800 in 2012, to over 19,000 in 2020-21.¹

Dental caries remains the most common preventable chronic disease in Queensland, especially in children. Untreated decay affects people who rely public dental services in higher numbers than those who are ineligible.²

The role of water fluoridation

As you know, fluoridation of community water supplies is considered one of the safest and cost-effective preventative strategies for dental caries, which results in improved health across the population, regardless of age, income, or social status.

In Queensland Health's own *Water Fluoridation Code of Practice*, fluoridation is described as 'a very effective public health measure that results in true cost savings as it saves more money than it costs to implement and operate in the majority of communities'.

ADAQ and AMAQ continue to advocate for public water fluoridation to be mandated where possible.

¹ Source: AIHW [Oral health and dental care in Australia, Hospitalisations - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au)

² Source: AIHW [Oral health and dental care in Australia, Healthy teeth - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au)



Recent studies³⁴ by Queensland researchers continue to prove why fluoridation of community water supplies is one of the safest and most cost-effective preventative public health strategies.

In 2012, just before the Queensland Government passed on its public health responsibilities to the local councils, almost 90 percent of Queenslanders had access to optimally fluoridated water. This was a great public health achievement in just four years since the Bligh government passed the *Water Fluoridation Act 2008* (the Act).

However, this figure has now dropped to approximately 72 percent. Remote and Indigenous communities are missing out the most.

What your government can do

As Premier, we strongly encourage you to support the reversal of the 2012 changes. Decision-making powers on implementing fluoridation should be returned to the health portfolio, where they belong. This is an essential step to ensure that all Queenslanders can access fluoridated drinking water, regardless of where they live.

In the interim, we suggest that funding be allocated in the 2025 state budget to:

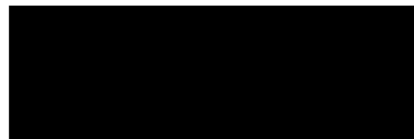
- Meet costs to reinstate water fluoridation in local government areas that stopped community water supplies fluoridation; and
- Deliver public education campaigns to inform Queenslanders and their local councillors about the safety and efficacy of fluoridated water and to debunk harmful myths.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the future of fluoridation in Queensland. To arrange a meeting please contact Lisa Rusten, Chief Executive Officer, on 07 3252 9866 or via ceo@adaq.com.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kelly Hennessy
President
ADAQ



Dr Nick Yim
President
AMA Queensland

Enc: ADAQ Statement on Water Fluoridation in Queensland.

C/C: Minister for Health and Ambulance Services

³ New research, published in the Medical Journal of Australia on 22 January 2023, found the 2012 decision to devolve responsibility for water fluoridation decisions and funding from Government to local councils has put people at even greater risk of dental decay. It urges the current government to revise its fluoridation policy and better support regional areas, where the burden of oral disease is already high. Sexton, Ha, Le, Lalloo, Ford, Do, Stormon; [Socio-economic status and access to fluoridated water in Queensland: an ecological data linkage study | The Medical Journal of Australia \(mja.com.au\)](#) Med J Aust || doi: 10.5694/mja2.52196.

⁴ A 2015 study in the Logan-Beaudesert district evaluated the effects of water fluoridation in young children at risk. It concluded that, in only three (3) years, an overall reduction of 19 percent in caries could be observed. Koh, Pukallus, Newman, Foley, Walsh, Seow; Effects of Water Fluoridation on Caries Experience in the Primary Dentition in a High Caries Risk Community in Queensland, Australia. Caries Res 1 March 2015; 49 (2): 184–191. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000369864>