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31 May 2024

§ 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024042074

Tēnā koe § 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 22 May 2024. This request was partially transferred from the Office of the Minister of Health, Hon Dr Shane Reti. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

What is the cost of setting up the system required to add this chemical to Tauranga and all the other water supply systems around New Zealand?

The Ministry only holds costs for implementing fluoridation for the 14 local authorities that were directed to fluoridate by then Director-General of Health in 2022. Those costs are outlined in the table below. Please note that in all cases (with the exception of New Plymouth) these are estimates and may not reflect the actual final amount.

Local Authority	Estimated cost
Auckland Council	Waiuku \$1,500,000 Onehunga \$125,000 \$1,625,000 (total)
Far North District Council	Kaitiāia \$400,000 Kerikeri \$400,000 \$800,000.00 (total)
Hastings District Council	\$2,338,000
Horowhenua District Council	\$972,000
Kawerau District Council	\$458,000
Nelson City Council	\$909,000
New Plymouth District Council	\$225,960

Rotorua District Council	Rotorua Central \$955,250 Rotorua East \$655,500 Total: \$1,610,750
Taranua District Council	\$542,000
Tauranga City Council	\$3,430,000
Waipa District Council	\$620,000
Waitaki District Council	\$655,000
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	Athenree \$924,000 Wharawhara \$939,000 \$1,863,000 (total)
Whangarei District Council	\$4,561,000 (total excluding Poroti)

For further information of the costs of implementing community water fluoridation in New Zealand, please see the following report: www.health.govt.nz/publication/review-benefits-and-costs-water-fluoridation-new-zealand.

Who is paying/funding these costs?

The Ministry of Health is paying for the capital costs of setting up community water fluoridation for the 14 local authorities that have been directed to fluoridate by the Director-General of Health. Ongoing costs in relation to the operation and implementation of fluoridation will be met by the local authorities.

What exactly are the suggested health benefits of this chemical?

What scientific studies are being used to confirm that fluoridation is safe to be consumed continuously by humans, domestic animals, wildlife, plants, and soil?

Who are the consulting agencies, scientists and toxicologists supporting this national rollout?

Who are the consulting agencies, scientists and toxicologists offering opposing scientific evidence and views?"

In 2014, a comprehensive report was published by the Royal Society Te Apārangi, prepared jointly with the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, reviewing the substantial body of scientific evidence on the benefits, efficacy and safety of fluoridation of public water supplies. The report concluded that there are no adverse health effects of any significance from fluoridation levels used in New Zealand.

In June 2021, the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor released an evidence update on community water fluoridation. The update confirmed that there are no significant negative health effects caused by fluoride at the recommended levels used in New Zealand, and that the conclusions of the 2014 report remain appropriate. These reviews are publicly available at: www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/fluoridation-an-update-on-evidence/.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Chambers'.

Jane Chambers
Group Manager
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui