

Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Advisory Committee

10 October 2025 | 9-11 am | NSW Health and via Teams

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Acknowledgement of Country, welcome, apologies and introductions	
2	Actions from previous meeting (18 July 2025)	
	<p>All actions from the previous meeting have been resolved. Additional discussions were held on:</p> <p>FPWSAC Terms of Reference The committee has adopted the revised Terms of Reference. Proposal from a committee member to add to the ToR: <i>Develop effective partnerships with local water utilities through a statewide asset renewal program to replace and upgrade existing fluoridation plants at the end of their agreed useful service life.</i></p> <p>After discussion the Committee agreed that this should be included in the broader operational focus of NSW Health, together with DCCEEW, in supporting utilities identify and prioritise plant renewal needs. It is also part of a utility's responsibility to consider end-of-life for its infrastructure as part of strategic planning.</p> <p>Unfluoridated water supplies of serving fewer than 300 people As well as infrastructure cost-effectiveness, other constraints should also be considered such as the daily operator attendance requirement of the NSW Fluoridation Code of Practice (CoP) and which leads to additional staffing needs. Although smaller communities tend to rely on rainwater for drinking purposes, some of the population may travel daily to bigger centres for work and schooling, where they may access to fluoridated tap water. The Committee agreed that the viability and practicality of implementing fluoridation in small towns should be considered on a case-by-case situation.</p>	
3	Discussion: What can we do better?	

	<p>Review cost-effectiveness of fluoridation for small supplies. Online analysers could allow for fluoridation of some of the smaller supplies. The current CoP review would need to consider this. A risk assessment is planned, as part of the CoP review, to consider risks and benefits of automation of dosing controls.</p> <p>Regularly gauge councils' interest in fluoridation. The Committee recommended testing new councils' appetite for fluoridation, with support from Local Health District Oral Health and ADA NSW. Office of Local Government has hosted webinar series for new councillors. Supporting this, DCCEEW, in consultation with NSW Health, developed education materials on councillors' roles and responsibilities regarding local water utilities. NSW Health will check whether this includes fluoridation.</p> <p>Improve communication by water utilities on fluoridation status. See AOB section.</p> <p>The CoP review is an opportunity to improve the Form 1 application process. There are only two suppliers in the market which results in long lead times for procurement.</p> <p>Assessment program of plants with long-term interruptions to supply to identify recurrent or systemic root causes. Include consideration of end-of-life and replacement process for plants.</p> <p>Ensuring councils are aware of NSW Health capital works subsidy and funding of operator training cost. The quarterly Country Mayors Association of NSW meeting could be a good platform for NSW Health to share information on programs and the oral health benefits of fluoridation. The Water Unit is engaging with the Water Directorate on the topic.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that encouragement, support and providing information on fluoridation is the preferred way to work with water utilities, including those that with long interruptions to fluoridation.</p> <p>Strengthen community confidence in fluoridation. NSW Health continues to reference the NHMRC's statement and evidence review on the safety and efficacy of fluoridation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NSW Health to provide updates on the CoP review in future Committee meetings 2. NSW Health to confirm whether fluoridation is included in induction topics for new councillors 3. Water Unit and Committee members to discuss improvements to the Form 1 process
4	NSW Health – Water Unit update	
	<p>The Water Unit provided an update on progress of the CoP review and the consultation process.</p> <p>Fluoride compliance data summary tables were presented for regional NSW and major utilities. The data suggest that the</p>	

	current control measures and reporting requirements in the CoP are effective.	
	Any other business	
5	The Committee discussed the most effective way for water utilities to inform their consumers about the fluoridation status of public water supplies, especially in the case of long-term interruption. The Committee considered options including publication of a map or communication direct with consumers. NSW Health, when notified of long-term interruptions, asks water utilities to inform their consumers.	4. NSW Health to consider options to ensure effective communication with consumers in case of long-term interruption to fluoridation
7	Next meeting	
	Next meeting will take place in the new year.	5. NSW Health to propose dates for next meeting