

Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Advisory Committee

18 July 2025 | 9-11 am | NSW Health and via Teams

Minutes

| Item | Description | | Action |
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| 1 | Welcome and acknowledgement of Country | | |
| | 1.1 | Apologies – none from Committee members | |
| | 1.2 | Introductions | |
| 2 | Committee role and Terms of Reference | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Committee's role is set out in the <u>Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957</u> and terms of reference. - There are 83 local water utilities in regional NSW, as well as Sydney Water and Hunter Water. - Water utilities considering fluoridation may apply for approval to fluoride or refer the question to NSW Health - NSW Health has committed to 100% funding of capital works and operator training. - Under section 5(1)(b) of the Act, the Committee has a broad ability to make recommendations on the administration of the Act. - Committee considered the terms of reference and the addition of explicit reference to section 6A of the Act. | | 1. NSW Health – to send wording on section 6A of the Act for the Committee's consideration and subsequent endorsement of the Terms of Reference. |
| 3 | NSW Health – Water Unit update and discussion | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fluoride target concentration and guidelines are based on the <i>NSW Code of Practice for Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies</i> (2018) and <i>NHMRC Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> (2011). - Most of the NSW population is receiving fluoridated water. Three utilities have a supply with adequate natural fluoride levels, six utilities have not sought approval to fluoride, | | 2. NSW Health to advise Committee of the utilities with adequate natural fluoride levels. 3. NSW Health to provide information on local water utilities |

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| | <p>and two have raised the question of fluoridation with NSW Health and have in principle support to fluoridate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fluoride plants can be offline for reasons including aging systems, construction lead times, work, health and safety (dust) concerns for operators, operational complexity and workforce and training challenges. - <i>NSW Code of Practice for Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies</i> (2018) is being reviewed. Consultation with major water utilities, Local Government Water Directorate, Environment Protection Authority and SafeWork is pending. - NSW Health has well established fluoridation tracking tools to monitor compliance. The Centre for Oral Health Strategy is notified when fluoridation plants are offline, but there is no procedure for notification when they are online again. See Action 4. - Note the Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists Association is now the Oral Health Association of Australia. | <p>who do not fluoridate water.</p> <p>4. NSW Health to agree on a communication plan with the Centre for Oral Health Strategy for notifying that plants are online.</p> <p>5. NSW Health to request colour changes in the fluoridation tracking map to improve readability.</p> <p>6. NSW Health to provide links of the NHMRC evidence review and Blue Mountains review.</p> |
| | DCCEEW-Water update and discussion | |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water utilities/councils are responsible for owning, operating and maintaining plants. - DCCEEW-Water runs the assurance on plant design, installation and operation. The choice of chemical used for fluoridation is based on factors including cost, supply, safety and plant size. - The process for a water utility to fluoridate requires DCCEEW-Water to approve multiple elements, conduct a compliance inspection, recommend for approval then NSW Health can approve fluoridation commencement. - DCCEEW-Water supports technical training and ongoing operations. Regional Inspectors visit facilities regularly. | |
| 5 | Any other business | |
| | Nil | |
| | Actions from last meeting (May 2021) | |
| 6 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>NSW Health to develop draft procedure for utilities that have temporarily ceased fluoridation or failing to commence. This should consider communications, escalation procedures, community notification.</i> | |

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| | <p>Actioned – the notification procedure was implemented. NSW Health will develop a procedure for notification when plants are turned back on (see Action 4).</p> <p>2. <i>NSW Health to present on bottled water at a future meeting.</i></p> <p>Actioned – upon Committee discussion, no update required.</p> <p>3. <i>NSW Health to provide an update on water fluoridation in the broader Oral Health context and strategic directions.</i></p> <p>Actioned – upon Committee discussion, no update required. NSW Health will present on unfluoridated supplies next meeting (see Action 3).</p> | |
| 7 | Next meeting | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings are to be held quarterly if no specific matters to be raised for consideration of the Committee. Meetings to be hybrid (virtual and in-person). | <p>7. NSW Health to send potential dates in October 2025 for the next meeting.</p> |