



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday, 18 September 2013

#### **NSW GOVERNMENT BOOSTS FLUORIDE FUNDING**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced the NSW Government will commit \$7.5 million to ensure councils are supported to build the vital infrastructure needed to fluoridate their water supplies.

Mrs Skinner, who today released a paper on the benefits of water fluoridation, said the NSW Government will undertake a suite of measures aimed at increasing rates of water fluoridation across the state.

“The NSW Government is committing \$5 million to ensure the 15 councils who have chosen not to fluoridate are able to provide this vital service to their communities,” Mrs Skinner said.

“A further \$2.5 million will be invested for the implementation of technological advancements for smaller communities with current approval for fluoridation.

“The evidence about fluoridation is clear – its role in ensuring good oral health and the wider health of the community is absolutely essential.

“Communities across NSW benefit greatly from fluoridated water and councils play an important role in delivering this service.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals came to the election with a commitment to support local councils to make local decisions.

“It is for this reason we are boosting our infrastructure support for councils who have avoided fluoridation, to encourage them to deliver this vital service to the community.”

Mrs Skinner said recent sustained efforts by NSW Health and local clinicians have encouraged increased fluoridation rates, with two North Coast councils voting to support water fluoridation.

“NSW Health - led by the Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant - in partnership with local clinicians has been very successful in convincing the community of the benefits of fluoridation,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This educative approach has been integral to fighting misinformation, and as a result, NSW Health will now be undertaking annual audits of all councils to ensure their commitment to fluoridation is unwavering.

“No council which has commenced fluoridation of their water supplies will be able to renege on their decision without the permission of the NSW Director-General of Health.”

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Government will not support Labor’s private member’s bill - *Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Amendment Bill 2013*.

“It is estimated 96 per cent of the NSW population currently has access to public fluoridated water and recent outcomes have shown that with education and information local councils are able to make informed decisions about fluoridation.

“Access to fluoridated water is fundamental to good oral health and I am heartened to see councils who have been unsupportive of fluoridation reversing their views.

“NSW Health will continue to support local communities and councils with information on water fluoridation and local public health units will continue to engage councils questioning the health benefits of fluoride,” Mrs Skinner said.

The *Water fluoridation in NSW* paper can be found at the following link:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Documents/water-fluoridation-nsw.pdf>