



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Ruapehu District Council**

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#### **WIDE RANGE OF FACTORS IMPACTS ON COUNCIL DECISION TO STOP FLUORIDATION OF TAUMARUNUI WATER**

The decision by Ruapehu District Council (RDC) to stop fluoridation of Taumarunui's water supply was for a number of factors and not due solely to the arguments of the anti-fluoridation lobby.

RDC Team Leader Strategic Development, Pauline Welch, said that arguments on the future of the fluoridation of Taumarunui's water supply had passionate submitters both for and against.

"With 34 submissions the future of Taumarunui fluoridation was the third most popular topic from the draft Exceptions Annual Plan 2011-12 consultations," she said.

"Submissions were evenly split for and against continued fluoridation of the water supply with both pro and anti proponents wanting to support their submissions with presentations to council."

"Both the pro and anti lobbies were very professional with high quality video and specialist speakers presenting in support of their position."

Ms Welch said that the Local Government Act 2002 requires that council enters the consultation phase from a completely unbiased position.

"Any form of pre-determination can open council's decisions up to a legal challenge," she said.

"On balance council decided that the fluoridation of Taumarunui's water supply should cease."

"The major factors in the final decision included; (a) the introduction of fluoridation into Taumarunui water in the 1960s was done without an extensive consultation process, although, was introduced on the prevailing medical advice at the time, (b) the decision to cease fluoridation has been after consultation and feedback from the community, (c) council is not a health or dental organisation and cannot provide any medical expertise or confidence on the issue. This is an issue as fluoridation involves council in health outcomes when it does not fully understand the science, and is unable or willing to monitor health outcomes, (d) council is not a provider of health

or dental products and is not funded for providing dental treatment, and (e) it cannot be guaranteed that fluoridation is 100% safe for 100% of the population 100% of the time.”

Ms Welch added that the treatment of the water supply made ingestion of fluoride compulsory for Taumarunui residents which took away people’s free choice, many of whom desire the right to choose.

“Although council has voted to stop fluoridation of Taumarunui’s water supply the elected members recognise the issues with dental care in the Ruapehu District,” she said.

“Council sees it as essential that the message of good and daily dental care is promoted by health providers and shared with students and parents.”

Ms Welch said that council had also noted that toothpaste contains fluoride and that fluoride tablets are available from pharmacies if people wish to use them.

DAVID HAMMOND  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

CJH : PRW