



Australian Government

National Health and Medical Research Council

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MEDIA RELEASE

## Public Statement on water fluoridation open for public consultation

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) today released for public consultation a draft Public Statement on community water fluoridation. NHMRC continues to support fluoridating water given fluoride's role in reducing tooth decay.

NHMRC invites the public to make a submission through its online public consultation portal at <https://consultations.nhmrc.gov.au>. Consultation closes on 3 August 2017.

Following a thorough review of the evidence, NHMRC confirms that adjusting the natural level of fluoride in drinking water supplies helps to reduce tooth decay for all Australians. The benefits of community water fluoridation in reducing and preventing tooth decay are supported by over 60 years of research.

The studies reviewed by NHMRC show that community water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by 26 to 44 per cent in children, teenagers and adults.

Community water fluoridation is seen as one of the top public health achievements. It has been approved by major health organisations in Australia and internationally, including the Australian Medical Association, Australian Dental Association, World Health Organization and World Dental Federation.

'NHMRC found no reliable evidence that community water fluoridation at current Australian levels causes health problems,' said NHMRC CEO Professor Anne Kelso AO.

'Studies implying harms from water fluoridation are largely from overseas countries that have much higher levels of fluoride than the levels used in Australia, and were done in ways which make their results scientifically unreliable.

Despite the backing of a substantial body of scientific evidence, about 10 per cent of the Australian population live in areas without water fluoridation.

Health authorities, which decide whether water will be fluoridated or not, should be assured that NHMRC recommends community water fluoridation as a safe, effective and ethical way to help reduce tooth decay.'

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