

Submission
No 260

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

Organisation:

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Theme:

Summary

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

My name is Jennifer McCarthy. I live on the Gold Coast and I have recently become aware that the NSW Government is holding an inquiry into dental services. As water fluoridation for dental caries treatment is one of the issues that the Inquiry is looking at, I would like to submit to the Inquiry my own story of the harm that fluoride in drinking water has done to me.

I have lived in Queensland all of my life, spending my childhood and young adult life in South East Queensland. In 1980, at the age of 22, I was a public servant working as a Court Officer in Ipswich. My husband, who was employed by the National Bank, was transferred to Townsville. Together, we moved to Townsville and after a couple of months there, I commenced a fulltime University course.

Within a few weeks of locating to Townsville, I suddenly developed dermatitis that was particularly severe on my hands and arms. I had never before suffered from dermatitis or any other skin condition. With the severe dermatitis I paid numerous visits to private Doctors and attended the Townsville Hospital. I also saw naturopaths and purchased many products from pharmacies and health food shops in the attempt to find a cure, but to no avail.

I changed brands of shampoo, soap and washing powder and then tried to avoid contact with any chemicals or possible allergens as much as possible. My husband did all the washing and washing up.

The dermatitis on my hands was very painful and extremely distressing, both physically and mentally. At times the itch was so bad I could have torn my hands to pieces. My fingernails were pitted all over and the skin on my hands constantly peeled off. In one prac at Uni, we were to print and examine fingerprints. The skin had peeled off my fingertips so often that I did not have fingerprints.

My husband and I lived in Townsville for just over 4 years. Each University vacation, I would travel back to Brisbane to visit my family. I would notice that after a couple of weeks away from Townsville my dermatitis would start to ease, only to flare up again on my return to Townsville.

At that time, I did not realize that the Townsville public water supply that I was drinking and bathing in, had been fluoridated. It was just before we were transferred back to SE Qld for work commitments that a GP made the comment to me that the Fluoride in the water could be the cause of my dermatitis.

Within weeks of leaving fluoridated Townsville and moving back to SE Qld, my dermatitis cleared up and it has not returned in the last 20 years.

I have since read that that double blind trials in the Netherlands have showed that between 1 and 5 percent of people are hypersensitive or allergic to

fluoridated water. I have proved by my reactions time and time again that I am one of those people who are hypersensitive to fluoride.

Unfortunately, about 10 years ago, I suffered a bad case of food poisoning and since that time have been wheat and dairy intolerant and generally more allergic than I had been as a young adult. I believe that now, my reaction to fluoridated water may now be even more severe than when I was in Townsville.

I believe that no health, safety and sensitivity studies have ever been conducted in Australia on water fluoridation. I find this to be unbelievable.

I very strongly urge the Inquiry to ask that health and safety and sensitivity studies be commenced immediately and that until these are done a Moratorium be placed on extending the areas that have public water supplies forcibly fluoridated.

Even if water fluoridation does have any positive benefit on dental decay (which from my reading appears to be so small it is almost insignificant) I would like to say to the Inquiry that it is just not worth it. The bad health outcome that I had and that others must also have had, can never compensate for one filling or less per person. Certainly the amount of money I spent at Doctors and Chemists over those 4 years in fluoridated Townsville trying to cure what was an fluoride allergy would have eaten up any saving at a Dentist.

I would not wish for anyone, to suffer the pain and anguish that I have suffered resulting from water fluoridation.

Please do not be a part of forcing any more of the Australian population being forced to endure water fluoridation.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Jennifer McCarthy