

Submission  
No 31

## INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

**Organisation:**

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**Telephone:**

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

## Committee Social Issues - Submission Dental Services

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**Date:** 19/05/2005 5:39 PM  
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The Director, Standing Committee on Social Issues, Legislative Council, Parliament House, Sydney 2000

### Submission on Inquiry into Dental Services

Honourable Members,

I am a resident of a small village south of Port Macquarie. As a result of NSW Department of Health's encouragement of fluoridation, there has been much controversy in our community.

Two local pressure groups, a so-called "Safe Water Association" and "Citizens Against Fluoridation" have used the local media ruthlessly to advance their opposition to fluoridation. The highest profiled person, Cr Lisa Intemann, also uses her own column in The Hastings Gazette to proselytise as well as making her opposition known in Hastings Council.

My wife and I have been high school teachers for 40 years. We feel strongly about the need for fluoridation here and elsewhere in rural Australia. There is no doubt that the children in the country have inferior teeth and less access to services than metropolitan areas and some of this is owing to the lack of fluoride at 1 ppm in the water supply. Much of the debate has been shanghaied by these small but highly vocal people using crude, untrue, unscientific, even anti-scientific arguments without any consideration of the perilous condition of dental health suffered by poor people especially. They claim that there's a conspiracy theory.

Thus, Cr Intemann, writing in her Inside Life column today [Hastings Gazette May 19], includes these typical remarks: "The chemical used in fluoridation in Australia is a never-health-tested industrial waste product called silicofluoride. We know that the economic rationalists at the national level have ruled that there are 'insufficient resources' to conduct any of the recommended fluoridation health research. In the face of this the authorities at the State level seem intent on keeping a poker face. And certainly no-one wants you – the community – to get the drift of what is really going on."

The President of the Hastings Safe Water Association, Therese McKay, writing a letter in the same issue, includes the claim that: "some of these health risks from the ingestion of fluoridated water include dental fluorosis, skeletal fluorosis, kidney disease, enzyme and mutagenic effects, birth defects and cancer ...the scientific community needs to further assess the potential health risks of fluoridated water".

These voices -- we're sure that you will hear much of the same repeated endlessly -- are offensive to common knowledge and common sense and they are potentially detrimental to public health. The writers appear not to care about dental health. The York Review established that none of the claims in the previous paragraph are true, apart from a minor incidence of mild dental fluorosis. Further, the claim of a hush-up by the Councillor has no basis in fact and her propagandist language when describing fluoride epitomises the unscrupulousness of the overwhelming majority of those opposed to it. The way fluorophobes couch their opinions are usually more worthy of Salem witch-hunters than laid-back Australians.

We know that there is vast evidence of the benefits and safety of fluoride in an almost endless number of studies. The recent history of fluoridation in the Republic of Ireland where fluoridation of all water supplies is compulsory has given their children the best fangs in Europe. We want what they're having. We also want what most of you take for granted in Sydney. More than that, we want our children, our grandchildren and our entire community to enjoy the miraculous benefits of fluoridation. Please take our teeth out of the Dark Ages and make them white and strong.

Yours faithfully,  
Paul and Susan Vernon-Roberts

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