

28 October 2014

Toby Regan  
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Dear Toby

### **Non-renewal of NFIS agreement**

Agreement 335340 for the National Water Fluoridation and Coordination Service (known as the National Fluoridation Information Service or NFIS) expires on 20 January 2015. This letter confirms that the Ministry of Health has decided not to renew this agreement following its expiry.

As discussed, the Ministry considers that it is no longer necessary to continue to fund the full range of independent scientific and advisory services that have been carried out under the NFIS agreement. It is now timely for the Ministry to review the type and scope of national services that may be required in future in relation to community water fluoridation.

The Ministry notes that the science relevant to community water fluoridation has been stable and conclusive for many years, as verified by numerous international reports. Moreover, the NFIS reviews of published scientific literature have continued to validate the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation, and thus the appropriateness of the Ministry's policy in New Zealand.

In August this year, the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor jointly published the report: *Health effects of water fluoridation: A review of the scientific evidence*. This report found compelling evidence for the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation within the range of concentrations currently recommended by the Ministry of Health. The report recommended that a similar review be repeated every ten years, or earlier if a large well-designed study is published that appears likely to have shifted the balance between health benefit and health risk.

Accordingly, the Ministry considers that the review within New Zealand of the international science related to community water fluoridation can be undertaken less frequently than under the current NFIS arrangements.

I would like to emphasise that the decision not to renew the NFIS agreement does not reflect adversely on the work done by Hutt Valley DHB and its consortium partners in the delivery of the independent National Fluoridation Information Service. On the contrary, the Ministry acknowledges the high quality of the work carried out and published under the auspices of NFIS.

As discussed, we will work together with your team to ensure that the extensive information published on the NFIS web-pages to date will be migrated from the Regional Public Health website to a Ministry-owned website to ensure the continuing public availability of this information.

My thanks to the NFIS team and consortium partners for your independent, high-quality scientific and advisory work carried out over the past four years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D Woodley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Woodley  
**Group Manager**  
**Personal Health Service Improvement**  
**Sector Capability and Implementation**