



## Office of Hon Peter Dunne

MP for Otago

Minister of Internal Affairs

Associate Minister of Health

Associate Minister of Conservation

31 MAR 2015

Dear

### **Request for official information relating to fluoridated water**

Thank you for your request of 6 March 2015 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for a response to the question "Given that recent peer reviewed research shows that there is a minimum 30 percent increase in the prevalence of hypothyroidism in women would the Minister consider issuing a warning to women not to drink fluoridated tap water?" The study you refer to is the Peckham et al study, which appeared in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health in February 2015.

The Government's current policy position is that water fluoridation at levels of 0.7 and 1.0 mg/litre is a safe, effective and affordable means of improving oral health while minimising the risk of dental fluorosis.

The August 2014 report 'Health effects of water fluoridation: review of scientific evidence' published on behalf of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (Skegg/Gluckman report) reviewed the scientific evidence for and against the efficacy and safety of community water fluoridation.

The Skegg/Gluckman report concluded that the efficacy and safety of fluoridation of public water supplies, within the range of concentrations currently recommended by the Ministry of Health, is assured. The RSNZ/OPMCSA report recommended that a review such as the 2014 review be "repeated every 10 years, or earlier if a large well-designed study is published that appears likely to have shifted the balance of health benefit versus health risk".

The Ministry of Health has advised that the Peckham et al study appears not to have "shifted the balance of health benefit versus health risk". Therefore, the study will be considered alongside the already substantial body of evidence confirming the safety and efficacy of water fluoridation in the next periodic systematic review of the evidence base about community water fluoridation.

In light of the advice I have received, I do not intend to issue a warning to women about fluoridated tap water.

Yours sincerely

Hon Peter Dunne  
**Associate Minister of Health**