

15 September 2016

Mr Kevin Tinker

By email: [nztinker@globe.net.nz](mailto:nztinker@globe.net.nz)

Dear Mr Tinker

**Conduct complaint – Dr Rob Beaglehole**

Please accept my sincere apologies for this delayed communication, due to my unforeseen absence from work for urgent personal reasons.

I refer to your complaint to the Dental Council concerning Dr Rob Beaglehole's conduct. In particular, your concern that Dr Beaglehole lied to the public and disrespected other health professionals by broadcasting the following statements during an interview on the Paul Henry TV show on 13 April 2016:

*"All health authorities, all around the world urgently recommend water fluoridation. It's effective, it's safe and there is not one reputable health organisation anywhere on the globe that will say water fluoridation causes problems that some of the anti-fluoridationists are highlighting."*

Dr Beaglehole was given an opportunity to respond to your complaint. He accepted it had been imprecise of him to use the word "all" when referring to health authorities around the world. The remote format of the live television interview had presented a challenging situation for him. At the time, he believed his statement was substantively correct in the context he had in mind. Dr Beaglehole "rigorously reject[ed]" your suggestion that he had lied or violated appropriate professional standards.

At its meeting of 8 August 2016, the Council reviewed the complaint information, including Dr Beaglehole's response. The Council agreed the statements made by Dr Beaglehole raised a question about the appropriateness of his conduct. However, Council accepted his comments were made in good faith in a challenging interview situation and there was no deliberate attempt to mislead the public.

The Council resolved to issue a firm caution to Dr Beaglehole that he take greater care to ensure adherence to his professional responsibilities, particularly when expressing his views in the public forum on the subject of community water fluoridation, or risk referral to a professional conduct committee.

I confirm Dr Beaglehole has been cautioned about his conduct, in light of your complaint, and advised to ensure compliance with his professional responsibilities as a registered dentist. He has been advised that a continued failure to do so puts him at risk of disciplinary action. The Council also recommended that Dr Beaglehole seek appropriate media training to support improved media communication in future.

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Thank you for raising your concerns with the Dental Council. I apologise again for the delay in advising you of the outcome of Council's consideration of your complaint.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V. Vassiliadis', with a small flourish at the end.

Valentina Vassiliadis  
Legal Advisor  
for Registrar