

CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

FROM: Manager Assets and Contracts

DATE: 14 May 2008

SUBJECT: **Fluoridation of Council Water Supplies
(COM 03-99-71)**

Purpose

To review the results of the Fluoridation referendum undertaken in conjunction with the 2007 Triennial Election and consider the recommendation of the Otago District Health Board (ODHB) to plan for fluoridation of the Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra public drinking water supplies.

Background

At the Council meeting of 20 June 2007, Officers of the ODHB outlined the case for the fluoridation of Central Otago District Council public water supplies.

Council agreed to a referendum as per the following resolution.

07.7.14 *Fluoridation of Water Supplies (COM 03-99-71)*

A report from the Chief Executive Officer relating to a request from Otago District Health Board to run a referendum to gauge support for fluoridation, had been circulated.

A. RESOLVED *that the report be received and the level of significance be accepted.*

Claridge/Smith

B. RESOLVED *that Council agrees to a referendum being run on a district basis during the Triennial Elections in October 2007 to gauge support for fluoridation.*

Claridge/Smith

The results of the referendum were as outlined below.

**CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL
FLUORIDE RESULT BY WARD**

	CROMWELL	EARNS/MANU	MANIOTOTO	ALEXANDRA	ROXBURGH	Grand Total
NO	730	608	323	1173	323	3157
YES	979	545	385	1177	310	3396
INFORMAL	1	1		2		4
BLANK	154	188	110	199	150	801
Grand Total	1864	1342	818	2551	783	7358

The ODHB by letter of 19 March 2008 have provided a report (**attached**) which considers the referendum results and recommends that Council plans for fluoridation of the Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra public drinking water supplies.

We have included the table above because the ODHB report incorrectly reports the Alexandra results as including Clyde when we know Clyde electors are in fact recorded under Earnsclough.

Significance

This matter of fluoridation of public water supplies is considered significant as it often generates significant public interest, with often extreme views (for and against) expressed.

The close nature of the referendum results suggests that if Council resolves to proceed further with consideration of fluoridation then a more detailed assessment of community views will be required.

This could be by further polling of the direct consumers (and ratepayers) of the public water supply or by community board decision based on discussion of more detailed analysis.

No further analysis of impacts or community views is deemed necessary at this stage.

Delegations

The Community Boards have been delegated (Power to Act: clause 3) the functions, duties, powers and discretions of "The general provision (including maintenance and upgrading as required) ... of water supplies...."

In granting these delegations, it would appear that there is a clear expectation that decisions on upgrade actions such as fluoridation should be made at the community board level.

Discussion

The ODHB report either notes or shows that:

- Oral Health of 5 (five) year old children compares favourably with the rest of New Zealand.
- The prevalence of tooth decay is not conclusively linked to the school decile rating in Central Otago.
- Omakau and Clyde School children have the greatest variation above the Otago means.

Analysis of Referendum

As the referendum was open to all ratepayers ward-wide, and not just the drinking water supply consumers, the overall results must be treated with some caution.

The two schools with the highest level of decay (Omakau and Clyde) are both within the Earnsclough/Manuherikia ward which only had a 47% acceptance of fluoridation.

Finance

The ODHB report notes that there are capital funding subsidies available under the Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme (SWSS) and the Minister of Health notes that all applications to date have received 100% subsidy grants.

The operating expenses for fluoridation are not significant being in the order of \$5000 p.a. for Cromwell and Alexandra and less than \$2000 p.a. for Clyde.

Options

1) Do Nothing

The Council could consider that the close nature of the referendum gives no clear mandate and declines to proceed further. This predetermines that a close vote is a no vote.

This option is not recommended

2) Approve Fluoridation

The Council decides that the public health argument is proven and agrees to commence planning for fluoridation of Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra public water supplies. This would over-ride the delegations that have been made to the community boards in respect to water supplies.

This option is not recommended.

3) Refer decision to Community Boards

The Council resolves that any decision about fluoridation of public water supplies is a matter for the respective community board to resolve. In this case the decision should be referred to the Cromwell and Vincent Community Boards.

This is the recommended option

4) Other potential options

There are potentially several more options that include the basic elements of options 2 and 3 above in that they relate to the Maniototo and Roxburgh Community Boards, or specific community public water supplies within wards. In the interests of brevity these are considered together.

These options are not recommended.

Proposal

The proposal is that the decision on fluoridation is passed onto the appropriate community boards. In this case we recommend only that the Vincent and Cromwell Community Boards consider this issue as they represent the three schemes mentioned in the ODHB report.

In not considering Maniototo and Roxburgh, we refer to page 9 of the ODHB report which notes that fluoridation is cost-saving for communities above 1000 individuals.

This is backed up by the presentation to Council of 20 June 2007 which noted “only appropriate for communities on reticulated supplies greater than about 1000.”

Clyde, Ranfurly and Roxburgh all have normal residential populations of about 800. However Clyde will greatly exceed 1000 persons for much of the summer holiday periods. Omakau has a residential population of only 300

Therefore it is appropriate that consideration only be given to Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra public water supplies.

Implementation Plan

If Council resolves to refer the fluoridation issue to the Cromwell and Vincent Community Boards (or others), then the Boards would consider these at their respective June and July meetings, if practicable.

The need for a more detailed implementation plan would depend on the Board decisions.

Even at this stage, it is noted that if there was further community consultation required, then the recommendation would be that a separate Special Consultative

Procedure, outside of the 2009-19 Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), be undertaken.

Other Issues

All other matters such as social, economic, environment, cultural impacts, and sustainability should be considered in future reports to the Community boards.

- A. RECOMMENDED that the report be received and the level of significance be accepted.

- B. RECOMMENDED that the ODHB Report on planning for fluoridation of public water supplies be referred to the next available meeting(s) of the Cromwell and Vincent Community Boards.

Murray Washington
Manager Assets and Contracts