

Legislative Council

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SAFE DRINKING WATER BILL

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (17:20):

I rise to indicate my support for the second reading of the Safe Drinking Water Bill 2011 and my intention to move some amendments (which would probably be no surprise). The bill, which I believe has its origins in the Productivity Commission, has as its premise the right for consumers to expect safe drinking water when they turn on the tap. It seeks to achieve this objective by subjecting water providers to universal safety standards, inspection and reporting requirements.

In detail, the bill—subject to certain exemptions—covers all the several hundred water providers in South Australia. While the largest, of course, is SA Water, with some 94 per cent of consumers as customers, there are numerous smaller suppliers, such as water carters and other resellers. Further, there are those who indirectly provide drinking water from rainwater tanks or bores, such as bed and breakfasts, caravan parks and other forms of holiday accommodation.

To limit contamination or toxic outbreaks, the bill requires each of these providers to have a risk management plan, with separate monitoring and incident plans. The bill also requires relatively frequent (once a year for SA Water, and no less than once every two years for smaller providers) audits and inspections by suitably qualified environmental health officers, the results of which are then to be reported to the Department of Health. Further, if there is an outbreak or contamination, the bill requires the provider to notify its consumers, which I believe is an increase in the transparency of the current reporting of incidents. Obviously, I fully support these measures to limit the risk and effect of outbreaks.

Ironically, it is a government that is probably responsible for more illness in this state that is introducing the safe water bill, when it persists in artificially fluoridating the water supply of everybody, when the known health effects of that practice are now accepted worldwide. The United States has lowered its level of 'dosing', if you want to call it that, to 0.7 parts per million because of the findings of the United States Federal Department of Health and Human Services, following significant scientific risk assessments performed by the Environmental Protection Agency, which in part found over 40 per cent of American teens now show signs of dental fluorosis—a sign of excessive fluoride intake that can lead to severe pitting and staining of teeth.

Those reviews also confirm earlier research showing that the prolonged high intake of fluoride can increase the risk of skeletal fluorosis, leading to brittle bones, fractures and crippling bone abnormalities. The reason the South Australian Health Department gives not to follow that lead is that this is Australia—Australia, where we have not done any of this testing, where we have not done any of these audits or risk assessments, and where the science on the harms of fluoride has basically been shoved under the carpet and ignored.

At the end of last year or beginning of this year, I had an expert in the field of fluoridation, Dr Paul Connett, come here and address members from this place and the other, and members of the public and healthcare professionals who were interested in this issue. I know that there were members of the Labor party who were shocked by the information they received, and I know that because I have spoken to them myself, and they are now asking why we would

persist with this practice when the health and wellbeing of not only our children but also of our sick and our elderly are being put at risk by an outdated and unscientific practice of putting rat poison in our water.

We know that fluoride has never been approved for human consumption. The way in which legislation has been drawn up and manipulated by federal and state governments, the TGA has no jurisdiction over any sort of assessments or studies on the efficacy of fluoride ingestion. So, that is a bypass, basically, of the watchdog of safety in this country. As far as putting medicines into people's bodies, they have to go through stringent testing, yet for sodium fluoride—and let me be clear, sodium fluoride (silicic acid) is rat poison—we are saying that it is okay to put this in our water supply at one part per million, based on junk science.

I am not going to rave on about this, because I have already made a very long speech on fluoridation, but I am going to put on the record, given the context of this bill and the title being the safe water bill, that the known symptoms of fluoride poisoning are:

- arthritis—stiff, painful joints, with or without swelling;
- asthma, especially after showering with chlorine-filtered water;
- bony, painful lumps where tendons and ligaments attach to connective tissue;
- chronic fatigue syndrome;
- being very sensitive to cold temperature—always feeling cold, even after a hot bath or hot shower;
- colic in bottle-fed babies, or colic developing when breastfed babies are weaned;
- dental fluorosis;
- diabetes: a worsening of symptoms;
- diabetes insipidus (a kidney ailment)—excessive thirst, increased consumption of water that does not relieve thirst, dry throat and irritation frequent, diluted urine, especially at night;
- eyes: moving black spots in front of the eyes;
- fatigue: weakness and brain fog after bathing or showering in fluoridated water;
- fibromyalgia: severe muscle weakness and/or pain, with extreme pain in various bony areas;
- food intolerances that seem to come and go;
- gastrointestinal problems: irritable bowel, nausea, diarrhoea, heartburn and upper bowel pain, especially after drinking water;
- gum disease: irritated or bleeding gums despite good hygiene which are difficult to heal but which heal easily when you start using unfluoridated toothpaste and water;
- heart palpitations and increased heart rate without exertion;
- kidney disease: worsening symptoms; kidney stones;
- skin: hives, blisters, rash on stomach or back within a fluoridated area or after bathing or showering;
- drinking tea causes upset stomach, gastric pain, heart palpitations or the jitters, similar to strong coffee;
- teeth: loosening or needing to be extracted despite good hygiene; and

□ thyroid diseases: underactive thyroid or overactive thyroid, goitre and nodules.

That is for adults. So, it may well be—and according to Dr A.K. Susheela, who has been diagnosing and treating fluoride toxicity for 35 years—that a great many people who are going to doctors for these ailments as adults are being misdiagnosed and therefore being prescribed medications they probably do not need. If that is the case, this government is responsible for that—and so is every previous government that has supported this practice without even considering that times change, science evolves and new information comes to light.

I think it is a bloody disgrace myself that we will not even call on Dr Susheela to come here and present to medical practitioners what she has found in her 35 years. You know what? If the science says that 3,700 healthcare professionals and 14 Nobel Laureates in science and medicine have this all wrong, we will yield. But no, turn a blind eye, a deaf ear, shove it all under the carpet and hope to God that these people never actually get tested for fluoride toxicity, and when they do they cannot even take it to a court of law. They have no common law rights the way we have legislated for fluoridation of our water supply.

I have just gone through the effects that it has on adults. Now, common in children—this is our children we are talking about, folks. Affliction of children due to fluoride poisoning is significantly different from adults. In children the adverse effects commence from intra-uterine life, if the mother is exposed to high fluoride. Infants with respiratory distress should be tested for fluoride in urine of the infant/drinking water, blood and urine of the mother. Fluoride ingestion by the infant from early developmental stages can lead to rickets, which may not respond to calcium and vitamin D treatment; unless the fluoride levels in urine/blood are lowered to normal range. In children the discolouration seen on the permanent teeth may not necessarily be due to dental caries or dirty teeth. But, in fact, dental fluorosis, which is, as I have said before, a sign of damage to the skeletal system.

The discolouration of the permanent teeth can be due to dental fluorosis. Discolouration is always horizontally aligned on the enamel surface; discolouration shall be away from the gums; the discolouration shall occur in teeth in pairs (bilaterally). Fluoride poisoning effects in adults can be tracked to soft tissue manifestations besides skeletal derangements. We also know now that it is a cause of kidney disease, it is a cause of lowered IQ in our children, it is a cause of behavioural problems and learning difficulties in our children and it is also the cause of brain damage which is absolutely debilitating in our children. We also now have a situation in Lismore, on the north coast of New South Wales, where a hero of the environmental movement named Al Olshack has fought Rous Water, which was basically directed by the New South Wales Health Department to fluoridate the Northern Rivers water system. A movement in Lismore has taken steps and brought this before the Environmental Court.

Last week, the judgement of Justice Biscoe was handed down. It was a decision on a preliminary legal matter ruling that Rous Water was required to comply with sections 111 and 112 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 with respect to the impacts of fluoride on human health and the environment. The ruling means that the New South Wales Fluoridation Act of 1957 does not stand in isolation from the EP&A Act, as was previously understood. In his ruling, Justice Biscoe made it clear that he did not believe that the environmental and human impacts of fluoride have been adequately investigated and has allowed for this case to go to trial so that the evidence can be presented in his court.

As a matter of fact, that is a win for the anti-fluoride movement, although I hate to call it that because it always sounds like people who want to go to war with each other. The fact is that

we have one court in Australia that is able to hear a case against water fluoridation that will allow all of this evidence to be presented and for a judicial ruling to be made on the efficacy of fluoridating water supplies.

I wonder what will happen in South Australia if that particular trial shows that this has been a bad practice for so many years and governments all around this country have rolled it out, steamrolled it, onto communities who have objected because they have done their research. For 40 years in South Australia the objections of many people have been ignored and they have been referred to as the lunatic fringe because they refuse to drink water with a toxic poison in it.

In conclusion, I would like to say that one of these days this issue is going to come home to roost whether it be that a government is forced to pay compensation for the harm that it has caused to children, the sick, the vulnerable and the elderly in this state or whether it be that each one of you in here who refuses, whether it be your portfolio or not, to look at the research that has been published and peer reviewed, because it has shown without a doubt that fluoride is contributing to ill health.

The former health minister in the Whitlam government now has to go away and live with the fact that he just did not do enough. That will be basically your lot when you leave here. You have sat on your hands and shut your mouth because of party politics and commercial agreements and agreed to poison thousands of people in this state. You have refused to take any responsibility within your party rooms to rectify that. Your lot will be the same as that former minister who expresses his absolute ongoing regret at the age of 87 that he did not do more to prevent this from happening. I hope you can all live with yourselves.

I want to put on the record that I was absolutely disappointed with the response of the Liberal Party to these amendments that I have put forward in this bill that because it was about fluoridation, it did not need to go to the party room. It did not need to go to the party room for discussion. They would be completely disregarded because the amendments referred to fluoridation. How pathetic! How pathetic is that for an opposition to take that point of view when children, our elderly, sick and vulnerable are being exposed possibly to something that they are highly sensitive to or completely allergic to?

We are talking about the low socioeconomic people of this state who, unlike myself and others, cannot afford to have a rainwater tank installed or cannot afford a reverse osmosis filter or cannot afford to substitute their tap water for bottled water. They are forced to drink and bathe in this crap and get sicker as time goes by. I know of families who are having their urine tested and sent over to Dr Susheela in India and, by having the diagnosis from those urine analyses, this place and the other place and the major parties in here are going to have a lot to answer for in years to come when all this unfolds. Believe me, it will unfold. The science will come out. The truth is out there and the truth will set you free. I believe on the fluoride issue that the truth will prevail, and you can all hang your heads in shame.