

## Legislative Council

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### WATER FLUORIDATION

In reply to the Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (9 February 2011).

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO** (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Gambling): The Minister for Health has advised:

1. Yes. It is important to note in announcing these actions both agencies reiterated their support for drinking water fluoridation.
2. In South Australia fluoride is added to drinking water supplies to achieve a concentration of  $0.9 \pm 0.1$  mg/L. This is within the recommended range of 0.6-1.1mg/L identified by the National Health and Medical Research Council based on ambient air temperatures and associated water consumption. A major point of difference between Australia and the United States is that evidence indicates that the rates of dental fluorosis in Australia are decreasing. This includes specific evidence from South Australia and is largely attributed to reduced use of other fluoride supplements and increased use of low-concentration fluoride toothpastes by children. The decreasing rates of dental fluorosis do not provide a basis for modifying current doses.
3. The National Health and Medical Research Council and Food Standards Australia New Zealand have both published reviews of total fluoride intakes. The National Health and Medical Research Council published data in its draft 1999 report, while Food Standards Australia New Zealand published a broader audit in 2009 as part of the assessment on the voluntary addition of fluoride to packaged water.

Following the assessment, Food Standards Australia New Zealand approved voluntary addition of fluoride to between 0.6 and 1.0 mg/L and noted that these concentrations did not raise any public health concerns for consumers of packaged water. The approved range is similar to that recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council.