

Legislative Council

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WATER FLUORIDATION

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (14:59): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Health questions about contaminants in the fluorosilicic acid added to our water.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: As you would be aware, a public meeting was held in Mount Gambier on 9 October of this year on the issue of water fluoridation. The meeting was well attended by local residents, with *The Border Watch* estimating 300 in attendance. The Minister for Health and a representative were also invited but failed to attend. We were advised by the media that the minister issued a statement and an apology for not being able to attend. Apparently, it had not been received by my office then, and it has still not been received. If it had been received, it would have given the panel the opportunity to point out the numerous deceptive and unsubstantiated statements. One of the points that the minister made was that the compound added to our water is 'highly purified'.

Since the public meeting, I have been provided through freedom of information with the certificates of analysis, which record the results of the analysis of each batch of fluorosilicic acid prior to sale. These certificates of analysis clearly show that every batch of this substance used in South Australia since November 2006 has been contaminated with numerous heavy metals, such as iron, lead, copper, zinc, mercury, as well as arsenic as high as 5.2 parts per million, which is linked to significant increases in cancer mortality at only 1.5 parts per million, as well as barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, thallium and other chemical elements, on top of fluorosilicic acid, now known as a carcinogen and a mutagen and listed by the World Health Organisation as a pesticide, herbicide, fungicide and rodenticide.

I have been informed by a healthcare professional that, upon inquiring with SA Water whether fluoridation was a source of arsenic and other heavy metals in our water, he was told, yes. My questions to the minister are:

1. Will the minister admit that his statement provided to the media was deceptive, and will he take steps to rectify that and correct the public record?
2. Will the minister make clear who advised him that the solution used to fluoridate our water is 'highly purified'?
3. If those certificates of analysis truly reflect a purification process, can the minister advise what method of purification could be used to still leave such a contaminated substance?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for the City of Adelaide) (15:02): I thank the honourable member for her important questions and will refer them to the Minister for Health in another place and bring back a response.