

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 9 November 2010, Page 1356

### WATER FLUORIDATION

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON** (15:25): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Health questions about water fluoridation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON:** On 28 October, I asked questions of the minister concerning his statement that the fluorosilicic acid used to fluoridate South Australia's drinking water is 'highly purified'. As I detailed to the council, recent statements of analysis provided to my office through freedom of information revealed that all batches of fluorosilicic acid provided by Incitec Pivot used in South Australia over the last five years have been contaminated with numerous heavy metals such as iron, lead, copper, zinc, mercury, as well as arsenic barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium and thallium.

Each certificate of analysis provides a breakdown of each of the elements mentioned, showing the quantities in parts per million in each batch. The latest certificate of analysis shows a uranium content as well as the other contaminants mentioned previously. Included in this freedom of information response were three statements of analysis that were not conducted by Incitec Pivot at their Geelong manufacturing plant but were instead conducted by Prayon, a Belgium-based phosphate company, and Shanghai MintChem Development Company, based in Hunan in China.

It would appear that SA Water has ceased sourcing fluorosilicic acid from Incitec Pivot and turned to international sources. It is interesting to note that the first batch after Incitec Pivot was provided by Prayon, the next by Shanghai MintChem Development company, and then back to Prayon. These statements of analysis, unlike those accompanying fluorosilicic acid provided by Incitec Pivot, do not give the same detailed breakdown of chemical contaminants. In researching the effects of fluoride, I have come across statements from numerous international health professionals concerned with the high levels of arsenic and other contaminants found in fluoride, particularly that sourced from China.

Given that the Shanghai MintChem Development Company statement of analysis simply breaks contaminants into two categories, that of 'heavy metals' and the other being water 'insoluble matter', it is difficult to know how their sodium fluoride compares to that previously provided by Incitec Pivot. My questions to the minister are:

1. Why did SA Water, which fluoridates on behalf of SA Heath, stop sourcing fluorosilicic acid from Incitec Pivot?
2. What is the difference in price between the fluorosilicic acid produced locally compared to that sourced internationally?
3. Were there any concerns about the sodium fluoride provided by Shanghai MintChem Development Company?
4. Has SA Water settled on a provider of fluorosilicic acid, and will a comprehensive certificate of analysis be provided from any new source of fluorosilicic acid for our water supply?

**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) (15:28): I thank the honourable member for her questions and will refer them to the Minister for Health in another place and bring back a response.