

Media Release

Andrew Buckley, Board Member, Waikato District Health Board and Candidate for Hamilton City Council
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DHB Board member says “it’s time to move on”

Waikato District Health Board member Andrew Buckley believes that it is time to move on from the controversial fluoride debate and instead focus on improving day-to-day life for Hamiltonians.

The Hamilton City Council recently decided to discontinue the controversial practice of fluoridation of the City’s water supply, a decision reached by a 7-1 vote by councillors comprising a special tribunal. In the two weeks since that decision there has been uproar from the pro-fluoride side of the debate. “It’s time to move on and focus on the future, rather than trying to re-hash decisions made through a sound process,” says Mr. Buckley.

One of the options put forward by the pro-fluoride lobby is the staging of a binding referendum to reverse the decision. As a candidate in the upcoming Council elections, Andrew Buckley believes that there are better things to spend rate-payer funds on. “Let’s re-direct the money spent on mass-medicating (mass-supplementation, for those who quibble the point) the community towards things that will actually improve life for our citizens,” says Mr Buckley. “We need better footpaths, better street-cleaning and non-slip paint on roadways, for example, and that’s just on the trip from my house to the hospital!”

The Council's decision on fluoride has also seen an enthusiastic response from the Waikato District Health Board, who are required by legislation to support fluoridation. Mr. Buckley believes that DHB funds spent on promoting fluoridation could be "better spent on subsidising the minimal cost of fluoride tablets for at-risk individuals who elect to medicate themselves." Mr. Buckley is a strong believer in the ability to enjoy personal freedom and exercise choice. "In those terms it could be considered that the adding of fluoride to town water supplies actually restricts choice and freedom, and for this reason it should be considered carefully," says Mr. Buckley. "The present, post-tribunal status is a win win – the people who do not wish to fluoridate their water are accommodated, while those who wish to supplement with fluoride can do so with tablets. Good result all round, I believe".

As a current DHB Board member and candidate in the upcoming Hamilton City Council elections, Mr. Buckley is keen to see that core DHB and Hamilton City Council services are maximised by diverting the money saved by ending the fluoride debate into more meaningful projects. "We elected our representatives and they made a decision based on well-referenced and valid evidence. That's what we pay them for and they did their job – let's move on to some more pressing issues, which are aplenty!"

ENDS

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