

FLUORIDE ACTION NETWORK (N Z) (Inc)

www.fannz.org.nz

NEWSLETTER NO. 7 December 2005

Liars, damn liars, and fluoridation promoters

The big event this year has been the underhanded attempts by, primarily, the Canterbury District Health Board, seemingly spearheaded by Martin Lee, to force fluoridation on Greymouth and Hokitika. FAN(NZ)' committee became aware of initial moves in mid to late 2004, but without local contacts could do little.

Meanwhile, in late 2004, the West Coast DHB distributed questionnaires, seeking opinions on loaded questions and approval for use of the respondent's name in promoting fluoridation. Some of the responses were obtained in bars. In other cases the questionnaires were given "legitimacy" by placing them in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms.

Meanwhile, it is apparent that non-public approaches were made to some members of the Grey District Council to garner support before the matter went to the Council as a proposal to its Long Term Community Plan – an approach first used in Rotorua (unsuccessfully due to the diligence of the local opponents).

Meanwhile, FAN(NZ) had sent submissions to all territorial authorities, many of whom, including Greymouth and Hokitika, accepted as submissions to their annual or long term plans.

FAN(NZ) sought to be heard in oral submissions. We heard only the day before that we were not on the list. The Grey Council CEO tried to claim we had not asked, conceded eventually that we had, and then told the meeting the next night that we had conceded we had not! The DHBs mounted a co-ordinated 1 hour presentation (6 speakers at 10 minutes each, with Martin Lee magically getting the last slot and therefore able to make false claims with no opportunity for rebuttal. (In Hokitika he did not have this slot, and was strangely silent on a number of claims he knew would be rebutted by opponents).

The locals began mounting a campaign, with assistance from previous campaigners. As the DHB had had a separate meeting with the Council outside of the submission process. They also took the questionnaires mentioned earlier, hand wrote these as submissions in the names of the residents who had completed them, none of whom knew of this and some of whom lodged their own. The Council, knowing the submissions were fraudulent, accepted them anyway. They were lodged at the last minute, prior to which the weight of submissions were against fluoridation.

The whole process was railroaded through, with the vote going to fluoridation by 5:4 (against the motion not to fluoridate) and then 6:3 on the new motion to fluoridate.

Due to the efforts of one councillor in particular, FAN(NZ) were invited by the Council to present the case against to a subsequent meeting, though limited to 30 minutes. By this time, a number of Councillors were concerned that they had been railroaded into possibly the wrong decision. Conversely, one fanatic was determined to leave fluoridation as his legacy to Greymouth.

Don Church and Mark Atkin delivered the presentation to the Council, and again to a public meeting that evening.

We have since been advised that these talks helped convince a couple of Councillors to vote for a public referendum, and provided valuable inspiration/support to some of the local campaigners. This is most pleasing, as this is what FAN(NZ) is all about.

The locals ran a \$2500 campaign, against \$13,000 spent by the West Coast DHB, and an as yet undisclosed amount by the Canterbury DHB. The DHBs continued to publish lies and misrepresentations in a series of paid advertisements. We have lodged complaints about many of these with the Advertising Standards Complaints Board. The ASCB refused to challenge any statement by the DHBs, claiming they were "expert bodies", in spite of being provided with unequivocal government-documented proof, of some of the lies. Those decisions are under appeal. In the end the Council voted to respect the local wishes and not to fluoridate. The Mayor has stated that the issue will not come up for discussion again so long as he is Mayor. The DHBs have said they will have to rethink their strategy for the rest of the Coast (as the rest look to Greymouth for the lead).

One good point to come out of this is that the Advertising Standards Complaints Appeal Board overturned a longstanding decision by the ASCB about the use of the skull and crossbones in anti-fluoridation advertising: it is now acceptable.

Meanwhile Hokitika voted 9:2 against fluoridation, having got the leading foot in the campaign because of the first attack and emphasis on Greymouth.

FAN(NZ) would like to acknowledge the support given to the local groups by the NZ Democratic Party, particularly Health spokesperson David Tranter.

Keeping the enemy at bay

Wanganui

Mayor Michael Laws has launched a campaign to fluoridate Wanganui. The campaign against is being headed by a local Osteopath, Nigel Brookes. As Mayor Laws also promotes open government, there has been a reasonably balanced opportunity for the group to put out information opposing fluoridation on the same footing as the proponents. This augurs well, as this tends to result in a more informed vote (against fluoridation) as evidenced in Petone and Onehunga in 1999 and 2000.

FAN(NZ) continues to support the local Wanganui group, with public meetings scheduled for February.

Hamilton.

The Hamilton Mayor requested earlier in the year both a local and an international speaker against fluoridation, to address the Council. Dr Mark Diesendorf of Australia had agreed to come over. However this initially promising request was later reduced to one local opponent to speak against (Dr Laurie Brett, who kept fluoridation out of Whangarei and new president of the NZ Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology), one proponent, and one ostensibly neutral ethics speaker. This was changed without the Councillors' knowledge, with several proponent speakers being invited. We understand the CEO has vowed to support fluoridation as long as the Health Department does, which we would consider potential grounds for dismissal if it leads to such an abuse of due process, under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. This sort of dishonesty has been a key proponent strategy for 60 years – we shouldn't expect them to change now! The Hamilton team has grown, with a local lawyer offering to be part of the team, and others joining the effort.

The Far North.

FAN(NZ) has been in contact with a local activist, but proponents seem to be working away somewhat behind the scenes. There is no question that the proposed "trial" apart from being inevitably inconclusive, is a breach of the NZ Bill of Rights Act.

Nelson

Suggestions that Nelson be fluoridated, following the initial result in Greymouth, met with little favour. Even a local dentist came out against it.

Oamaru

Condensed from:

Otago Daily Times 6 December 2005

Fluoride advocacy has mayor fuming

Political pressure being put on the Waitaki District Council to fluoridate Oamaru's water supply has drawn the ire of Waitaki Mayor Alan McLay.

Mr McLay has challenged the Otago District Health Board to lead the debate in the controversy and questioned why it took the board so long to raise the issue.

Mr McLay was not impressed with the board entering the debate after the council had been planning the Oamaru water upgrade for more than two years. The upgrade does not include fluoridation.

"They (the board), have never been to us officially," Mr McLay said. "What annoys me is all the emotion, without the facts."

Mr McLay said he would be happy to facilitate a forum or meeting between the board and community so people could hear the facts. He had an open mind on the issue, but only a small number of the people who contacted him favoured fluoridation, while the majority opposed it.

The score so far:

The people - 100%; DHBs - Nil

Fluoridation now illegal in the EU ?

As of 31 October, under the EU Court of Justice ruling all ingestible substances are either foods or medicines. When fluoride - in ANY form - is added to water with the intent to medicate then that water becomes a medicine, and must comply with the regulations relating to the registration, licensing, sale and administration of medicines.

More York Board statements

We copy here some telling statements by the York Board members. Local Councils would do well to take note of the lies promulgated by DHBs, identified by the York Board's various public statements. The York review has shown that the **optimism about fluoridation** as a method of safely reducing dental decay, traditionally shown by dentists, Governments and public health bodies, **rests on shaky foundations. The question is whether good science is now to prevail**, in a health measure affecting millions, or whether the same low quality of evidence as before is to be relied on. One problem is that **fluoridation has been promoted and defended too loudly and too long** for its advocates easily to admit error, and the signs of a change since the York review have not so far been encouraging. Sir Iain Chalmers, a member of the Advisory Board to the York review, describes as **"appalling" the claims still being made for fluoridation by public and professional bodies.**

AGM and Conference 2006

The FAN(NZ) conference for 2005 will be held on the weekend of 5/6 March.
Venue: 14 Watson Drive Paraparaumu.
The AGM will be held at 11:00 am on Sunday, 6 March.

Nominations for committee and officers are to be sent to the Secretary by 6 February, c/- PO Box 9804 Marion Sq, Wellington. They can also be pre-sent by email to info@fannz.org.nz.

Membership Renewal 2006

Please mail to The Treasurer, FAN(NZ) PO Box 9804 Marion Sq, Wellington.

I/WE ENCLOSE:

- \$10 annual subscription.
 Donation of \$____. Tick if receipt req'd:

Total \$____.

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone:

Fax:

- Group member.** How many individuals does your group represent or have as members?

Note: if your group is not incorporated, you will need to have one member subscribe on the group's behalf.

Are you interested in becoming a local co-ordinator? Y/N Note: the MoH is currently pushing for 100% fluoridation: we are all at risk.

Able to help? (a) Strong commitment____ (b) Can help____ (c) Unable to help.____ (Tick one)

Needed: letter writers, speakers, canvassers, delivering flyers, organising meetings.