

PUBLIC

Stephen Garland

5th Oct 2010

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

RE: Petition No 79 – Proposed Chlorination of Busselton’s Water Supply

Dear Committee Members,

The following is my submission in relation to Petition 79.

I am concerned about the way Busselton Water has conducted itself in regards to the overwhelming wishes of the community in relation to the proposal to install full time chlorination in our pure water supply.

In answer to the recent article from Chairman Reid from Busselton Water, and the Water Minister Dr Jacob (Busselton Water gets support, The Busselton Mail, Sept 1).

I am absolutely shocked by their brazen attempt to gag the community’s opposition to the full chlorination of the Busselton water supply.

I note Dr Jacob states in the article that “I support the right of Busselton Water to make the decision and support its decision”.

Busselton Water rights? What about the Busselton community’s rights?

Since when have the rights of a handful of employees down at Busselton Water held precedence over the majority of the community?

I also note Dr Jacob states that “there is a small group of opposition” to the proposal to chlorinate Busselton’s Water supply.

I don’t know where Dr Jacob gets his misguided information from, but I assume it is from Busselton Water. If Dr Jacob did his research correctly, he would have found that there were two petitions tabled in parliament in opposition to full chlorination. The last time I looked, there were over 5,000 signatories on each petition tabled with both the upper and lower houses respectively, totaling well over 10,000 signatures. Not bad for “a small group of opposition”.

Even the shire at its special meeting dated 23/06/2010 unanimously voted on a motion acknowledging there was a substantial amount of signatories on the petitions, and sent a letter to the State Government confirming this.

In a media release provided by Busselton Water as recently as 26th of May 2009, it was noted that a recent survey was conducted. The release stated that “Busselton Water’s customers had a lot to say about their water supply” and that the survey had “achieved a 36% return rate, much higher than the industry standard of between 10-16%”.

Chairman Reid stated in the media release that “The community remains of the view that a permanent chlorine disinfection method, used by the majority of other water authorities is definitely not favored. The current Ultra Violet (UV) disinfection method is preferred overall by 86.4%”.

I also note a letter was sent to Busselton Water customers on the 27th of April 2010. In this letter CEO Keith White states that “Busselton water is not being influenced by any outside party.”

If this is the case, why do we have an endless procession of representatives from the Health Department and the Department of Water coming down to Busselton trying to ram full chlorination down the throats of the community?

It is plain to see that the overwhelming majority of the community are against full chlorination and Busselton Water knows it. Please listen to what the people are saying. Please go back to the drawing board and find a better solution. Did Busselton Water think to consult the company that installed the current UV system, to find out ways of expanding it to meet future needs? Obviously it did not.

It appears to me that Busselton Water board members have simply taken the easy way out, and have not provided due diligence or duty of care in relation to researching the appropriate disinfection system that the community has overwhelming requested.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Garland