

3-9-12

Re: Petition No 166 - Cessation of the Chlorination of the Busselton Water Supply

Dear Committee Members,

The following is my submission in support of the above petition, No 166.

The main point of my submission is regarding the final one made on the said petition, which addresses "the health risks of adding chlorine and other toxins to our specific water supply with its unique water chemistry."

Thorough research done by a group of citizens since the proposal to chlorinate was first mooted in February 2009 has shown emphatically that the detrimental effects of chlorine outweigh its value as a disinfectant in this particular water supply which at its source is intrinsically pure. Prior to the introduction of chlorine, and since the mid 1990s (1995?) Busselton's water was effectively treated with the then "state of the art" ultra violet radiation system, which has since been adopted by major water suppliers around the world. These same suppliers are progressively turning from the use of chlorine with ongoing research indicating that the chemical could be a major cause of several health problems, ones which have shown an increase in the Busselton district since the introduction of the system here. Medical practitioners have advised patients undergoing cancer treatment not to use chlorinated water, thus necessitating their provision of commercial untreated water. I have a friend who has had an artificial eye since childhood, which requires the twice-daily rinsing of the socket area, who has experienced severe pain and discomfort since the chlorination of the water supply. She has also been professionally advised to use only unchlorinated water for these ablutions.

I am also aware of local people who are experiencing exacerbated symptoms of respiratory complaints and skin rashes since the introduction of chlorine gas. Most of these people have lived in the area for an extended length of time or have moved to the town largely because its water supply was chlorine-free. Up till late in 2009

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the Busselton Water Board was publicly declaring that it was committed to maintaining its chemical-free status in support of the community's clearly stated wishes. The change of policy was suspiciously sudden.

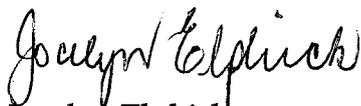
The fact that so many in the community signed the earlier petition protesting the proposal, was disregarded by the Water Board whose CEO stated that "This decision is too important for the community to decide". This statement, and its failure to involve the community in such a decision, ignores the recommendations of the 2004 and subsequent 2011 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. This position denies natural justice, withholds human rights and contradicts the many international treaties enacted to protect individual rights on matters impacting their health and wellbeing, treaties to which Australia is a signatory.

Water is a vital basic essential to life and no substance should be added to the public supply unless absolutely necessary to maintain its integrity. In no instance does the AWD Guidelines stipulate that chlorine must be added to a drinking water supply, only that the supply needs to be "safe". Apart from its standard use in Australia, and it being the least expensive to supply, there is no excuse for not considering another less intrusive manner of safe-guarding our water. Not only is chlorine a danger to health, and a pollutant to our totally pure Yarragadee aquifer source, but it does not provide adequate protection against water-borne health hazards like cryptosporidium and giardia. There has not been any known health problem arising from Busselton water in the years the Board has been operating (since 1905, I believe).

Please accept the petition of the over 7000 signatures and support its request for intervention.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


Jocelyn Elphick

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