



WORK UNDERWAY ON DUBBO FLUORIDE REPAIR

The tender for the refurbishment of the fluoride dosing system at the John Gilbert Water Treatment Plant (JGWTP) in Dubbo has been awarded by Dubbo Regional Council (DRC).

Following a comprehensive evaluation process, the council resolved to engage TWS Evolution at the tendered amount of \$1,192,101. This decision has been finalised with all requisite documentation assessed by NSW Public Works and the Department of Planning and Environment (Water Group).

The design phase has been initiated and is expected to span approximately 12 weeks. Upon completion and approval of the design, work will commence at the JGWTP with a targeted completion date set for the end of April 2024.

Since the failure of the city's fluoridation equipment in January 2019, Dubbo's residents have been without fluoride in their water supply. Despite the JGWTP staff alerting the council's leadership at the time, no immediate corrective action was undertaken.

The issue was not fully addressed until April 2022 when the newly appointed council leadership became aware of the lack of fluoride. Subsequent to this, meetings were held with NSW Health, DPE Water and NSW Public Works to comprehend the magnitude of the problem and formulate an effective solution.

“I once again extend my apologies to the public for this significant breach of trust. In January 2019, the community should have been notified about the lack of fluoride in the water supply. This oversight not only represents a breach of public trust but also, according to Section 6B of the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957, the unauthorised discontinuation of fluoridation is a breach of the Act,” Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Mathew Dickerson said.

“Transparency is paramount and it should have been vital that the public be informed about the situation.”

The council initially aimed to reintroduce fluoride into the water supply by June 2023. However, in collaboration with NSW Public Works, DPE Water and NSW Health it became evident that the project was more complex and time-consuming than initially estimated. Further, the decision was made to implement a different fluoride dosing method compared to the one previously used at the JGWTP.

“I apologise to the public for not meeting our target date. The project was substantially larger than initially estimated, but it was crucial that we execute this correctly for the future residents of Dubbo,” Cllr Dickerson said.

The affected water supply includes potable town water from the JGWTP which serves Dubbo, Wongaroon, Eumungerie, Ballimore, Mogriguy and

Brocklehurst.

Water fluoridation refers to the process of adjusting the fluoride concentration in drinking water to an optimal level that helps mitigate tooth decay. Dubbo's water supply currently only includes natural fluoridation.

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