

***Smoke, Mirrors and Journalism: Making
Fluoridation 'Un'-Newsworthy and the
significance of Fire Water.***

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My name is Daniel Zalec. I am the Researcher/Writer for the documentary, FIRE WATER: Australia's Industrial Fluoridation Disgrace, which has screened at this festival over the past few days.

I have been involved in the fight against mandatory water fluoridation in the state of Victoria, Australia, since 2008, where I have worked as the Chief Writer for the Anti-Fluoridation Association of Mildura.

I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Literature and Composition, from Griffith University, in Queensland; and a Master's Degree in Writing, from Swinburne University of Technology, in Victoria.

Today, I will present the case that *Fire Water* would never need to have been made, if only the Australian media had performed its duties with true critical analysis, instead of supplying the public with official information, unquestioned.

We are led to believe that there is no genuine scientific debate surrounding the practice of water fluoridation, and that those who oppose the measure are misinformed.

By maintaining an official 'no debate' policy on fluoride, and by controlling the 'officially sanctioned' sources of information, promoters are able to maintain the illusion that there is no debate to be had.

Absolutely essential to the ongoing success of fluoride

promotion and enforcement, is a tame, well-trained mainstream media.

The media in Australia buys into the notion that the science on fluoride is settled, and that public opposition arises only from 'fringe' elements.

Authorities use the power and the prestige of their respective offices to ensure that the media establishes and maintains *them* as *the* official – and only – legitimate sources of information.

A simple example of this is Australian newspapers concluding news articles with sentences such as:

QUOTE / For further information on fluoride, call the Department of Health's toll free line. / **UNQUOTE**

Readers are only directed to a single source for additional information.

Such 'official' sources have been widely criticised by numerous scientists and researchers around the world, for their lack of substance and honesty --

-- and their blatant agenda-driven promotion of water fluoridation policy.

Furthermore, most articles do not even mention opposing viewpoints, and are written as virtual 'press releases' on behalf of health authorities.

This is a far cry from the ideal role of the media, in a democratic society, which should act as a ‘watchdog’ of government – **not** an uncritical mouthpiece **for** government.

The fact that the media conducts no independent investigation of official sources, results in the fluoridation ‘issue’ being deemed a ‘non-issue’ – both by journalists, and therefore the wider uniformed public.

This is significant, because journalists and editors decide which stories to cover, based on the fundamental principles of newsworthiness, such as impact or relevance, timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict, currency, the unusual or the novel, and human interest.

Promoters have been highly successful in creating a monopoly on the information that is presented to the public, and to medical professionals.

Dr. John Carnie, Chief Health Officer of Victoria, explains how *his* Department views information:

QUOTE / What we are hoping is that as people get used to the idea [of being fluoridated], they will start to look at the evidence and they will be convinced that actually the evidence that **we provide** indicates that there are no huge health risks to this. In fact, it's all on the benefit side. / **UNQUOTE**

In relation to claims against water fluoridation policy, the

Australian Dental Association's Dr. Mark Bowman arrogantly states:

QUOTE / I don't know that we should really air some of these claims, because they're just not worth mentioning. / **UNQUOTE**

In other words, “the information we provide is unquestioned, there is no debate worth having, and no alternative view is worth mentioning. End of discussion.”

This *provided* evidence manifests itself in a variety of forms.

The well-oiled propaganda machine includes measures such as: Nation-wide brochure distribution to health professionals and to the public; government-sanctioned websites; government advertisements in the media; press releases; and, quoted official statements, especially in newspapers.

Concerned individuals could never hope to muster the financial resources necessary to counter such an overwhelming information offensive.

All possible alternative sources are pre-emptively dismissed as irrelevant; and the public is discouraged from seeking them out.

For instance, the Department of Health, in its brochures, states that:

QUOTE / Scientific and technical information is often quoted in the press, printed in a letter to the editor or distributed via the Internet. In these contexts, the information can appear as true simply because it is in print. / **UNQUOTE**

In other words, “if *we* or our *friends* don’t print it, say it, sanction it, or review it, it cannot be taken seriously.”

It is clear why the Department would not want the public to take such items seriously.

Consider the following example of a published letter to the editor, written by Environmental Scientist, Dr. Mark Diesendorf, from the University of New South Wales, in 2009:

QUOTE / Fluoridation is unsafe, ineffective and unethical... Medical authorities have blithely accepted the unscientific rhetoric from dentists that fluoride deserves exemption from medical ethics. On the grounds of its adverse health impacts, its ineffectiveness in reducing tooth decay and its violation of medical ethics, fluoridation should be discontinued forthwith. / **UNQUOTE**

Unfortunately, a letter such as this is an extremely rare sight in any Australian corporate newspaper.

The journalistic profession has failed the public dismally by not investigating such concerns.

As a result, the mass-propaganda machine of fluoride promotion continues, unabated.

Journalists and Editors, are acting as mere 'reporters', and simply 'repeating' the official version of fluoridation, fed to them by authorities.

For example, in a 2008 article titled 'Fluoride ready in a year,' the *Sunraysia Daily* newspaper announced the pending fluoridation of the Mildura region, by citing only two sources...

... Dr. John Carnie, the State's most ruthless fluoride promoter; and Ron Leamon, the man directed by Dr. Carnie to force-fluoridate the water supply.

Leamon announced the injection rate of the chemical, and Carnie made his usual unreferenced statements of safety and effectiveness.

And, like a well-trained Pomeranian Poodle, the media did not critically analyse a single word, nor provide any alternative viewpoints.

But, the paper did manage to tell readers to call Dr. Carnie's department for further information on fluoride!

It is therefore the process of critical analysis of information by the mainstream media, which is severely lacking.

If serious questions do manage to seep into the public arena, they do so only via unofficial sections of newspapers, such as letters to the editor; or, from community members, using small-scale independent techniques, such as letterbox drops.

We have already seen the contempt promoters have for such 'alternative' sources of information.

These can readily be dismissed by authorities as 'fringe' rants, no matter how well argued or referenced, or even how scientifically credible the writer.

As long as the issue remains 'un'-newsworthy, this predicament cannot and will not change.

The day the media stands up to the endorsers and promoters of fluoridation, will mark the beginning of the end of the practice, because the lies, the spin, and the absence of quality science behind their claims, will be exposed for all to see.

So, today, I'm going to do the media a favour. I'm going to give them some leads for further investigation – –

– – and if they still believe that all the research has been done, then I suspect they have been drinking too much fluoridated water!

I hereby quote directly from a 2006 report by the US National Research Council of the National Academies of

Sciences:

Page 102: “Research is needed on fluoride plasma and bone concentrations in people with small to moderate changes in renal function as well as patients with serious renal deficiency. Other potentially sensitive populations should be evaluated, including the elderly, postmenopausal women, and people with altered acid-base balance.”

Page 130: “More research is needed on the relation between fluoride exposure and dentin fluorosis and delayed tooth eruption patterns.”

Page 180: “More research is needed on bone concentrations of fluoride in people with altered renal function, as well as other potentially sensitive populations... to better understand the risks of musculoskeletal effects in these populations.”

Page 204: “A case-control study of the incidence of Down’s syndrome in young women and fluoride exposure would be useful.”

Page 223: “Additional studies of the relationship of the changes in the brain as they affect the hormonal and neuropeptide status of the body are needed. Such relationships should be studied in greater detail and under different environmental conditions.”

“Studies of populations exposed to different concentrations of fluoride should be undertaken to

evaluate neurochemical changes that may be associated with dementia.”

“Studies of populations exposed to different concentrations of fluoride in drinking water should include measurements of reasoning ability, problem solving, IQ, and short-and long-term memory.”

Page 267: “The effects of fluoride on various aspects of endocrine function should be examined further, particularly with respect to a possible role in the development of several diseases or mental states.”

Page 303: “It is paramount that careful biochemical studies be conducted to determine what fluoride concentrations occur in the bone and surrounding interstitial fluids from exposure to fluoride in drinking water.”

“Epidemiologic studies should be carried out to determine whether there is a higher prevalence of hypersensitivity reactions... studies could be conducted to determine what percentage of immunocompromised subjects have adverse reactions when exposed to fluoride... in drinking water.”

“The effect of low doses of fluoride on kidney and liver enzyme functions in humans needs to be carefully documented in communities exposed to different concentrations of fluoride in drinking water.”

Page 338: “Further research on a possible effect of fluoride on bladder cancer risk should be conducted.”

And finally, a quote from the 2000 University of York Review, as noted by the UK’s Centre for Reviews and Dissemination:

QUOTE / We were unable to discover any reliable good-quality evidence in the fluoridation literature world-wide. **/ UNQUOTE**

But of course, fluoridation is not an issue! (late edition: Dr. Shanti reference, Moama, “Wonderful Natural Experiment”)

I am not a scientist, but I’m not a moron either – because only a moron would ignore all these research gaps, as highlighted by the National Academies of Sciences, and others – –

– – and STILL continue forcing this measure on communities across the nation.

In fact, *Fire Water* goes one step further...

These people are nothing short of CRIMINALS!

We used the word ‘Disgrace’ in *Fire Water’s* title for very good reason.

It is a DISGRACE that we had to do the job the media should have done, to inform the public of the danger they face!

It is a DISGRACE that untested toxic industrial waste is being pumped into the drinking water of children, kidney patients, the elderly, athletes, those with compromised immune systems, those with mental disabilities, animals, and into the environment!

It is a DISGRACE that the Australian public is being forcibly experimented upon in an uncontrolled manner!

It is a DISGRACE that water authorities and governments are not liable for damages caused by fluoridation!

So sure of themselves, yet so terrified to debate the issue, promoters and their media lackeys are now encountering a new wave of informed citizens and professionals.

Fire Water is testament to this fact.

According to a recent DVD review of the film:

QUOTE / A cross-section of researchers, politicians, activists, sufferers and health professionals... The mainstream media... have rarely allowed voices like these to be heard / **UNQUOTE**

The primary source for information in a democratic society is the mainstream media and official authoritative organisations – thus, the true power is in their hands.

If the former non-critically repeats (or blindly promotes)

the views of the latter, and refers interested parties only to the latter for further information, a vicious cycle will be maintained.

The ultimate result will be a general public and a medical community who are both largely, or even totally unaware, that fluoridation is a legitimate scientific and ethical issue.

I wish to conclude by citing the words of a heroic man, Dr. Paul Connett, Executive Director of the Fluoride Action Network –

– a man to whom we all owe an immense debt for the knowledge we now have about the dangers and the absurdities of water fluoridation.

On the day of the first public presentation of Fire Water, at Parliament House in Adelaide, South Australia, Dr. Connett passionately stated the following words:

AND I QUOTE / These people are working for us! They're paid for by OUR tax dollars! Our taxpayers are paying these bureaucrats, who work in the health agencies of South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania – they're working for us. And, they LYING THROUGH THEIR TEETH! They are DECEIVING THE PUBLIC! It's a massive betrayal of the public's trust! And I mean that. It's a MASSIVE betrayal of the public's trust, when doctors go on a stage, and dentists go on a stage, and health officials go on a stage, and say "fluoridation is safe and effective". Number one,

if they're a dentist, they have no right to talk about ANY ISSUE other than the teeth. They're not QUALIFIED! And, to say that it's SAFE, when they cannot produce a single health study in Australia, to demonstrate safety... it's a MASSIVE lack of due diligence – but it IS a RELIGION. / **END OF QUOTE**

And I would add, that Australian journalists should be absolutely ASHAMED – as Diana Buckland states in *Fire Water* – of themselves, and of their entire profession, for not holding these **BLOODY CROOKS** to account!

THANK YOU

* References available upon request.