



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# Water Fluoridation Survey

## Bunbury and Dalyellup Areas

March 2018

**Suggested Citation:**

Epidemiology Branch (2018). Water Fluoridation Survey, Bunbury and Dalyellup Areas. Perth: Department of Health WA.

**Correspondence to:**

Principal Epidemiologist

Epidemiology Branch

Public and Aboriginal Health Division

Department of Health WA

P.O. Box 8172

Perth Business Centre WA 6849

Email: [EPI@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:EPI@health.wa.gov.au)

**Acknowledgements:**

The Epidemiology Branch would like to thank the community members across the local government area of City of Bunbury, Dalyellup and Gelorup who took the time to complete an interview.

**Disclaimer:**

All results presented in this publication were deemed accurate at the time of preparation. Any representation or statement, expressed or implied, in this publication is made in good faith and is based on sources believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication. The authors of this report do not accept legal liability or responsibility for any consequences arising from its use.

## Contents

Abbreviations	iii
Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Methodology	6
2.1 Questionnaire Development	6
2.2 Sample selection	7
2.3 Sample size	8
2.4 Data collection	9
2.5 Weighting the data	9
2.6 Response rate	10
3. Results	11
3.1 Demographics	12
3.2 Fluoride in the public water supply	13
3.3 Attitude towards fluoridation	15
3.4 Information received on fluoridation	25
3.5 Drinking water source	26
4. References	29
Appendix A: Approach letter	30
Appendix B: WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System brochure	31
Appendix C: Water Fluoridation Survey questionnaire 2018	33
Appendix D: Result tables	39
Appendix E: Respondents' comments – Agree that adding fluoride to public drinking water can assist in preventing tooth decay	45
Appendix F: Respondents' comments – Disagree that adding fluoride to public drinking water can assist in preventing tooth decay	69
Appendix G: Respondents' information sources – On the addition of fluoride to public drinking water	73
Other forms of information	73
Websites	73

## **Abbreviations**

CATI: Computer Assisted Telephone Interview

CI: Confidence Interval

ECU SRC: Edith Cowan University Survey Research Centre

HWSS: Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

N: Number

WA: Western Australia

## Executive Summary

The Water Fluoridation Survey was completed by the Epidemiology Branch at the Department of Health WA on request from the Environmental Health Directorate, Department of Health WA, in turn based on a request from the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Advisory Committee. The aim of the survey was to assess community attitudes and knowledge around fluoridation of the public drinking water supply in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas.

A Computer Assisted Telephone Interview system was used to collect information from 601 households, which had been previously randomly selected to complete the Western Australian Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System survey from 2013 to 2017, or were newly selected for this module. Households from the local government area of the City of Bunbury, along with households from Dalyellup and Gelorup were selected for this study.

The major findings of the study were<sup>a</sup>:

- Approximately half of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, aged 18 years and over, agreed with fluoridation of public drinking water supplies (51%), 25 per cent were unsure, 20 per cent did not agree to fluoridation and five per cent declined to provide an answer.
- Around two-thirds (64%) of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, aged 18 years and over, did not know if fluoride was currently added to the public drinking water supply. A further 25 per cent of the population thought fluoride was currently added and 11 per cent of the population thought fluoride was not currently added to the public drinking water.
- An estimated 85 per cent of the population's households were connected to the public drinking water supply and 69 per cent of the population consumed tap water from the local public drinking water supply as their most common source of drinking water.

---

<sup>a</sup> All percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage point for the executive summary. As a result in some dot points of the major findings the total may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

- Approximately half (52%) of the population aged 18 years and over in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas agreed that fluoridation of public drinking water supplies was safe. A further 27 per cent were unsure, 18 per cent of the population did not agree that the fluoridation of drinking water was safe and three per cent declined to provide an answer to the question.
- An estimated 54 per cent of the population aged 18 years and over in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas agreed that fluoridation of the public drinking water supply could assist in the prevention of tooth decay. A further 27 per cent of the population were unsure, 19 per cent did not agree and less than half a per cent declined to answer the question.
- An estimated 57 per cent of the population aged 18 years and over whose main source of drinking water is the public supply from the tap agreed to fluoridation of the public drinking water supply. A further 26 per cent of this population were unsure and 17 per cent did not agree.
- The main source of information around fluoridation of public drinking water came from newspapers.
- There was no statistically significant difference in the level of agreement to fluoridation of public drinking water supplies in the Bunbury area (55%) when compared when the Dalyellup and Gelorup areas combined (50%).

The results from the Water Fluoridation Survey indicate that 51 per cent of the population aged 18 years and over in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas are in favour of fluoridation of the public drinking water supply and 54 per cent agree that its addition can assist in the prevention of tooth decay.

## 1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health WA for the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Advisory Committee<sup>b</sup> and the Environmental Health Directorate, Department of Health WA.

The Environmental Health Directorate was requested by the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Advisory Committee to organise an independent telephone survey of residents of Bunbury and some of the surrounding areas (Dalyellup and Gelorup, Figure 1) to ascertain the level of support within the community for the addition of fluoride to the local public drinking water supply. The Environmental Health Directorate contacted the Epidemiology Branch to independently conduct such a survey for residents of Bunbury and the surrounding areas. This is the second water fluoridation survey completed for the Bunbury area, with the first survey conducted and report published in 2011.<sup>1</sup>

The 2018 survey covers the City of Bunbury (excluding Pelican Point and Picton) and the areas of Dalyellup and Gelorup to the south. The 2011 survey covered these areas as well as areas around Australind and Eaton.

This report documents the results of the Water Fluoridation Survey, 2018, which was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI).

The Water Fluoridation Survey had two main objectives:

1. To ascertain the level of awareness in the community on fluoridation of the public water supply.
2. To measure local support for fluoridation of the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas public drinking water supplies.

Drinking water is supplied to properties in the City of Bunbury by AqWest (Bunbury Water Corporation) and to Dalyellup and Gelorup by the Water Corporation. Neither of these supplies

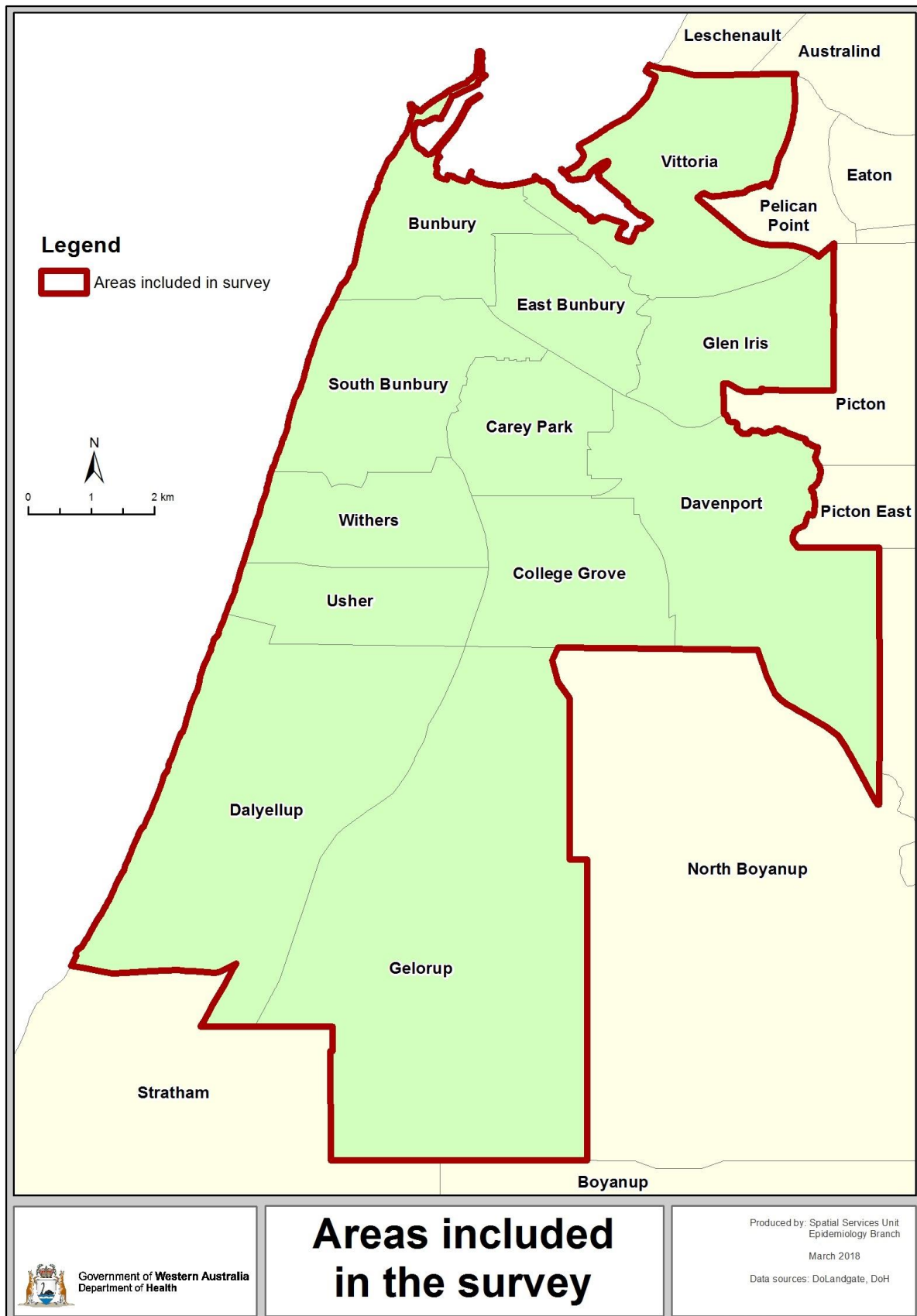
---

<sup>b</sup> Details of the Committee are at: [http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F\\_I/Fluoridation](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Fluoridation)

is currently fluoridated. Some individual properties in this area, predominantly around Gelorup, are not serviced.



Figure 1: Map of the areas in Bunbury, Dalyellup and Gelorup included in Bunbury Water Fluoridation Survey, 2018



## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Questionnaire Development**

One of the primary intentions of the questionnaire was to ascertain the level of support within the community for fluoridation of the local public drinking water supply.

The same questions used in the 2011 survey were used again in 2018 for consistency and the ability to compare the results between the two rounds if required. The survey questions were chosen based on previously published literature on attitudes towards fluoridation of public drinking water supplies<sup>2,3</sup> and were worded to be succinct, centred on the research and ethically appropriate.<sup>4</sup>

Piloting of the questions had been completed in 2011 and the questionnaire had current ethics approval to be used from the Western Australian Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Edith Cowan University Survey Research Centre (ECU SRC) was contracted to conduct the telephone survey as a CATI on behalf of the Epidemiology Branch. The Centre is highly experienced at delivering high quality data collection services and was responsible for the preparation and mailing of the approach letters, sample management, data collection, extraction and provision of data to the Epidemiology Branch for analysis.

The CATI system was considered the preferred mode to complete this survey. Benefits of a CATI system include being able to immediately enter survey responses into the database; correctly sequencing questions according to answers provided by the respondent; enforced checks on each response with questions having pre-determined response categories; automatic rotation of response categories to minimise bias; and higher response rates than some other modes.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 Sample selection

It was decided during the development of a sample frame for this study that individuals in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas who had previously completed the WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System (HWSS), an ongoing population-based health survey conducted by the Department of Health WA and during their interview had agreed to be recalled for future Department of Health WA surveys, were eligible.

Over 70 per cent of HWSS respondents agree to being recalled. Analysis of a number of socio-demographic variables indicates that those who agree to recall are similar to those who do not (Table 1).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who agree to be recalled for further surveys**

	<b>Agree to recall</b>	<b>Do not agree to recall</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	49.4%	53.1%
Female	50.6%	46.9%
<b>Age</b>		
25 to 64 years	80.4%	81.1%
65+ years	19.6%	18.9%
<b>Government Concessions</b>		
Government pension	19.8%	20.7%
Health care card	26.6%	25.2%
<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</b>	1.6%	1.8%
<b>Education</b>		
Tertiary degree or equivalent	29.8%	26.7%

This decision also enabled access to a population-wide sampling frame; the White Pages® residential telephone directory. Respondents who completed the initial HWSS were randomly selected from this instrument, after stratification of the sampling frame by location of the household. The White Pages® was preferred to a random digit dialling procedure as there are fewer non-operational numbers and it allows an approach letter to be sent prior to calling which has been shown to improve response rates.

Since the White Pages® predominantly lists households with landlines the sampling frame may miss out on mobile-only households that are unlisted.

To obtain a large enough sample, all HWSS recall respondents from 2013 to 2017, aged 18 years and over at the time of this sample selection were included.

An approach letter was sent to all selected individuals informing them about the upcoming survey and indicating that their selection to participate was based on their prior agreement to be recalled for future surveys. The approach letter gave the time within which the individual could expect to be contacted by the data collection agency. A brochure was included with the letter, which provided contact numbers for people to call for more information. A copy of the approach letter is provided in Appendix A, the brochure in Appendix B and the questionnaire in Appendix C.

Due to the large number of respondents requested for this project additional sample was required. This was achieved by including a small number of households (randomly selected from the areas of interest) from the White Pages which were cold-called for this specific module, at the end of the collection period to ensure enough interviews were completed. On request a copy of an approach letter could be supplied to the respondent and a website link to the HWSS. No respondents requested this information. This cold-call group made up 10.5 per cent (63 interviews) of the total number of interviews (601 interviews).

### **2.3 Sample size**

To obtain a sample size suitable for statistical analysis, a minimum sample size of 380 people was required. This sample size provides a maximum relative standard error of +/- 5.1 per cent at the standard 95 per cent confidence level<sup>6</sup>. The relative standard error indicates how precise an estimate is, given that the estimate was obtained from a random sample of the population. The Environmental Health Directorate requested a larger sample size for this survey. The 601 interviews obtained provided a maximum relative standard error of +/- 4.1 per cent at the standard 95 per cent confidence level. This gives greater confidence that the survey results are representative of the community of interest.

## **2.4 Data collection**

Surveys were conducted from 29 January 2018 to 7 February 2018. All surveys were conducted by trained interviewers at the Edith Cowan University Survey Research Centre.

The Survey Research Centre is accredited with an ISO 20252 Standard Certification, the Manager of the Centre is a member of the Market and Social Research Society and all interviewers are trained to industry standards.

All data collected by the Survey Research Centre on behalf of the Department of Health is stored securely by the centre in accordance with their ISO Standard Certification.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.5 Weighting the data**

Most surveys collect information from a sample of the target population and not the entire population. In this instance, this survey collected information from a sample of respondents from the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas. In order to provide information at a population level, the raw data was weighted to the population that is being described. The Water Fluoridation Survey information was weighted to the age by sex distribution of the latest available (2015) Estimated Resident Population, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for the Bunbury area, Dalyellup and Gelorup.

This means each respondent is given a weight that indicates the number of people they represent in the Bunbury and Dalyellup overall population.

## 2.6 Response rate

An important feature of survey work is the response rate attained. Low response rates may produce estimates that are not representative of the population or that are unreliable or biased. Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the response rate obtained in this survey.

**Table 2: Response rate for Water Fluoridation Survey**

	Number	Per cent (%)
<b>A. INITIAL SAMPLE</b>	999	100.0
<b>B. OUT OF SCOPE</b>	272	27.2
B1. Phone not connected	207	
B2. Not Bunbury area	25	
B3. Deceased/ not home owner or resident	8	
B4. Incorrect contact details	15	
B5. Fax/ modem	17	
<b>C. ELIGIBLE SAMPLE</b>	727	72.8
<b>D. NON-CONTACT AFTER 10 ATTEMPTS</b>	103	10.3
<b>E. ELIGIBLE CONTACTS</b>	624	62.5
E1. Refusals	5	
E2. Terminated	0	
E3. Foreign Language	1	
E4. Incapacitated	10	
E5. Respondent unavailable	5	
E6. Answered phone but out of scope	2	
E7. Completed interviews	601	
<b>F. RESPONSE RATE: E7/(E+D)</b>		82.7
<b>G. CONTACTED RESPONSE RATE: E7/E</b>		96.3
<b>H. PARTICIPATION RATE: E7/(E7+E1)</b>		99.2

In summary, a total of 624 households were contacted by telephone, yielding 601 completed surveys. This resulted in a raw response rate of 82.7 per cent and a participation rate of 99.2 per cent. The high response rate provides an excellent basis for producing reliable and representative estimates in the population of interest.

### **3. Results**

Results are presented for each question asked in the survey. Results that are presented in graphic form are also shown in table format in Appendix D of this report. All analysis presented in this report was completed using de-identified data.

Each figure presents the estimated proportion of the population with the particular attitude or factor of interest. All estimates presented are weighted unless otherwise indicated. Significant differences between results have been calculated using the 95 per cent confidence interval around that estimate. These are represented by the black error lines at the end of each coloured bar on the graph.

The 95 per cent confidence interval is the range between which the true estimate would lie 95 out of 100 times. Overlapping confidence intervals indicate that there is probably no difference in the estimates being compared. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, then the estimates are considered to be significantly different. Confidence intervals are generally a conservative method for testing significance and were deemed the most appropriate method given the number of comparisons undertaken in the analysis for this study.

The smaller the sample size is for which the 95 per cent confidence intervals are calculated, the wider the interval will be as there is more variation in the data.

### 3.1 Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the adult sample that participated in the 2018 Bunbury Water Fluoridation Survey are shown in Table 3. The table shows the unweighted number in the sample for each group and the unweighted and weighted prevalence expressed as a per cent.

**Table 3: Demographic characteristics, adults 18 years and over, Water Fluoridation Survey, 2018**

	<b>Unweighted Sample (n)</b>	<b>Unweighted Prevalence (%)</b>	<b>Weighted Prevalence (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 24 yrs	11	1.8	11.9
25 to 44 yrs	25	4.2	35.0
45 to 64 yrs	228	37.9	33.3
65 yrs & over	337	56.1	19.8
<b>Gender</b>			
Females	385	64.1	52.0
Males	216	35.9	48.0
<b>Suburb</b>			
Bunbury	90	15.0	15.5
Carey Park	74	12.3	10.1
College Grove	11	1.8	1.5
Dalyellup	72	12.0	22.5
East Bunbury	72	12.0	11.0
Gelorup	52	8.7	11.0
Glen Iris	31	5.2	5.2
South Bunbury	135	22.5	13.3
Usher	17	2.8	2.1
Vittoria	1	0.2	0.1
Withers	46	7.7	7.8

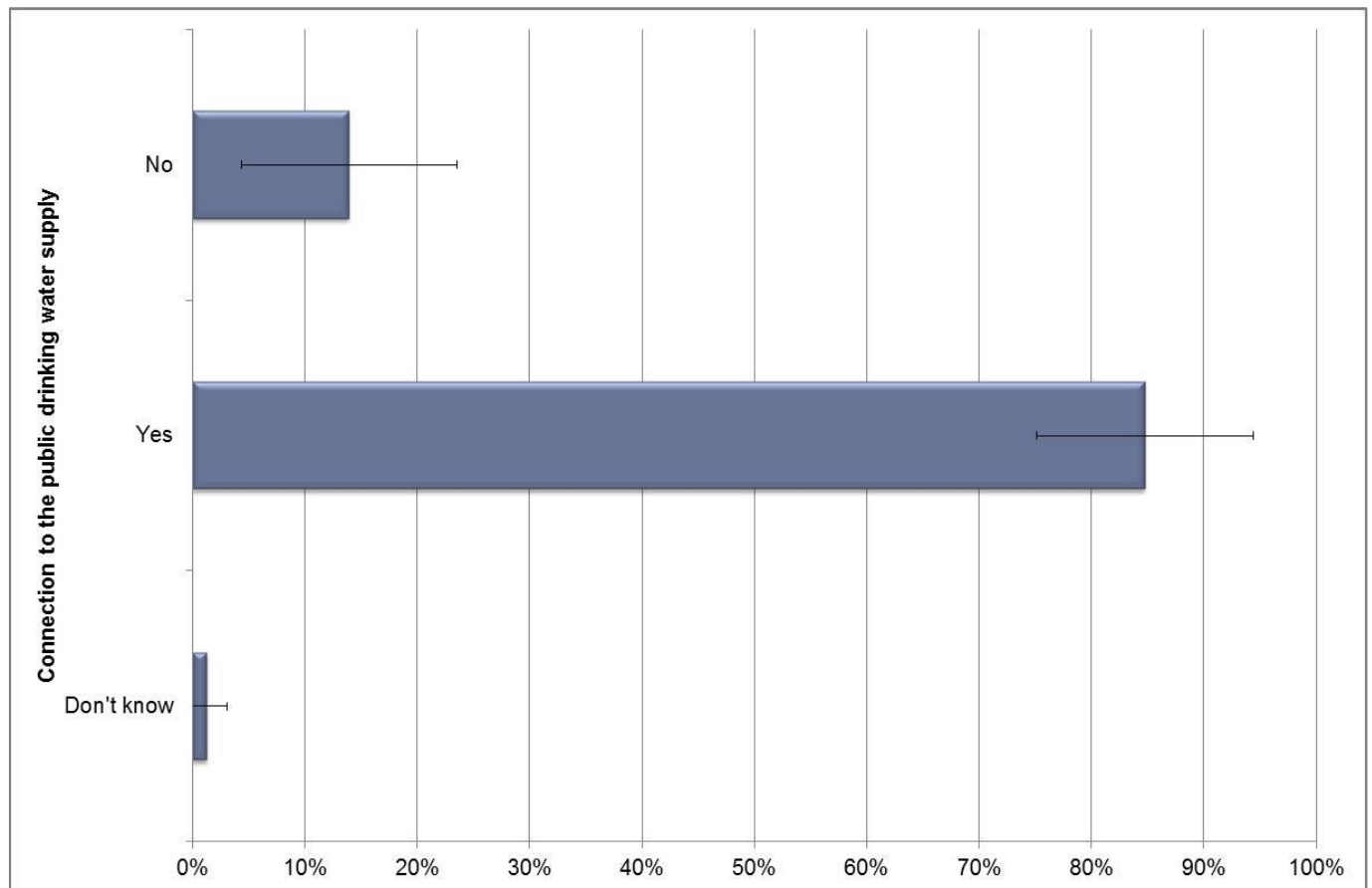


### 3.2 Fluoride in the public water supply

In order to determine if fluoridation of the public drinking water supply had the potential to impact households, respondents were asked if their premises were currently connected to the public water supply.

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the population (84.7%) in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas live in a household that is connected to the public drinking water supply. The data is in Table 4.

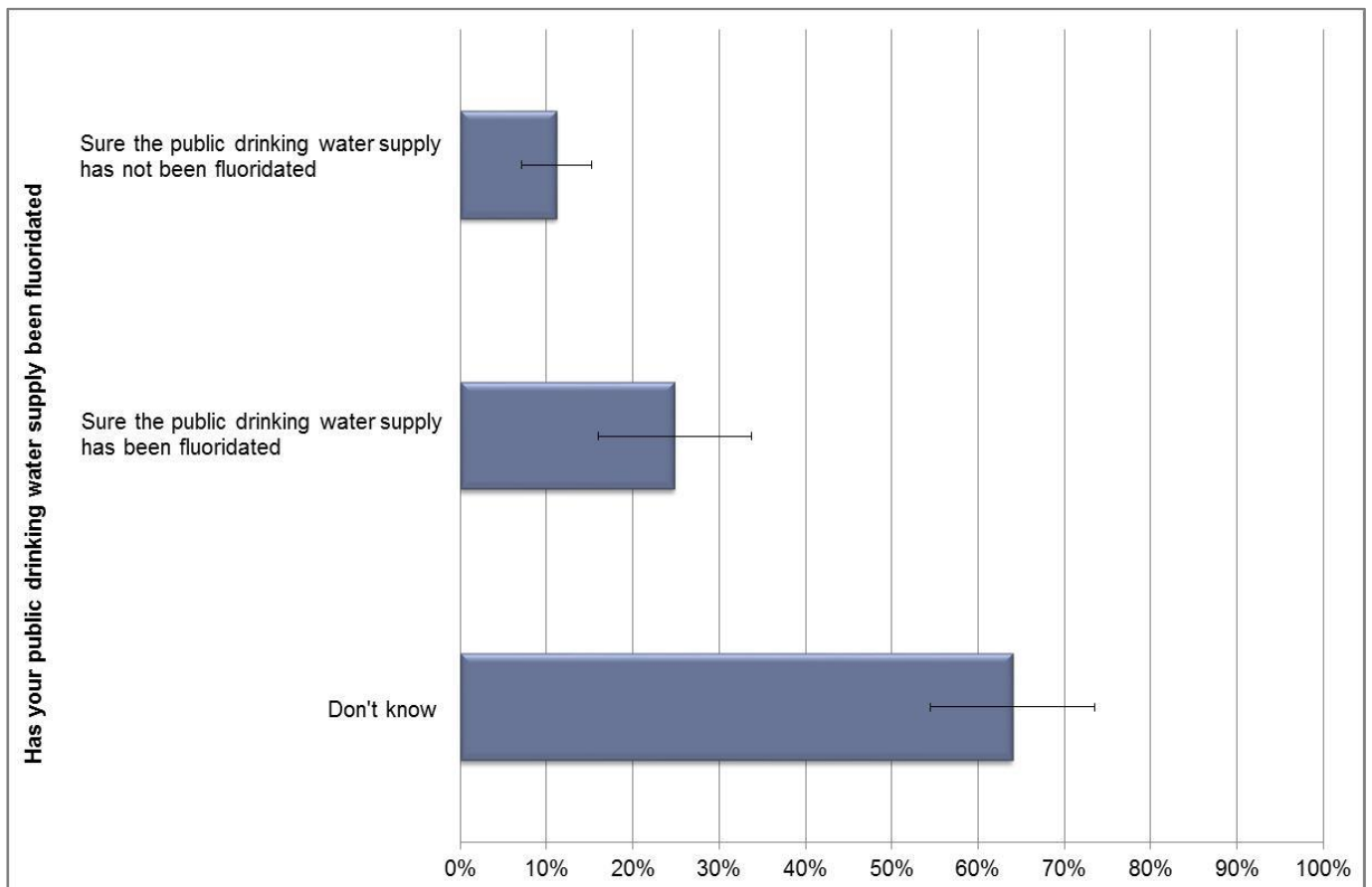
**Figure 2: Weighted proportion of households connected to the public drinking water supply, 18 years and over, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Those respondents that were connected to the public drinking water supply were asked if they knew whether their public water supply currently had fluoride added to it.

Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas did not know if their public drinking water supply was fluoridated or not (64.0%). One in ten residents (11.2%) was sure that their public drinking water supply was not fluoridated and approximately one-quarter (24.8%) were sure that the public drinking water supply was currently fluoridated. The data is provided in Table 5.

**Figure 3: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over who knew if their public drinking water supply was currently fluoridated, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

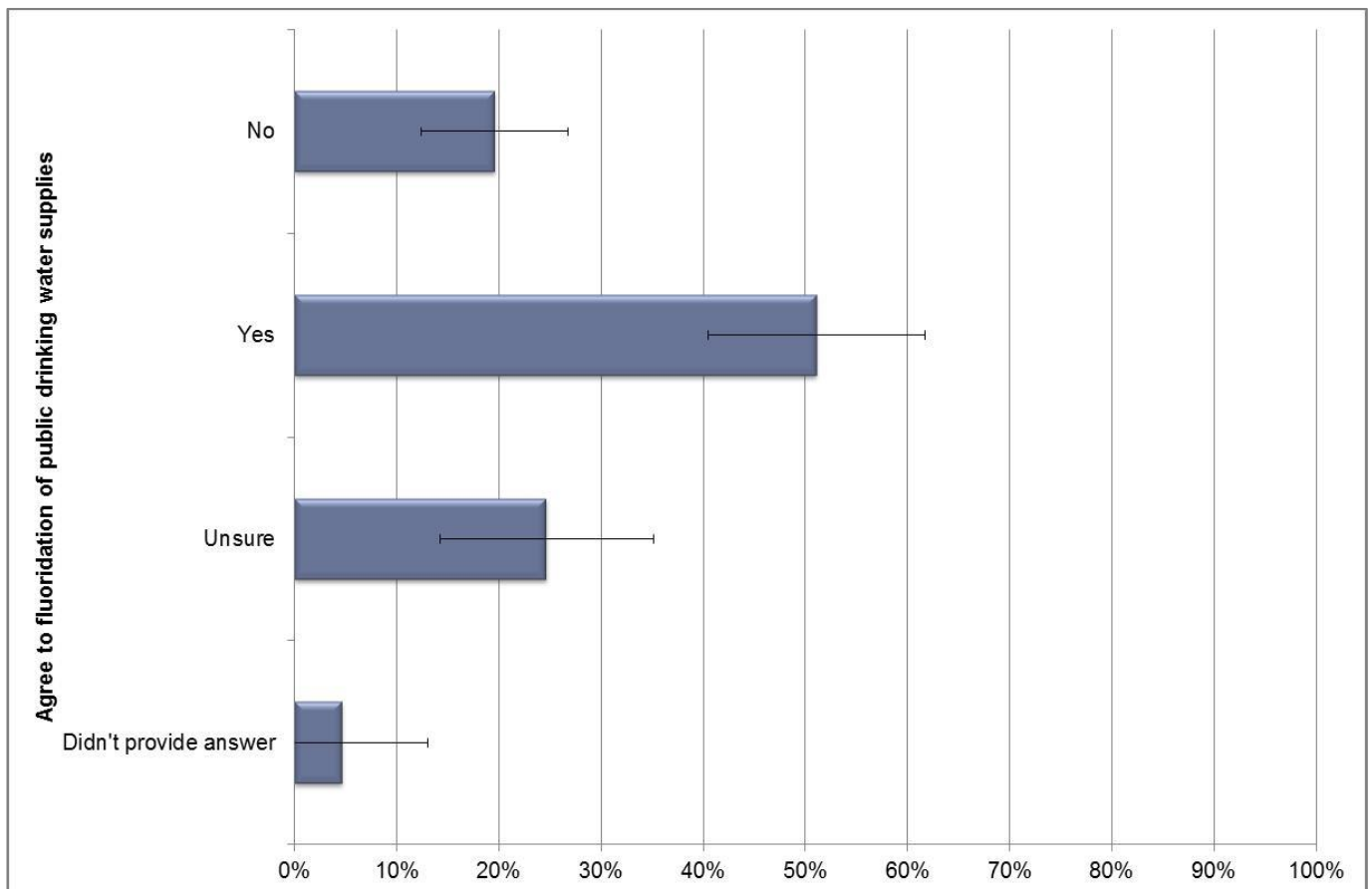


### 3.3 Attitude towards fluoridation

Several questions were asked of respondents on their attitudes towards the fluoridation of the public drinking water supply, and their perceptions of the safety and health effects of the addition of fluoride.

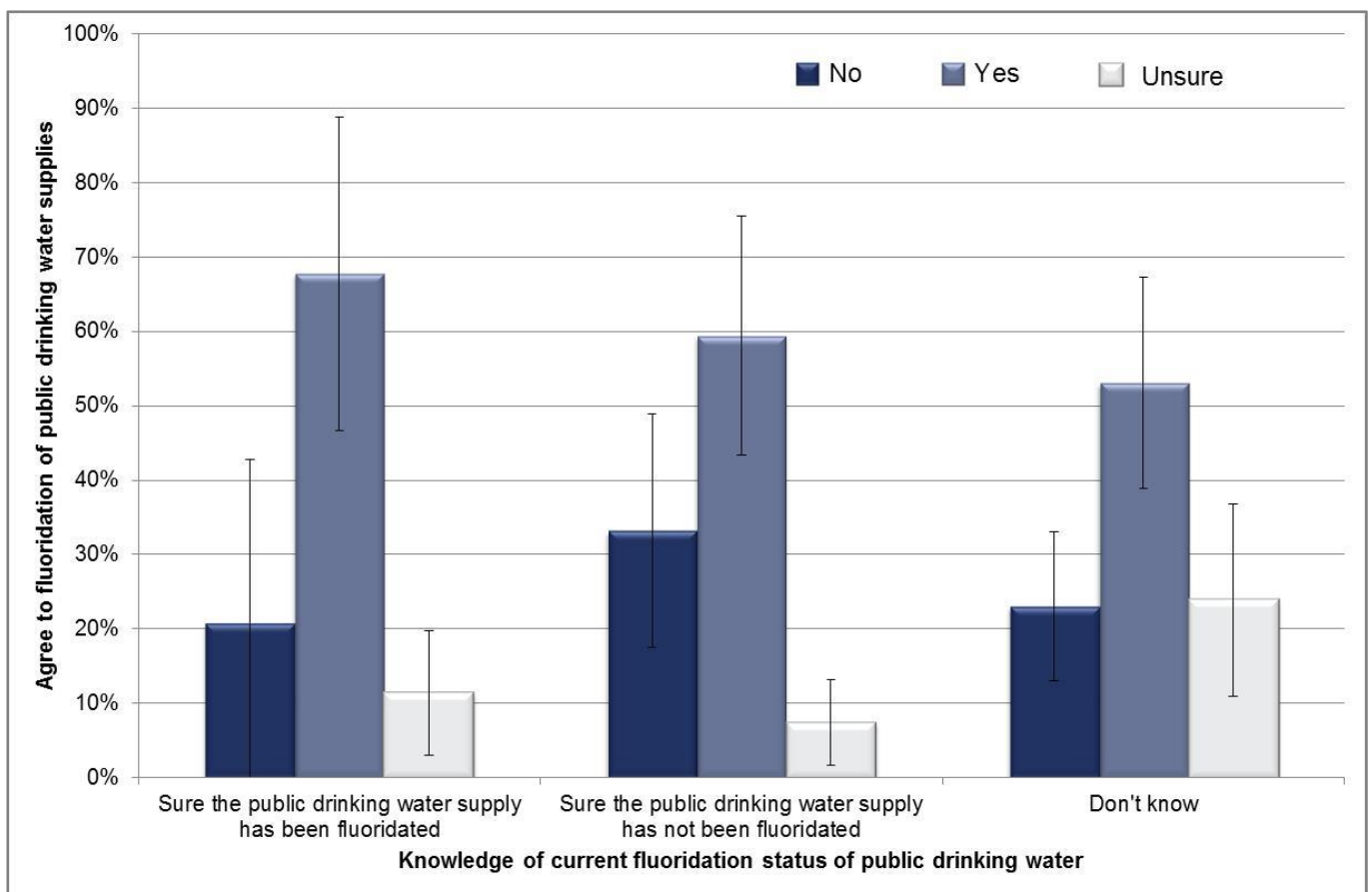
In relation to agreement to fluoridation of the public drinking water supply, 51.1 per cent of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas agreed to the addition of fluoride. Figure 4 illustrates that the proportion of people in agreement with fluoridation (51.1%) was significantly higher than those in opposition to it (19.6%) and those who were unsure (24.7%). The data is provided in Table 6.

Figure 4: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018



For those who were sure the public drinking water supply was fluoridated, and for those who did not know, a significantly greater proportion agreed with the fluoridation of the public drinking water supply (67.8% and 53.1% respectively) compared with those who did not agree or were unsure. There was no significant difference between those who did and did not agree with fluoridation of the public drinking water supply amongst those who were sure the public drinking water supply had not been fluoridated. The data is provided in Table 7.

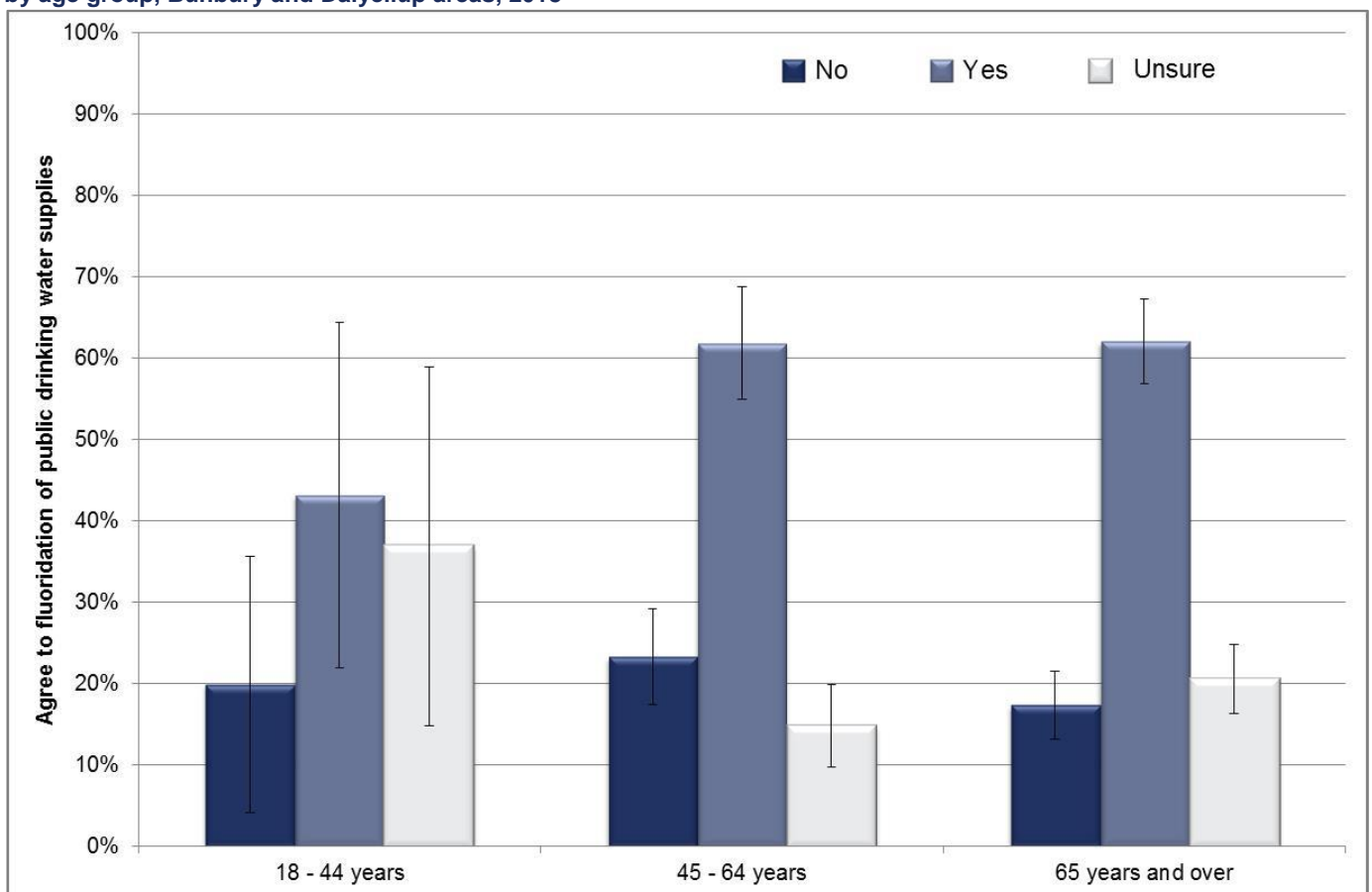
**Figure 5: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation by knowledge of current public water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



To determine if agreement to fluoridation of public drinking water differed according to age, a comparison was made across three different age groups. As illustrated in Figure 6, in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, a significantly higher proportion of adults aged 45 to 64 years and 65 years and over agreed with fluoridation of public drinking water (61.9% and 62.1% respectively) compared with those who did not agree or were unsure. There was no significant difference in the proportion of adults who did and did not agree with fluoridation of public drinking water for 18 to 44 year olds.

It is worth noting that the pattern of responses for 18 to 44 year olds was similar to that of those aged 45 years and over but that confidence intervals were much wider on account of smaller sample numbers for the 18 to 44 year old group. The data is provided in Table 8.

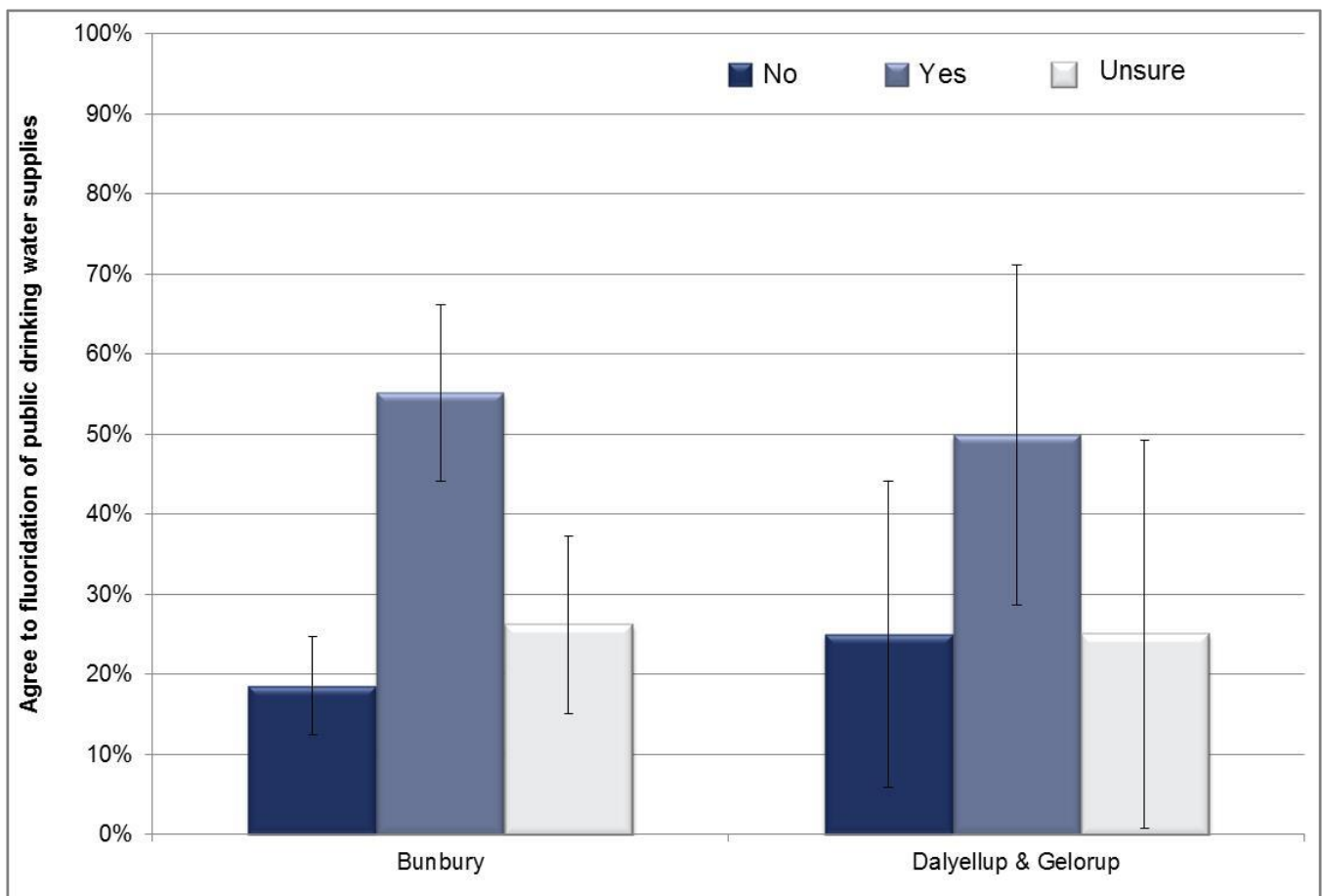
**Figure 6: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation by age group, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Agreement with the fluoridation of public drinking water was also examined across the different locations included in the sample.

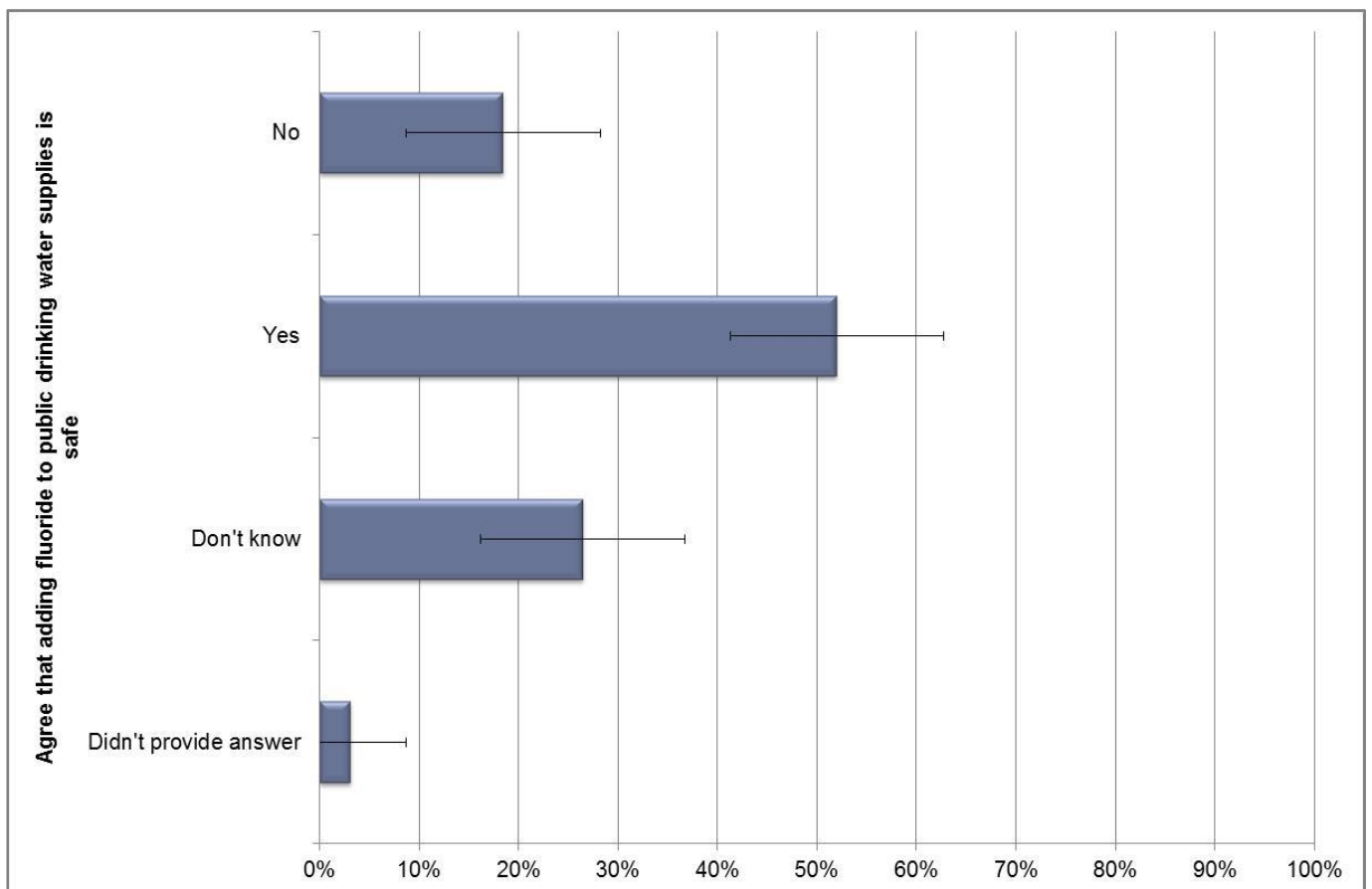
In the City of Bunbury area, a significantly higher proportion of the population agreed (55.2%) with fluoridation of public drinking water supplies than those who did not agree (18.6%) and those who were unsure (26.2%) (see Figure 7). For the Dalyellup and Gelorup areas combined, there was no significant difference between the proportions of the population who agreed (49.9%), did not agree (25.0%) or who were unsure (25.1%) about fluoridation of public drinking water supplies. There was no significant difference between the two areas in the proportion of the population agreeing to fluoridation of the public drinking water supply. The data is provided in Table 9.

**Figure 7: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation, by location of residence, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Approximately half of residents from the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas agreed that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water is safe (52.0%), while approximately one in four people did not know if the addition of fluoride to public drinking water was safe (26.5%). Figure 8 illustrates the breakdown of responses in relation to the perceived safety of the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies. The data is provided in Table 10.

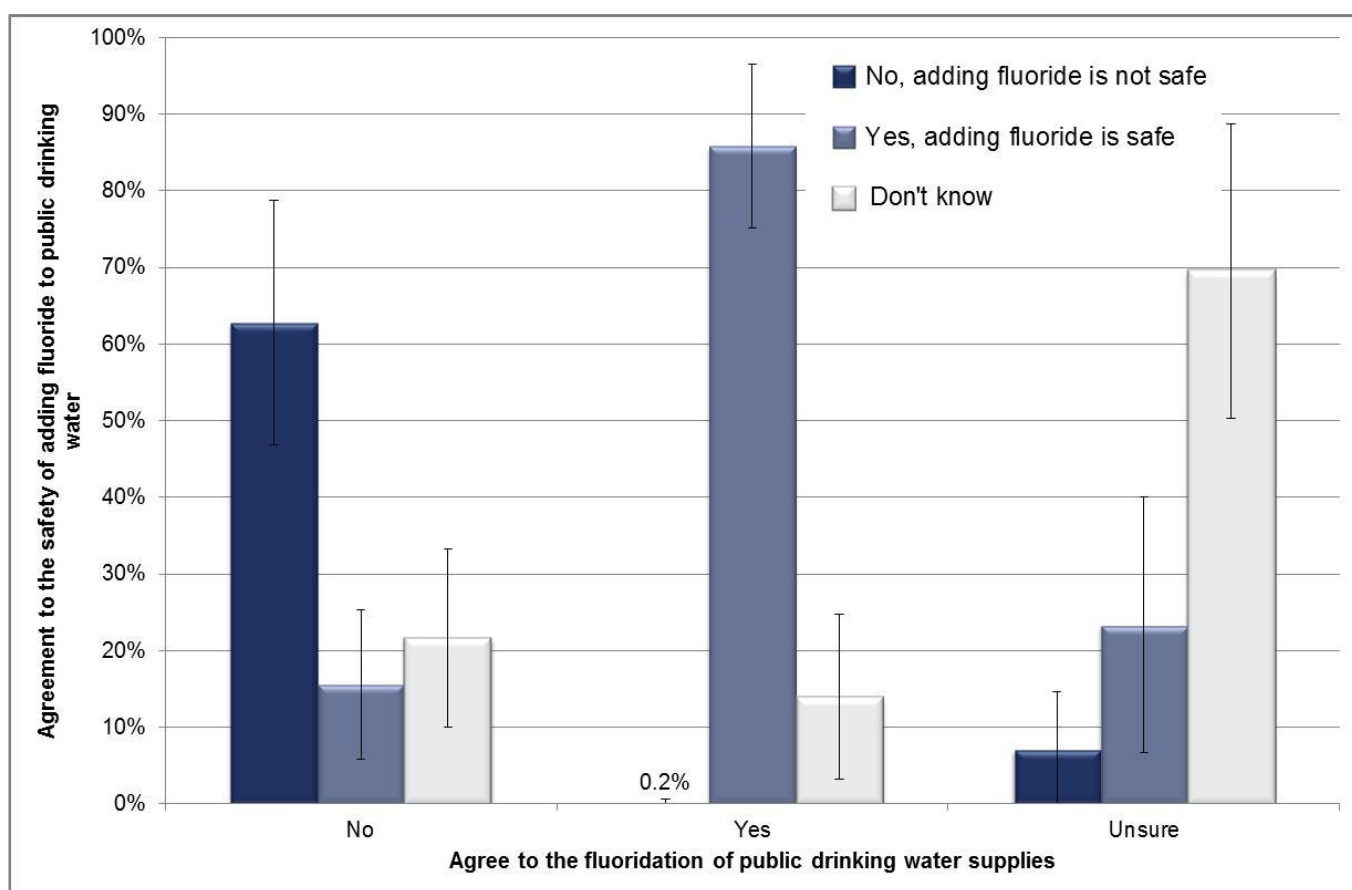
**Figure 8: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to the safety of adding fluoride to public drinking water supplies, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Respondents' perception of safety around the addition of fluoride to public drinking water was significantly linked to their agreement with having fluoride added to the public drinking water supply.

Among those who agreed to the addition of fluoride to public drinking water, 85.8% believe that the addition of fluoride is safe (see Figure 9). Among those who did not agree with the addition of fluoride to public drinking water, 62.8% believe that the addition of fluoride is not safe. Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the addition of fluoride to public drinking water, the majority did not know whether it was safe (69.5%). The data is provided in Table 11.

**Figure 9: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, perceived safety of the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies and agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



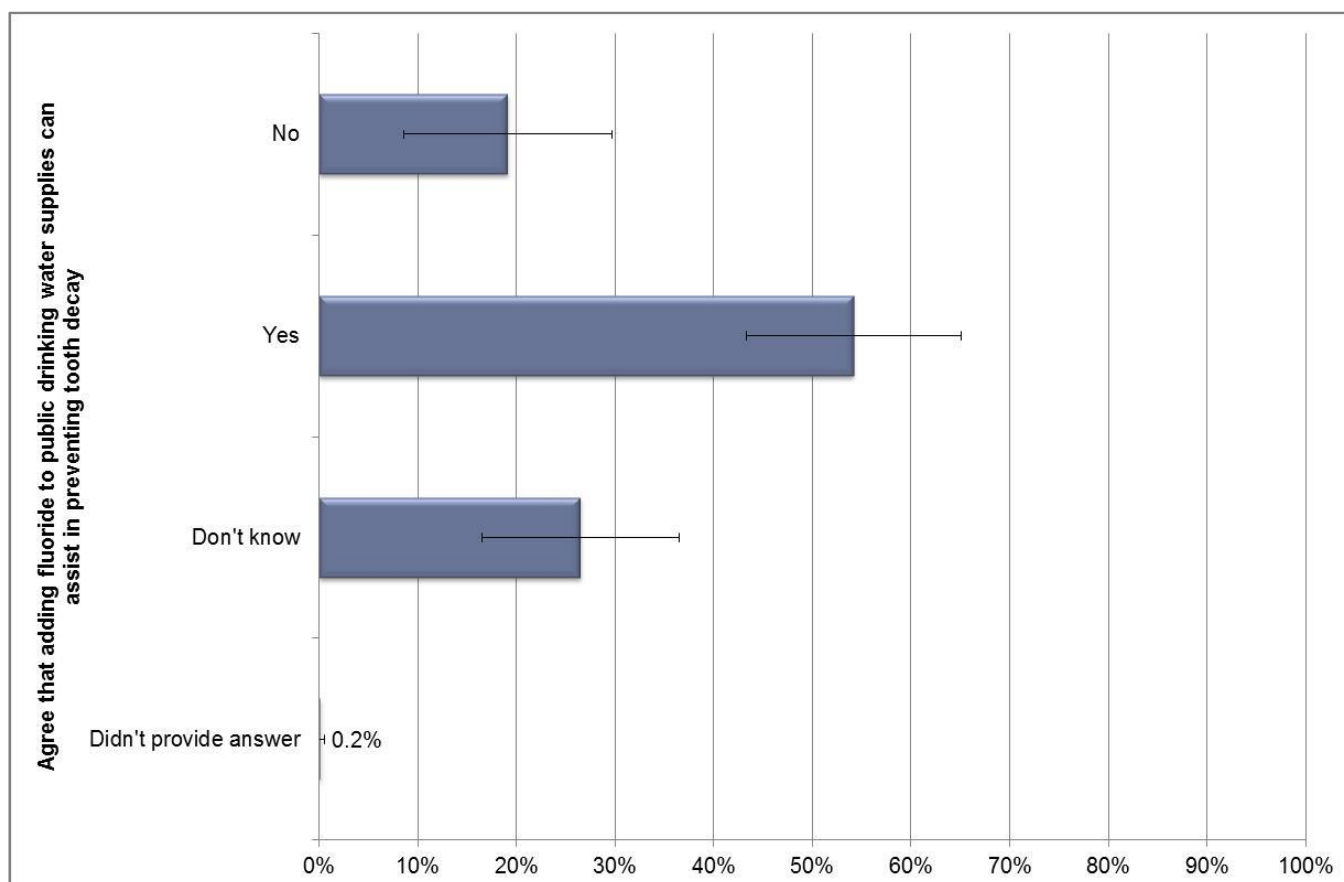


Respondents were asked if they believed that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay.

Figure 10 illustrates that 54.2 per cent of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas agreed that fluoride in the public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, while approximately one-quarter (26.5%) did not know if the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water supply can help prevent tooth decay. The data is provided in Table 12.

Respondents were also asked to provide the reasons behind their response (yes or no). These comments are provided in Appendix E (380 comments agreeing that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay) and Appendix F (58 comments opposing) of this report.

**Figure 10: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Responses regarding whether or not respondents agreed that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay was examined between age groups.

Figure 11 illustrates that 39.2 per cent of the population aged 18 to 44 years, 68.4 per cent of the population aged 45 to 64 years and 66.4 per cent of the population aged 65 years and over agreed that fluoride in the public drinking water could assist in the prevention of tooth decay. For those aged 45 to 64 years, and those aged 65 years and over, those agreeing that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay were significantly higher when compared with those who did not agree or did not know. The proportion of the population aged 18 to 44 years that agreed that fluoride in the public drinking water could assist in the prevention of tooth decay was significantly lower when compared to the two other age groups. The data is provided in Table 13.

**Figure 11: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies prevents tooth decay, by age group, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

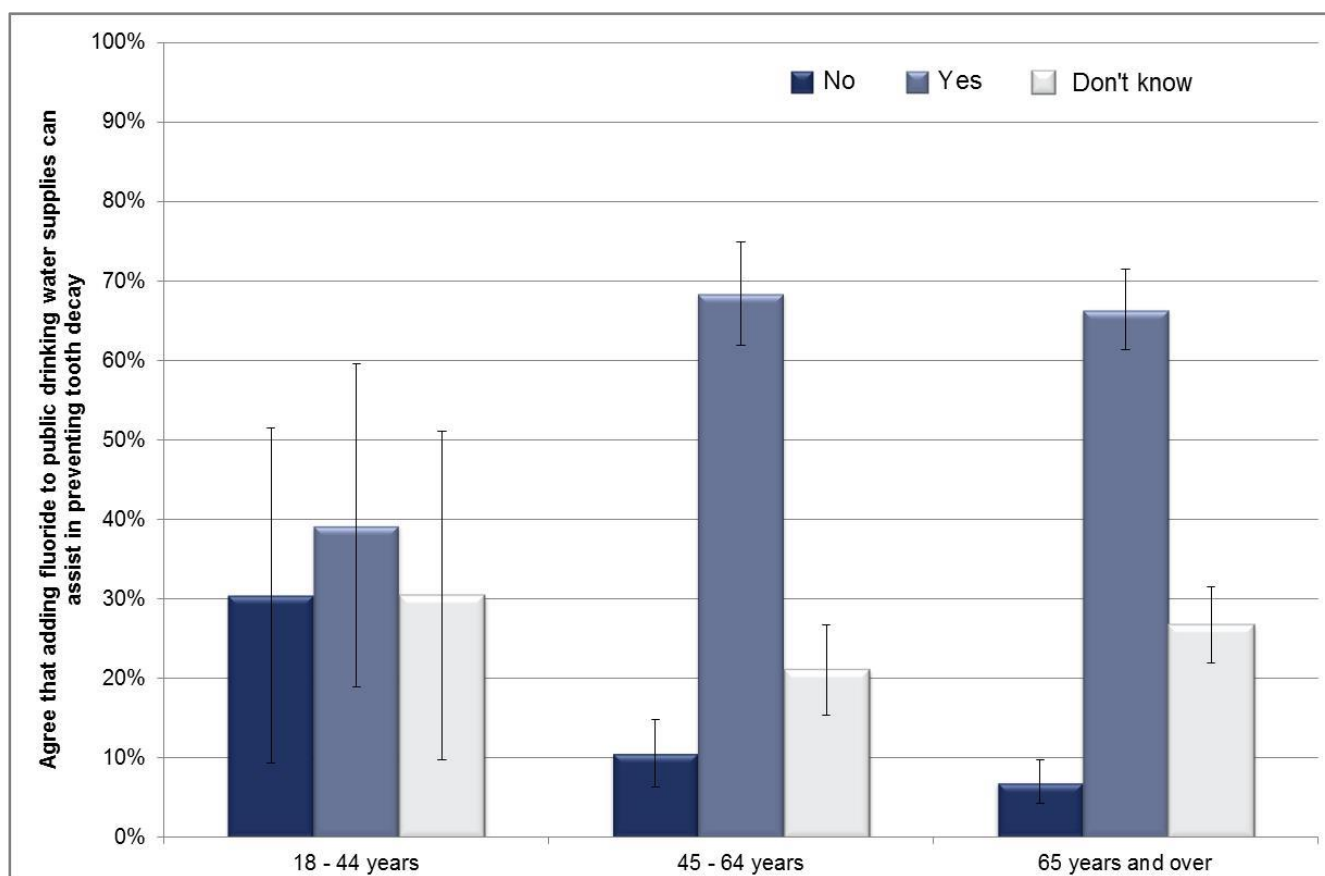
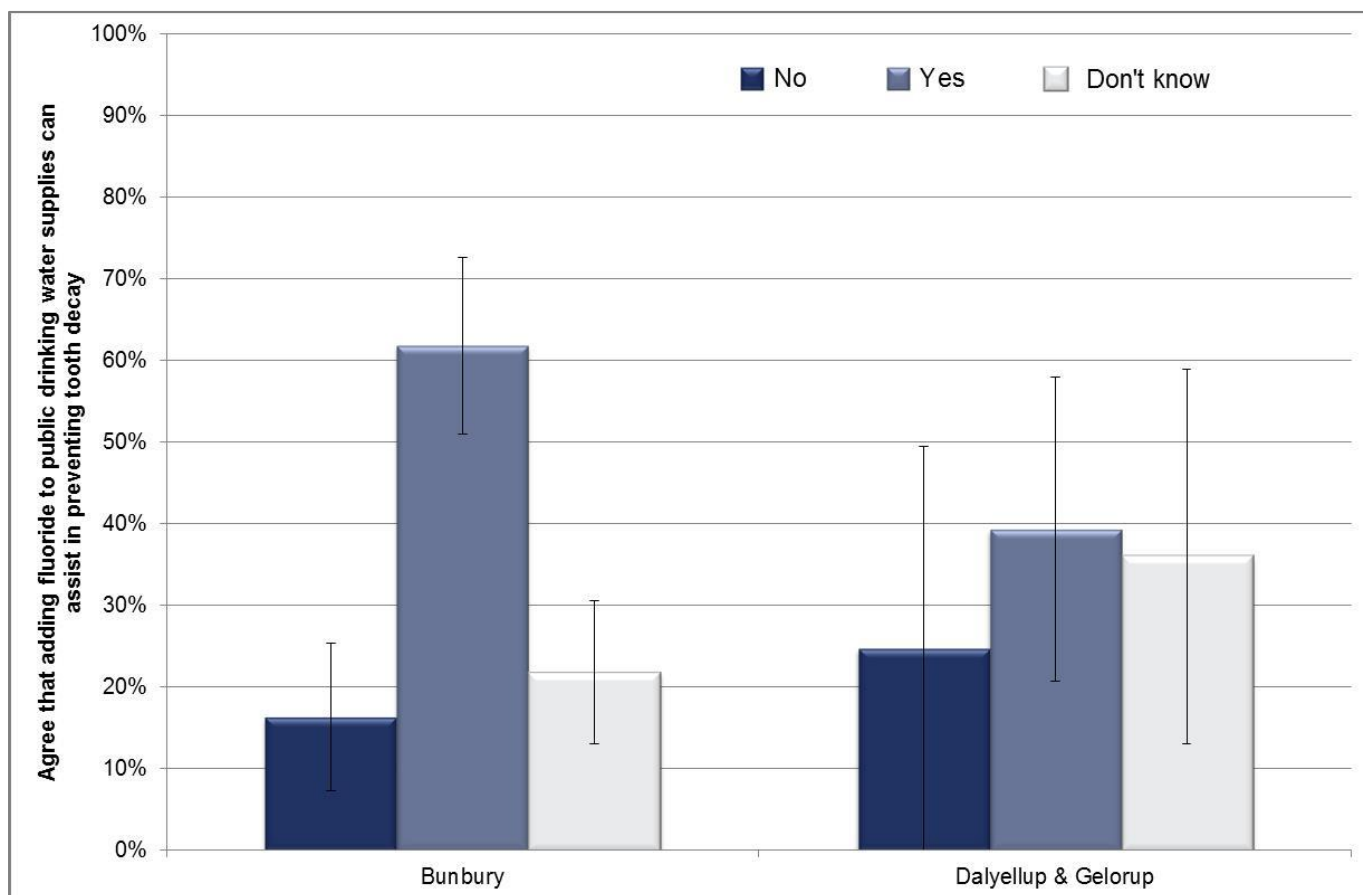


Figure 12 illustrates the area in which the population of interest resides by agreement that the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water supply can help in preventing tooth decay.

In the Bunbury area, the majority (61.8%) of the population agreed that fluoride in the public drinking water could help prevent tooth decay. This is significantly greater than the proportion of the population in Bunbury who disagreed or did not know. In the Dalyellup and Gelorup areas combined, 39.3 per cent of the population agreed that the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water could assist in the prevention of tooth decay. There was no statistically significant difference in agreement based on location of residence for the population of interest. The data is provided in Table 14.

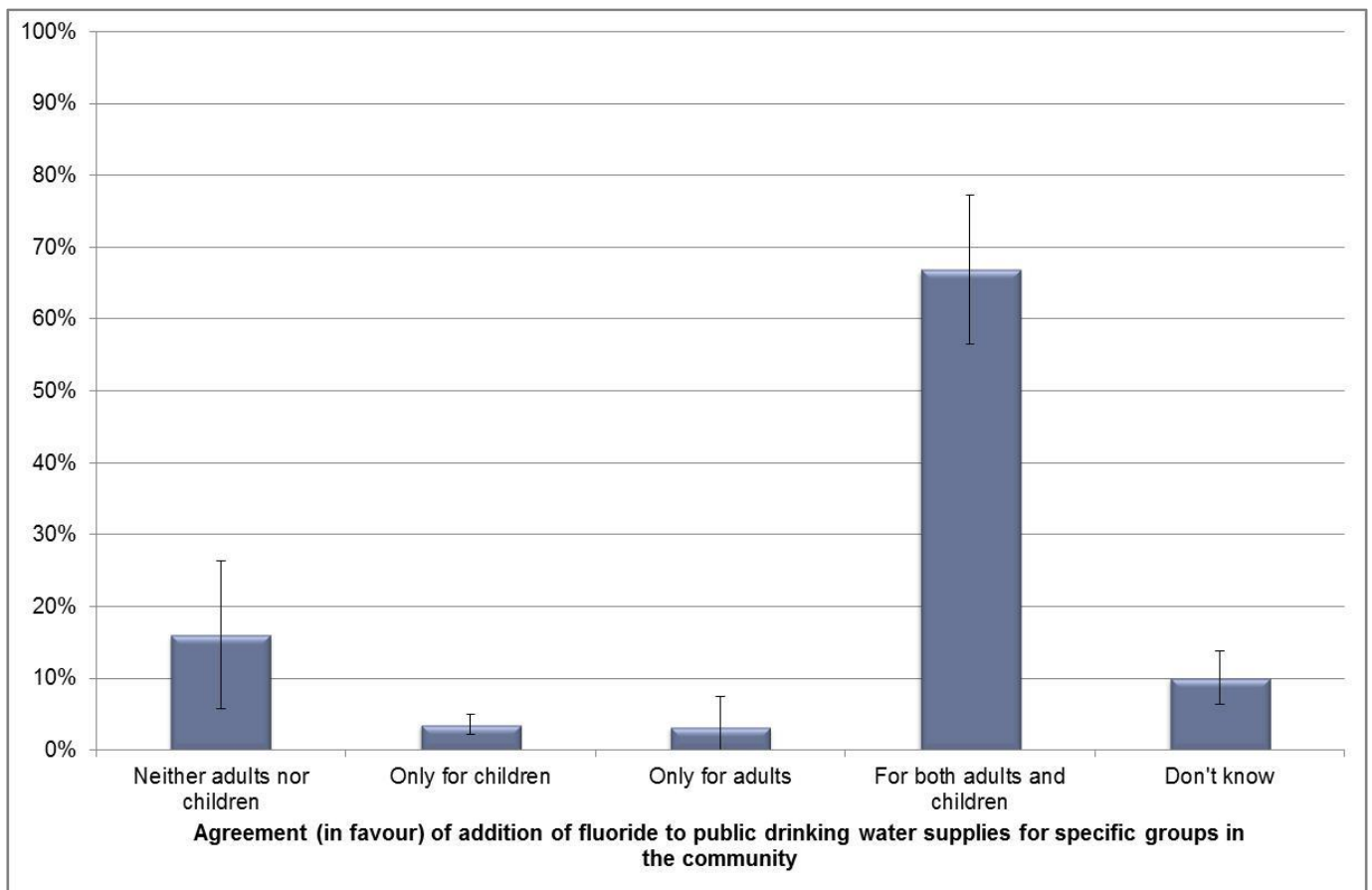
**Figure 12: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, by location of residence, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Those participants who believed that fluoride could assist in the prevention of tooth decay (see Table 12) were asked if they would be in favour of adding fluoride to the public drinking water supply to assist with tooth decay prevention for specific groups in the community.

Figure 13 illustrates that the majority of people who believed that fluoride could assist in the prevention of tooth decay were in favour of its addition for both adults and children (66.9%). The data is provided in Table 15.

**Figure 13: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, in favour of the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies to help prevent tooth decay, by specific groups in the community, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



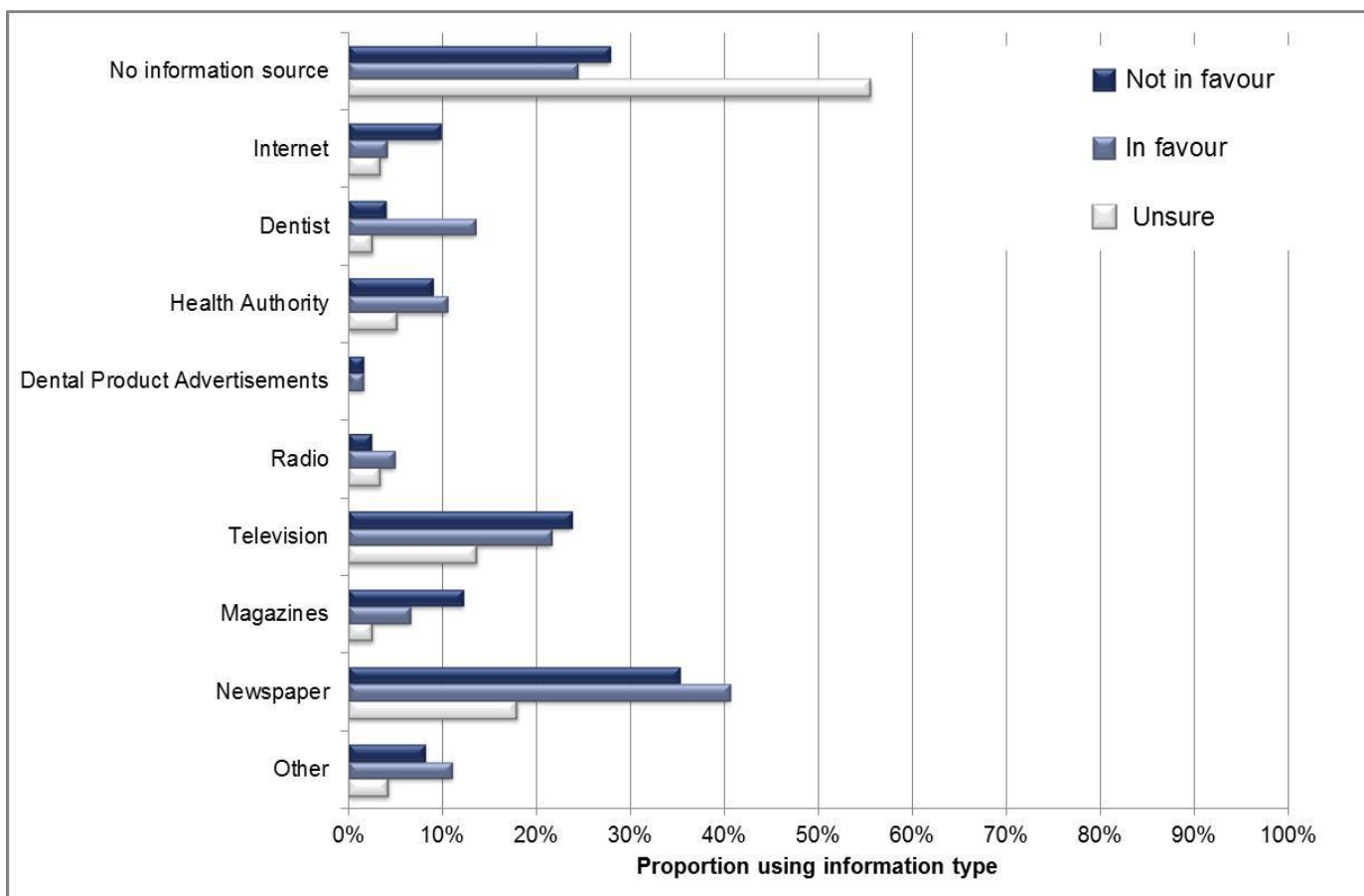
### 3.4 Information received on fluoridation

Respondents were asked where they had obtained information about the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies.

Figure 14 illustrates the main sources of information by respondents' agreement to the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies. For both those in favour of fluoridation and not in favour of fluoridation, the main source of information stated was newspapers followed by no information source. For those people who were neither for nor against fluoridation the majority indicated that they had no information source in relation to water fluoridation. Multiple responses were possible for this question. The data is provided in Table 16.

Information on the other types of information people sought and the websites they visited on the internet are available in Appendix G of this report.

**Figure 14: Unweighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, by information source and agreement to the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

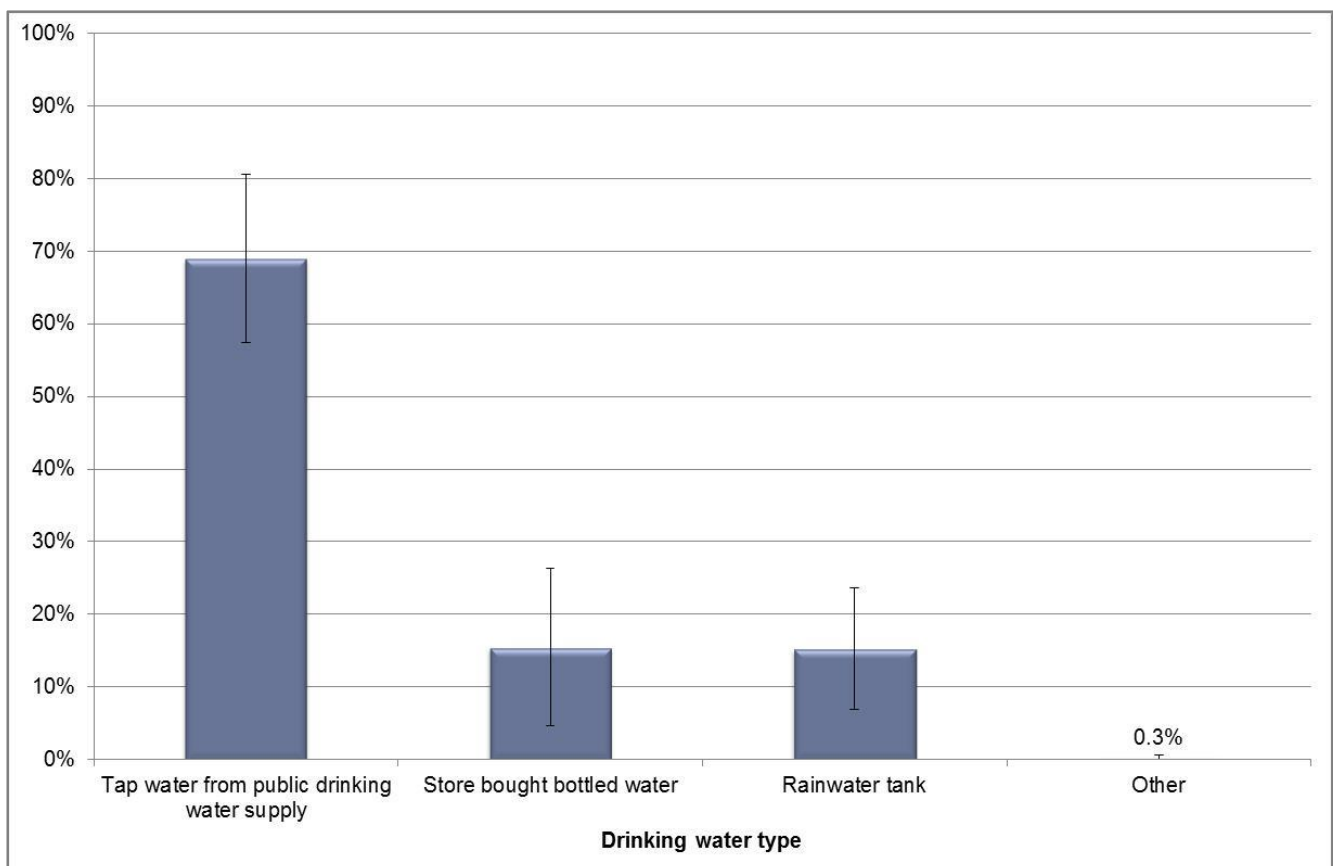


### 3.5 Drinking water source

While the majority of population's households (84.7%) were connected to the public water supply it was also of interest to determine what proportion of the population actually consume the public water supply. Overall, 69.0 per cent of the population of the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas consumed tap water from the public drinking water supply as the most commonly used source of drinking water.

Figure 15 illustrates that tap water from the public drinking water supply was the most common type of water consumed (69.0), followed by store bought bottled water (15.5%) and rainwater tank (15.3%). For those in the population who described their water supply as "other", all specified that bore water was consumed (treatment type not specific). The data is provided in Table 17.

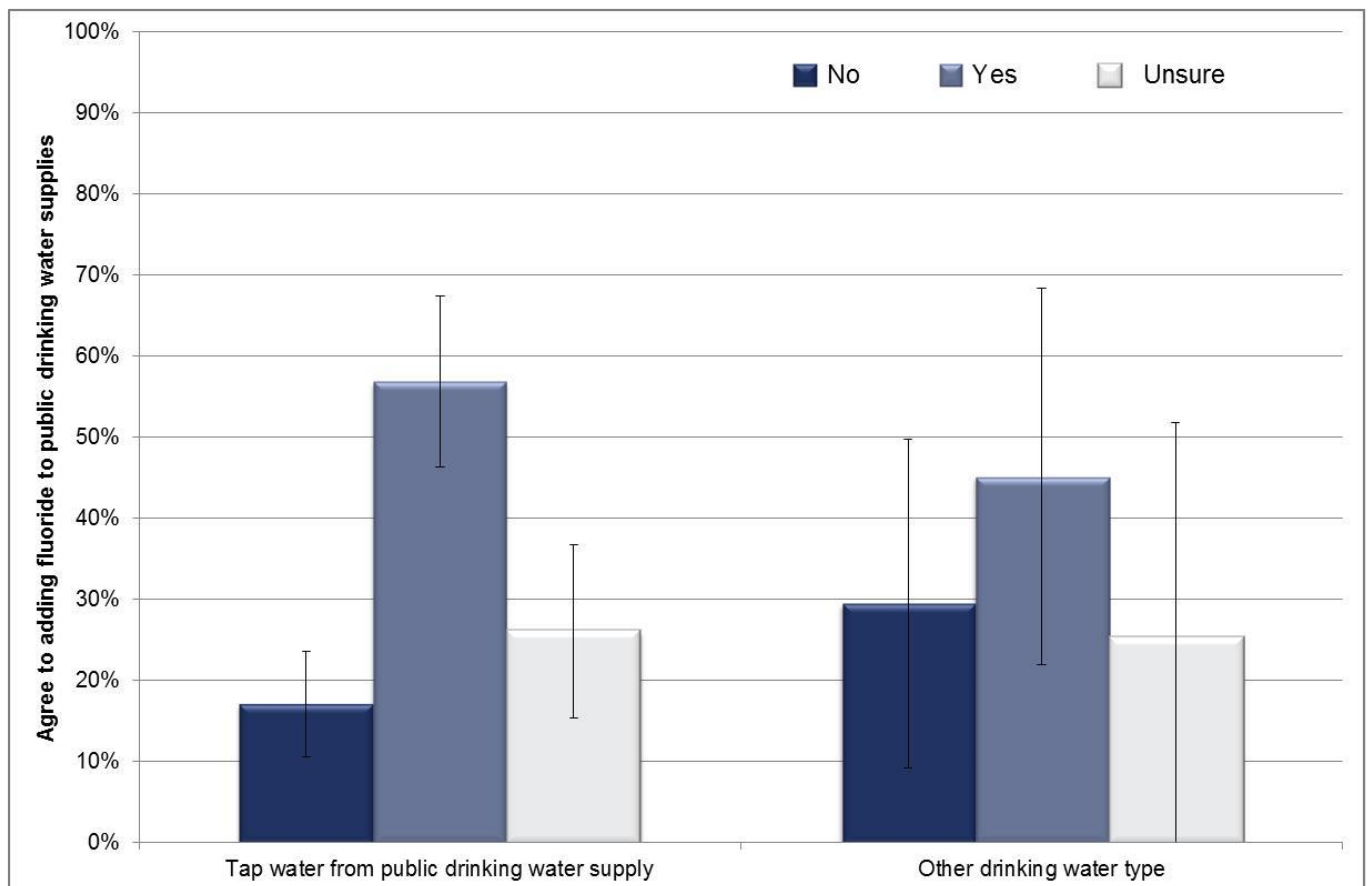
**Figure 15: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, by type of drinking water, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Approximately two-thirds of the population in the Bunbury and Dalyellup areas drink the public drinking water, so it was of interest to determine if the type of water consumed affected the level of agreement to the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water supply. As the number of people who consumed water other than the public water supply was low, the three additional groups of store bought, rainwater tank and other were combined into one “other” group for analytical purposes.

Amongst those who consume tap water from the public drinking water supply, a significantly greater proportion agreed (56.8%) rather than disagreed (17.1%) or were unsure (26.1%) to adding fluoride to the public drinking water supply (see Figure 16). For those who consume another type of drinking water, there was no significant difference between the proportion of adults who agreed, disagreed or were unsure about adding fluoride to the public drinking water supply. The data is provided in Table 18.

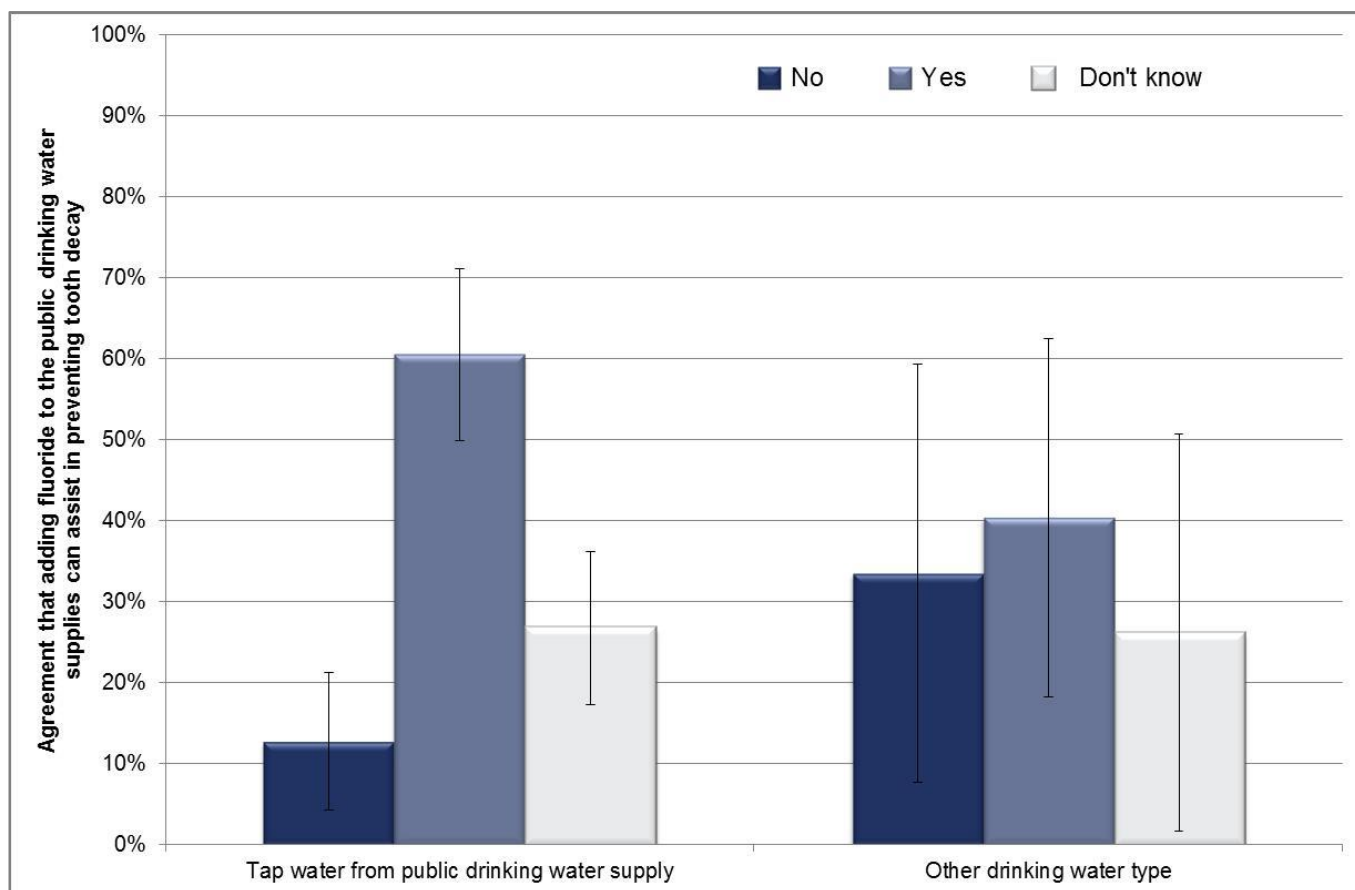
**Figure 16: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supplies fluoridation by type of drinking water consumed, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**



Finally, along with agreement to the addition of fluoride there was also interest in determining if the type of drinking water consumed had an impact on the population of interest's perception of the benefits of fluoride in assisting to prevent tooth decay.

Figure 17 illustrates that for those in the population who drink tap water from the public drinking water supplies, 60.5 per cent agree that the addition of fluoride to this type of water supply can assist in the prevention of tooth decay. For those who drink other water types, 40.4 per cent agreed that the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water can assist with the prevention of tooth decay. The data is provided in Table 19.

**Figure 17: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies prevents tooth decay, by type of drinking water consumed, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**





## 4. References

1. Epidemiology Branch. Water Fluoridation Survey, Bunbury Area, September 2011. Perth, WA (Australia): Department of Health WA; 2011.
2. Western Research Institute. Household Fluoridation Survey, Prepared for the Northern NWS Oral Health Network. Bathurst, NSW (Australia): Western Research Institute; 2006.
3. Office of Economic and Statistical Research. November 2004 Queensland Household Survey. Brisbane, QLD (Australia): Queensland Government; 2004.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Evaluation Briefs: Data Collection Methods for Program Evaluation: Questionnaires. No. 14. Atlanta, Georgia (USA): Department of Health and Human Services; 2008.
5. Epidemiology Branch. The WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System, Technical Paper Series No. 1: Design and methodology. Perth, WA (Australia): Department of Health WA; 2018.
6. National Statistical Service. Sample Size Calculator [Internet]. Belconnen, ACT (Australia): Australian Bureau of Statistics; 2015 [cited 2017 Dec 8]. Available from: <http://www.nss.gov.au/nss/home.nsf/pages/Sample+size+calculator>
7. Edith Cowan University. ECU Survey Research Centre – About [Internet]. Joondalup, WA (Australia): Edith Cowan University; 2016 [cited 2017 Feb 19]. Available from: [www.ecu.edu.au/faculties/computing-health-and-science/research-activity/research-centres/survey-research-centre/about](http://www.ecu.edu.au/faculties/computing-health-and-science/research-activity/research-centres/survey-research-centre/about).

## Appendix A: Approach letter



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

Dear <<Name of householder>>

### The WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Survey System

You have previously taken part in the important Department of Health initiative, the WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System Survey. During that interview you consented to be recalled should the Department of Health require assistance with future survey research. We are currently inviting you to take part in an additional section of the WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System, looking into the public's views on local health improvement options in the Bunbury area. The Edith Cowan University (ECU) Survey Research Centre conducts the survey on our behalf.

In the next few weeks, an interviewer from the ECU Survey Research Centre may telephone your house. The interviewer will ask to speak to the person from the household who previously completed the WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System survey.

The interviewer will ask you to take part in an interview over the telephone. The interview will last no more than ten minutes. All information collected will be strictly confidential. While you do not have to participate, I hope that you do.

This survey will ensure that we have up-to-date information about the views and attitudes of your community towards local health improvement options.

If you have any queries about the survey, please call Vicki Graham or the supervisor on duty on 1800 993 310. They will be happy to answer your questions. There is also a contact number on the brochure if you want to speak to someone in the Department of Health.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support and participation in this important initiative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. E. Goodchild'.

Stan Goodchild  
A/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE

9 January 2018

Environmental Health Directorate | Public and Aboriginal Health Division  
All correspondence to: PO Box 8172 Perth Business Centre Western Australia 6849  
Grace Vaughan House 227 Stubbs Terrace Shenton Park WA 6008  
Telephone (08) 9388 4999 Fax (08) 9388 4955  
ABN 28 684 750 332  
[www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)

## Appendix B: WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System brochure

### Does it matter who takes part in the survey?

The HWSS is about everybody in WA. This means that we need everyone to help us to build an accurate picture of the health needs of the state. If you have been contacted to take part in the survey, please do. While the survey is voluntary, by taking part you are helping us to plan and provide the best possible health services for our state.

### Further information

For more information about the survey visit: [www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/popsurveys.cfm](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/popsurveys.cfm) or call Department of Health on 9222 4222 and ask for the Epidemiology Branch.

Further information about linking health records can be found on the internet site: [www.data linkage-wa.org](http://www.data linkage-wa.org) or call the Department of Health on 9222 4222 and ask for the Data Linkage Branch.

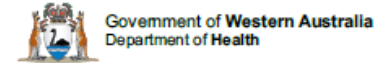
This project has been approved by the Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

Produced by Epidemiology Branch  
© Department of Health 2017

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

ESP-003455 AUG 17



## Western Australian Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System



[health.wa.gov.au](http://health.wa.gov.au)

[health.wa.gov.au](http://health.wa.gov.au)

## Why does WA need a Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System?

In 2002, a Health and Wellbeing Surveillance System (HWSS) began monitoring the health status of all Western Australians.

Every month more than 500 people of all ages are asked to take part in a telephone interview. Those who agree are asked a range of questions about their health and way of life.

The information from the HWSS is very important for identifying the health needs of Western Australians across the State.

## How is the information from the HWSS used?

The information from the HWSS is used to:

- monitor the health status of all Western Australians
- identify important relationships between lifestyle choices and health
- identify groups who are at risk of developing health problems
- plan and develop health services to ensure the provision of effective, safe and high-quality health care
- inform health education programs
- evaluate what is already being done in health care
- inform health policy development.



## What you will be asked about

Question topics in the survey include:

- health status
- smoking
- physical activity
- nutrition
- alcohol consumption
- use of health services
- sociodemographic information such as age, sex and geographic location.



## Other possible uses of information collected in the survey

At the end of the survey, we will ask you if you would agree to be telephoned again at some time to take part in other important health studies. You do not have to participate in the future even if you say yes at this time.

We will also ask for your consent to have the information you provide on the survey linked to other health-related data collections, such as hospitalisation or midwives data. This type of research helps us to identify emerging issues and to plan our services more effectively and efficiently.

All research projects would have approval from a qualified ethics committee and would only use and report on information that was not individually identifiable.

You can request to have a brochure about data linkage sent to you at the time of the interview.



## Appendix C: Water Fluoridation Survey questionnaire 2018

### CATI Health and Wellbeing Survey

#### Water Fluoridation Module 2018

*Note: The letters to the right indicate which age groups were asked each question.*

*Y=Young adult 18-24 years, A=Adult 25-64 years and O=Older adult 65+ years*

**Hello my name is.... I am calling on behalf of the WA Dept of Health regarding a health survey. You may have received a letter and brochure explaining about the survey from us recently. Sorry to have missed you we will call again later or if you would like to make an appointment for us to call, please telephone 1800 etc.**

**Hello. I'm calling from the Survey Research Centre on behalf of the Department of Health regarding the study we are conducting on community attitudes towards local health improvement options.**

***Additional information about silent numbers (if this issue is raised by the respondent). We obtained your number from the White Pages. This probably means that prior to you getting the number, the number was not a silent one. If you are concerned about this, we suggest that you contact your telephone service provider.***

**We would like to talk to [Adult's name] as they previously completed a health and wellbeing survey and indicated that we could call back if we had any further health-related surveys.**

<b>LET1 We recently sent you a letter telling you about the survey. Did you receive the letter? (Single Response)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
	18-	25-	65+
	24	64	

0 No

1 Yes

999 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember

**[If No or Unsure] The letter invited [Adult's name] to take part in an important health survey being conducted by the Department of Health. It was sent to your household to let you know that we would be contacting you by phone. Your responses will form part of a picture of your local community. The results of the survey will be used to help us obtain a community view on attitudes towards local health improvement options.**

**[All] I can assure you that information given will remain confidential. The answers from all people interviewed will be gathered together and no individual answers will be published or passed on. On average the survey takes no more than 10 minutes. Participation in the survey is voluntary. You may withdraw from the survey at any time and may refuse to answer any questions as you wish.**

<b>SCREENER 1: As we are focussing on the City of Bunbury and its surrounds in this survey could you please let me know what postcode you live in?</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
--	----------	----------	----------

2 6230 (Continue with survey - Go to DEM 1)

5 Other Postcode (screen out)

998 Unsure/ Don't Know/ Can't remember (Go to Screener2)

999 Refused (screen out)

<b>SCREENER 2: Could you please let me know what suburb you live in?</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
(Continue survey only if one of the following suburbs, otherwise screen out)			
3 Bunbury			
4 Carey Park			
5 College Grove			
6 Dalyellup			
7 Davenport			
8 East Bunbury			
10 Gelorup			
11 Glen Iris			
18 South Bunbury			
19 Usher			
20 Vittoria			
22 Withers			
998 Unsure/ Don't Know/ Can't remember (screen out)			
999 Refused (screen out)			
<b>DEM1 What was your age last birthday? (Single Response. IF REFUSED, TERMINATE INTERVIEW)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
Enter age _____			
<b>Record the sex</b>			
<b>DEM5 Sex (Do not ask. If unsure at end of interview, delete interview)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>

## WATER FLUORIDATION

The following questions will be used to help us obtain a community view on the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies.

Y A O

**Q1 Is your residence connected to the public water supply? (Single response)**

0 No (Go to Q3)

1 Yes (Go to Q2)

998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember (Go to Q2)

999 Refused (Go to Q2)

**Q2 Do you know whether fluoride has or has not been added to your public water supply? (Single response)**

Y A O

0 No, I don't know if fluoride has been added to the public water supply or not

1 Yes, I am sure the public water supply has had fluoride added

2 Yes, I am sure the public water supply has not had fluoride added

999 Refused

**Q3 Do you agree with the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water supply? (Single response)**

Y A O

0 No

1 Yes

998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember

999 Refused



<b>Q4 Do you believe that the addition of fluoride to the public drinking water supply is safe? (Single response)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
0 No			
1 Yes			
998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember			
999 Refused			
<b>Q5 Do you believe that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay? (Single response)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
0 No (Interviewer to prompt why this response was given and enter comment Q5a) (Go to Q7)			
1 Yes (Interviewer to prompt why this response was given and enter comment Q5a) (Go to Q6)			
998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember (Go to Q6)			
999 Refused (Go to Q7)			
Q5a Comment_____ (specify)			
<b>Q6 Would you be in favour of adding fluoride to the public drinking water supply to assist in the prevention of tooth decay? (Single response) (Interviewer note: If respondent only says yes interviewer to clarify which yes option this refers to out of the three available)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
0 No			
1 Yes, in children only			
2 Yes, in adults only			
3 Yes, in both adults and children			
998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember			
999 Refused			

<b>Q7 Where have you received information on the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies? (Multiple Response Possible - Do not read out options, Prompt after first response by saying "anywhere else" to obtain more information)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
Q7a Newspapers			
Q7b Magazines			
Q7c Television			
Q7d Radio			
Q7e Advertisements for dental products			
Q7f Health authorities			
Q7g Dentists			
Q7h Internet <b>(specify)</b> _____ <b>website</b>			
Q7i No information/ source			
Q7j Other _____ <b>(specify)</b>			
998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember			
999 Refused			
<b>Q8 What is your most commonly used source of drinking water? (Single Response)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>
1 Tap water from public drinking water supply			
2 Store bought bottled water			
3 Rainwater tank			
4 Other _____ <b>(specify)</b>			
998 Unsure/Don't know/Can't remember			
999 Refused			
<b>THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>

## Appendix D: Result tables

**Table 4: Weighted proportion of households connected to the public drinking water supply, 18 years and over, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Connected to public drinking water	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
No	49	13.9	( 4.3 - 23.5 )
Yes	544	84.7	( 75.1 - 94.4 )
Don't know	8	1.3	( 0.0 - 3.0 )

**Table 5: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over who knew if their public drinking water supply was currently fluoridated, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Knowledge of public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
Sure the public water supply has not been fluoridated	68	11.2	( 7.1 - 15.2 )
Sure the public water supply has been fluoridated	150	24.8	( 16.0 - 33.7 )
Don't know	334	64.0	( 54.5 - 73.5 )

**Table 6: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement to public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
No	122	19.6	( 12.4 - 26.8 )
Yes	360	51.1	( 40.5 - 61.7 )
Unsure	117	24.7	( 14.2 - 35.1 )
Didn't provide answer	2	4.6	( 0.0 - 13.1 )

**Table 7: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation by knowledge of current public drinking water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement to public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Sure fluoride has not been added to the public water supply</b>			
No	20	33.2	( 17.5 - 48.8 )
Yes	40	59.4	( 43.3 - 75.5 )
Unsure	8	7.4	( 1.7 - 13.1 )
<b>Sure fluoride has been added to the public water supply</b>			
No	22	20.8	( 0.0 - 42.7 )
Yes	111	67.8	( 46.7 - 88.9 )
Unsure	17	11.4	( 3.1 - 19.8 )
<b>Don't know if fluoride has been added</b>			
No	61	23.1	( 13.0 - 33.1 )
Yes	145	53.1	( 38.9 - 67.2 )
Unsure	62	23.9	( 10.9 - 36.8 )

**Table 8: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation by age group, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement to public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>18 - 44 years</b>			
No	8	19.9	( 4.2 - 35.6 )
Yes	16	43.2	( 22.0 - 64.4 )
Unsure	11	36.9	( 14.9 - 59.0 )
<b>45 - 64 years</b>			
No	56	23.3	( 17.4 - 29.2 )
Yes	138	61.9	( 55.0 - 68.7 )
Unsure	33	14.8	( 9.7 - 19.9 )
<b>65 years and over</b>			
No	58	17.4	( 13.2 - 21.5 )
Yes	206	62.1	( 56.8 - 67.3 )
Unsure	73	20.6	( 16.3 - 24.9 )

**Table 9: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation by place of residence, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement to public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Bunbury</b>			
No	96	18.6	( 12.4 - 24.8 )
Yes	288	55.2	( 44.2 - 66.2 )
Unsure	92	26.2	( 15.1 - 37.3 )
<b>Dalyellup &amp; Gelorup</b>			
No	26	25.0	( 5.9 - 44.1 )
Yes	72	49.9	( 28.6 - 71.2 )
Unsure	25	25.1	( 0.8 - 49.3 )

**Table 10: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to the safety of adding fluoride to public drinking water supplies, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Adding fluoride to public drinking water is safe	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
No	73	18.4	( 8.6 - 28.3 )
Yes	379	52.0	( 41.3 - 62.7 )
Don't know	146	26.5	( 16.2 - 36.8 )
Didn't provide answer	3	3.1	( 0.0 - 8.6 )

**Table 11: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, perceived safety of the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies and agreement to public drinking water supply fluoridation, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Adding fluoride to public drinking water is safe	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Do not agree with adding fluoride to the public water supply</b>			
No	63	62.8	( 46.8 - 78.8 )
Yes	21	15.6	( 5.8 - 25.3 )
Don't know	38	21.6	( 10.0 - 33.2 )
<b>Agree with adding fluoride to the public water supply</b>			
No	2	0.2	( 0.0 - 0.6 )
Yes	320	85.8	( 75.1 - 96.5 )
Don't know	38	14.0	( 3.2 - 24.7 )
<b>Unsure about adding fluoride to the public drinking water supply</b>			
No	7	7.1	( 0.0 - 14.6 )
Yes	38	23.4	( 6.7 - 40.0 )
Don't know	70	69.5	( 50.3 - 88.7 )

**Table 12: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Adding fluoride to public drinking water assists to prevent tooth decay	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
No	58	19.1	( 8.6 - 29.7 )
Yes	391	54.2	( 43.3 - 65.1 )
Don't know	151	26.5	( 16.5 - 36.5 )
Didn't provide answer	1	0.2	( 0.0 - 0.5 )

**Table 13: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, by age group, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement that adding fluoride to public drinking water assists in the prevention of tooth decay	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>18 - 44 years</b>			
No	9	30.4	( 9.3 - 51.5 )
Yes	18	39.2	( 18.9 - 59.5 )
Don't know	9	30.4	( 9.7 - 51.0 )
<b>45 - 64 years</b>			
No	25	10.5	( 6.3 - 14.7 )
Yes	152	68.4	( 61.9 - 74.9 )
Don't know	50	21.1	( 15.4 - 26.7 )
<b>65 years and over</b>			
No	24	6.9	( 4.2 - 9.7 )
Yes	221	66.4	( 61.3 - 71.5 )
Don't know	92	26.7	( 21.9 - 31.5 )

**Table 14: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies can help prevent tooth decay, by location of residence, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement that adding fluoride to public drinking water assists in the prevention of tooth decay	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Bunbury</b>			
No	47	16.4	( 7.3 - 25.4 )
Yes	313	61.8	( 51.0 - 72.6 )
Don't know	116	21.8	( 13.1 - 30.5 )
<b>Dalyellup &amp; Gelorup</b>			
No	11	24.7	( 0.0 - 49.5 )
Yes	78	39.3	( 20.7 - 57.9 )
Don't know	35	36.0	( 13.0 - 59.0 )

**Table 15: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, in favour of the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies to assist preventing tooth decay, by specific groups in the community, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

In favour of adding fluoride to public drinking water to assist in the prevention of tooth decay for specific groups in community	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
Neither adults nor children	65	16.1	( 5.7 - 26.4 )
Only for children	37	3.6	( 2.2 - 5.1 )
Only for adults	6	3.3	( 0.0 - 7.5 )
For both adults and children	364	66.9	( 56.6 - 77.3 )
Don't know	70	10.1	( 6.4 - 13.8 )

Please note: Only includes respondents that agreed that fluoride in public drinking water can assist in preventing tooth decay.

**Table 16: Unweighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, by information source and agreement to the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Information sources about adding fluoride to public drinking water supplies	Agreement to the adding fluoride to public drinking water supplies					
	In favour		Not in favour		Unsure	
	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted prevalence (%)	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted prevalence (%)	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted prevalence (%)
No information source	88	24.4	34	27.9	65	55.6
Newspaper	146	40.6	43	35.3	21	18.0
Magazines	24	6.7	15	12.3	3	2.6
Television	78	21.7	29	23.8	16	13.7
Radio	18	5.0	3	2.5	4	3.4
Dental Product Advertisements	6	1.7	2	1.6	0	0.0
Health Authority	38	10.6	11	9.0	6	5.1
Dentist	49	13.6	5	4.1	3	2.6
Internet	15	4.2	12	9.8	4	3.4
Other	40	11.1	10	8.2	5	4.3

Please note: Multiple responses were possible for this question. For more information refer to Section 3.4 of this report.

**Table 17: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, by type of drinking water, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Drinking water type	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
Tap water from public drinking water supply	475	69.0	( 57.4 - 80.5 )
Store bought bottled water	28	15.5	( 4.7 - 26.3 )
Rainwater tank	95	15.3	( 6.9 - 23.6 )
Other	3	0.3	( 0.0 - 0.6 )

Please note: All three "other" responses were for bore water.

**Table 18: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement to public drinking water supplies fluoridation by type of drinking water consumed, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement to public drinking water fluoridation	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Tap water from public drinking water supply</b>			
No	80	17.1	( 10.6 - 23.6 )
Yes	307	56.8	( 46.3 - 67.3 )
Unsure	87	26.1	( 15.4 - 36.8 )
<b>Other drinking water type</b>			
No	42	29.5	( 9.2 - 49.8 )
Yes	53	45.1	( 22.0 - 68.3 )
Unsure	30	25.4	( 0.0 - 51.7 )

**Table 19: Weighted proportion of adults aged 18 years and over, agreement that the addition of fluoride to public drinking water supplies prevents tooth decay, by type of drinking water consumed, Bunbury and Dalyellup areas, 2018**

Agreement that adding fluoride to public drinking water assists in the prevention of tooth decay	Unweighted (n)	Weighted prevalence (%)	95% CI
<b>Tap water from public drinking water supply</b>			
No	36	12.7	( 4.2 - 21.2 )
Yes	317	60.5	( 49.9 - 71.1 )
Don't know	121	26.8	( 17.3 - 36.2 )
<b>Other drinking water type</b>			
No	22	33.5	( 7.6 - 59.3 )
Yes	74	40.4	( 18.3 - 62.5 )
Don't know	30	26.1	( 1.6 - 50.6 )



## **Appendix E: Respondents' comments –**

### **Agree that adding fluoride to public drinking water can assist in preventing tooth decay**

All comments are presented verbatim.

- I have read somewhere that it is good. In the newspapers. Both local and The West.
- I think that when I look at the statistics I can see that it does make a difference. I've looked at different medical magazines and books.
- I know that there was scientific proof that it was safe. Also dentists seem to think it is safe.
- Nowadays I don't hear people complaining about getting their teeth filled, so I guess the fluoride is working.
- Because fluoride does prevent tooth decay. I was told this.
- I have heard of children in the Bunbury area having more tooth decay than those in Perth. I read in the newspapers that fluoride was in Perth but not Bunbury, and my grandchildren living in Bunbury do have tooth decay. I have also spoken to dentists about fluoride.
- I recently went to the dentist who confirmed we need fluoride for healthy teeth.
- I think that it will prevent tooth decay and I have kids and my dentist says that the reason my kids teeth decay quickly is due to no fluoride in my drinking water.
- I have most of my own teeth because of fluoride added to the drinking water. Fluoride is a naturally occurring product and it has had a positive effect on the dental health of the population for the past fifty years.
- Fluoride being added to water has been happening for a long time and I think it prevents with tooth decay.
- It is in toothpaste, must be good.
- Because the experts say it is good. E.g. The scientists who do the testing and who know what all the components are.
- We have been told this that it helps stop tooth decay. I do not know who told me.
- Both of my children were born and raised in Hong Kong and their tap water had fluoride in it and 'til this date my sons do not have any fillings or cavities in their teeth. Also my grandkids are raised in a place where fluoride is already added to their water and they do not have any issues with their teeth.

- From the comments I have heard. Like the editorial in a news source, like the ABC reporting on the radio and television.
- Based on the public health evidence of fluoride helping to prevent tooth decay.
- I think it helps with the prevention of tooth decay and it helps purify the water.
- Fluoride provides protection to one's teeth.
- I used to give my children fluoride tablets when they were little since it is my belief that fluoride helps prevent tooth decay.
- There is fluoride in toothpaste, so I am assuming that fluoride helps with tooth decay.
- I still have some of my own teeth and I have no trouble with my teeth because I feel fluoride helps a lot to keep teeth healthy and this has also been told to me by the dentist.
- I am a dental nurse and so I know that fluoride is okay to put into the water and yes it is good for you.
- The addition of fluoride to water has been helping prevent tooth decays for years now.
- Information I have received over the years states that fluoride prevents tooth decay.
- I think that there have been studies that show that it is safe. However I gave my children fluoride tablets when they were very young and none of them have ever had a filling and they are now in their late 20s.
- I feel that fluoride is good since I still have all my teeth because of having had fluoride.
- They also add it to toothpaste so it must be doing some good. The toothpaste companies would want to see results.
- I don't think that they would put fluoride into water if it was not safe, I heard from my daughter in Perth that it has been used successfully.
- Because everyone has access to public water supply and it is a good thing for the children. All the children in the area will benefit from it.
- Mainly because I read something that the incidence of tooth (decay) [sic] in my region is higher than a region that does fluoride in the water supply.
- I was a dental nurse and I have seen the benefits of it. I have seen children that have access to fluoride and those who have not and there is a big difference.
- I don't think people get enough fluoride. This would mean that everyone would get it in their water and every one would benefit. Better teeth particularly in children.

- So the kids that are not doing the right thing, like brushing their teeth then this could be a help to all kids. Even if they don't know it they are getting this sort of help when they are having a drink of water.
- Fluoride helps with having better teeth. Healthier teeth. My kids grew up in Perth where there is fluoride and they all have good teeth.
- I've noticed improvements such as less decaying in my teeth.
- I have spoken with dentists they have informed me that you can notice the difference in children presenting with tooth decay. Those who have only had tank water compared with those who have had water with fluoride.
- The reports that I have read from newspaper articles and opinions of researchers seems to support this evidence.
- I had the dentist on Thursday and they always finish with a fluoride wash so that gave me enough evidence that it is safe to use in drinking water and that it will benefit our teeth.
- I use to be a dental assistant and I have learnt that fluoride is good to build healthy and strong teeth.
- Studies show that by having fluoride administered in a tablet form, not just in our water supply, will help to prevent tooth decay.
- Because a lot of people wouldn't actually take the time to clean their teeth or take care of it so having it in the water would really help.
- Because fluoride is good for your teeth, which I have seen on TV when they are advertising toothpaste.
- Because dentist asks if you are usually using fluoride or not.
- Just through years of hearing it from doctors and advertisements and the fact that we have fluoride in our toothpaste I feel that it would help with the health of our teeth.
- I know my dentist is strongly in favour of fluoride and so it has led me to believe so.
- Because my children all have nice teeth and fluoride has been added to the water supply of other areas.
- I'm from Melbourne and there was fluoride there and I guess there studies done to see if it was worthwhile. They continue with it so it must worthwhile. I still have all my own teeth.
- Because of what I have read. Newspaper- local. An ad about fluoride treatment from a dentist. I had fluoride and so did my kids and we all have healthy teeth.

- We had fluoride added to our water in Queensland, where I am originally from and when I was younger there was a lot of tooth decay and as fluoride was added to the water, I am assuming that it helped.
- Research and studies have shown that fluoride decreases tooth decay so it would be a great idea to have this in our waters.
- I used to live in Perth where they put fluoride in the water and I have five grown children and all five of them have great teeth and I thank it all to fluoride.
- No side effects of the addition of fluoride.
- Fluoride is in toothpaste so I guess it must work.
- I have heard research over the years that areas with fluoride in their water have shown to have a decrease of people having decay of their teeth.
- I think that the authorities, water supply authority, or the state government, mentioned it has been in water supply over time for quite some time now.
- Over the years I have read articles and when my children were small we had fluoride painted onto their teeth.
- I think that fluoride is an active agent to help to strengthen teeth.
- I have had a chat to the dentist and he says that it is beneficial. I feel that to have a bit of extra fluoride in the water would help.
- I used to give my kids fluoride tablets when they were small. So if we can have something in the water to help prevent tooth decay it's a good thing.
- From studies at school and also at kindy they told us that fluoride is good for our teeth.
- When they taught dental hygiene they would always talk about the benefits of fluoride.
- It's good to prevent tooth decay as it helps to build up the enamel on the teeth. It's good for kids and to strengthen their teeth.
- I have heard from newspapers and TV reports that the addition of fluoride to water supply is a good thing.
- My kids have never had bad teeth. The grandkids teeth are good as well. We have had fluoride in the Bunbury water for years and it is good.
- I suppose it depends on the amount that they would put into the water.
- I think that years ago when they gave fluoride to our children they had better teeth.

- It's a good idea as there are a lot of kids out there that don't brush their teeth. And it would save a lot of money on toothpaste.
- I have heard that it is good for teeth. It was on the TV but a long time ago. I may have read about it in the newspaper. I don't know why they haven't had it in the water before now.
- There have been a lot of studies about fluoride in toothpaste and public water. It is very good for children who don't brush their teeth. I read a lot about it in Sweden when I was living there with my children.
- When my children were small we had fluoride in the water and their teeth were okay.
- Originally before it was added to water in America the children in America in places where fluoride occurred naturally had better healthy teeth.
- I have used tooth paste with fluoride in it and it hasn't harmed me.
- I am a civil engineer and have been responsible for several LGA water supplies and I believe it works.
- I can only suppose that those in power that agree to putting it into the water know and understand what they are doing.
- Because when I was having my children the doctor told me to take fluoride to aid the children's teeth development.
- I have always been brought up to believe that fluoride in the water was a good thing from my parents and also from school.
- It has been proven by medical doctors that it can prevent tooth decay.
- I have not studied the question but I am hopeful.
- People we know who live in Perth have fluoride in the water and they don't have half the problems with their teeth as we do.
- Fluoride is good for your teeth. My dentist tells me that.
- It is what I have been told. This has been in publications I have read.
- My old dentist said it was good for my teeth. It must be true as I have all my own teeth.
- Fluoride is good for the teeth; it strengthens the teeth and is added to toothpaste.
- I believe in the science that says adding fluoride to drinking water helps prevent tooth decay.

- When I had my children we had to give the children fluoride tablets supplied by the local authorities. They supplied these tablets as there was no fluoride in the drinking water. It must have worked as all my children had beautiful teeth.
- I was a pharmacist; I kept up to date with research about adding fluoride to drinking water. The research said it was safe and helped to prevent tooth decay.
- I had 3 children who all had great teeth and there was fluoride in their drinking water. Unlike me who had bad teeth with no fluoride in the drinking water.
- Fluoride in drinking water has been around for a long time with no known ill effects.
- Fluoride is a known factor in toothpaste and other oral products with no bad side effects. It is safe if the amount of fluoride is monitored.
- I work in the Health Department as a nurse. I see children who do not have fluoride in their drinking water and the state of their teeth is a lot worse than children who have fluoride in the drinking water. The children who do not have fluoride in their drinking water need very comprehensive dental treatment from dental surgeons.
- We gave our children fluoride because we lived on a farm years ago and we only had rain water
- I grew up in Melbourne where we have fluoride added to our water ways and because of this I had no issues with tooth decay.
- It's just what I have read in magazines in doctors surgeries. I have heard discussions on TV about adding fluoride to our water supply.
- I use to work in a dental clinic, the evidence while working there showed me that fluoride does help prevent tooth decay.
- There have been areas throughout the world that have had fluoride added to their water and there has been better dental health for people. I read this in reports. Mainly in the newspaper.
- I have false teeth but the dentist said fluoride is good for the teeth.
- Anything that can help with tooth decay will be good.
- I don't know a great deal about it, it's just what I have heard from other people.
- Compared to when I was a kid we all had fillings but my kids have never had a filling. We had fillings when we were in primary school.
- Scientific data shows that fluoride does reduce dental decay.

- I think it is okay because we had it in the water in Perth when I was a kid so I guess it is okay. It didn't do us any harm.
- When I was younger we had to go and have fluoride treatment so it would be good for the kids today as well.
- I have spoken to friends who are dentist and they say that it works and it helps to prevent tooth decay.
- I gave my children fluoride and they have great teeth.
- Compared to areas that do not have fluoride to those areas that do have it, their general dental health is much better.
- Because there's good medical evidence to prove that it works. I was doctor in East Africa and there is natural fluoride in the water there and the people had very good teeth.
- I have read various reports in the local newspaper that say that it is a good idea to put fluoride in the water. Also I've seen reports on TV.
- I have been in other countries that have unhealthy water supplies so I think that fluoride in our water would be good as it gets rid of bugs in our water.
- When I was young I only had bore water so I think today it's good if we can have fluoride in our water as it improves the teeth. My kids were given fluoride tablets when small and they have beautiful teeth.
- I think it's because fluoride is very good for the teeth.
- I was raised in Melbourne and I remember taking my brother to the dentist to have all his teeth out. I also remember having teeth out. I have a medical science background so I believe it does prevent decay.
- Every English person has bad teeth because they don't have fluoride in their water so I think that it's a good idea to put it into our water in Australia.
- Because there is fluoride in toothpaste so it must be good for you.
- Looking at it from my age I think kids have too much sugar in their diet and so it's beneficial to put it into the water to help with decay.
- The young people seem to have better teeth than my generation so yes I think it's a good idea to keep it in.
- From what I have seen on TV and in our newspaper it seems as though it would be good for us.

- Because years ago when we first came here we had to take fluoride tablets because there was no fluoride in the water and that was almost 40 years ago.
- I spoke with a few dentists and they have all said they could tell the difference between kids who have been brought up with rain water and those who have had tap water with fluoride - tap water with fluoride kids have better teeth.
- It's been proven; it definitely has positive effects on our health and the strength of our teeth. That's why they have it in toothpaste.
- I think it's been tested over a fairly lengthy period and I have a fair bit of faith in the authorities that's made these decisions. I've also noticed a decrease in tooth decay over the years for people who have fluoride in their water.
- Simply because I have always believed that it was the right thing to do. It was probably education by the Department of Health brain washing me. I don't have any personal evidence, but that's what I think is right.
- I think that fluoride is good for my teeth. My husband is from New Zealand and his family have always had bad teeth due to having no fluoride in the water supply.
- Years ago when I was expecting my children I was given fluoride tablets to take during my pregnancy as a result my children have beautiful teeth.
- On hearsay they, as in the council in Bunbury, say it's good. I don't know for sure. I don't really care because I have false teeth but I don't know what it's doing to my insides.
- Well I just seen literature that says that it does and that it is good for your teeth.
- The kids have always used fluoride toothpaste over the years and I believe it does help with preventing tooth decay.
- I think that's evidence based. There have been conversations - at the dentist - of varying levels of fluoride in local water and toothpaste and so my understanding from the dentistry professionals would be that adding fluoride to our local water would be beneficial for our oral hygiene.
- When my children were little and they didn't have fluoride in the water we used to give them fluoride tablets to protect their teeth and to make them strong. Now they have excellent teeth with minimal dental treatment needed.
- Because of the fact that toothpaste has fluoride in it, I believe it will help the community with tooth decay.
- Probably because everybody drinks water at some point during the day and for the little ones who are not cleaning their teeth properly drinking water with fluoride will help them with preventing tooth decay.



- I believe that it does prevent tooth decay; that is just based on the toothpaste ads I've seen on TV.
- Just from watching on TV programs that fluoride added to water will help prevent tooth decay and has helped over the years.
- That's what the dentist say and we've always had fluoride in our water but I'm not a hundred percent sure that it does work.
- My children brush twice a day with fluoride in their toothpaste anyway, so I believe that it would be safe to use and will help with tooth decay in the long run.
- Well just scientific stuff I heard when my kids were kids, which was telling us that you need fluoride to prevent tooth decay, that's about it.
- I think it is well documented that fluoride helps improve the prevention of tooth decay.
- When I was a child we didn't have it and I have a mouth full of fillings so I'm sure it makes a difference. When my kids were little I researched it and I gave my kids fluoride because there was no fluoride in the water in Bunbury at the time.
- I've informed myself, by reading up about it. Also, I grew up in Hong Kong and they had fluoride in the water system and I have had dentists tell me that my teeth are in impeccable condition.
- I've read it somewhere that fluoride prevents tooth decay. It might have been in a Reader's Digest in a doctor's surgery years ago.
- There's a large amount of clinical evidence supporting that which I have personally read years ago when my kids were young.
- When I was younger and I was having my babies, my doctor told me that it would be good for my babies.
- I've had sons raised in Perth and they have a huge difference with my son who lives with me here. My sons in Perth have far better teeth than my son here.
- Where we previously lived years ago we were given fluoride to give to our children and I think it's helped them with their teeth, and where we will live now I think it has maintained our good oral health.
- We heard that on the news or on the radio years ago when they were talking about adding fluoride to water and how that would help tooth decay, because the tooth decay was terrible in Australia.

- I have been told that fluoride is being used in Queensland, where I lived previously, and it is safe but there are lots arguments for and against. I heard that it is effective against tooth decay but not every argument is reliable.
- I think there have been studies that have shown that it has been successful in preventing tooth decay.
- Probably from experience, I've lived in the UK and we've had fluoride in our water and I found that it has helped a lot with the decrease in tooth decay especially to those who can't afford to take care of their teeth regularly.
- I was told years ago that it prevented decay, not exactly sure by whom but it was part of the campaigning they did to get fluoride into the water system a long time ago.
- I just think it was a common fact fluoride helps in stopping tooth decay so it would be safe to use in our waters.
- Just because of what I've read and looked up on the internet, but I couldn't tell you where, it's been a long time.
- They - the government releases - say that it's there to stop tooth decay in the community.
- Well that's what my dentist has always told me.
- That's what we are led to believe from the health authorities.
- I've had 2 children raised with fluoride in the water and they both have perfect teeth according to the dentist.
- When I was young we didn't have fluoride in the water and our teeth were very bad, but the next generation had it and they have much less tooth decay.
- I have raised four daughters in Bunbury and they have all been drinking the mains water supply through our taps at home and none of my children have suffered from tooth decay. I think that if the water supply in Bunbury has the addition of fluoride then this has helped my children to a certain extent to the prevention of tooth decay.
- I read an article that fluoride was not affecting our general health but it helps improve tooth decay.
- I think all tests have shown that if fluoride is added to the drinking water tooth decay is much less than areas where fluoride is not added to the drinking water.
- People have said to me that fluoride is good for preventing for tooth decay, so I believe them.

- Since adding fluoride to drinking water shows there is less tooth decay, well that is according to scientific studies.
- It's been proven. I was a dental nurse and have seen studies on this.
- I've read information on it and it is my belief that it helps prevent tooth decay.
- My brothers and sisters were raised on a farm without fluoride and we have shocking teeth, and the next generation has much better teeth.
- In the past when I was young we always had fluoride added to our drinking water and even though we also lost teeth we were far better off than those who did not have fluoride added.
- Because of all the information on TV and the things one reads about in newspaper.
- Because fluoride is found in toothpaste, so I'm assuming it prevents tooth decay.
- Because it's in toothpaste, it must help with teeth.
- All the scientific tests have shown it prevents decay. Also, the dentist fluoridated my teeth.
- Well it's probably because it is just something I have been told over the years from reading in the paper and on the TV and I just sort of accepted it to be true. I don't know for sure of course but I'll take their word on it.
- My son told me about an article he had read about fluoride preventing tooth decay.
- I worked in a school dental practice for 10 years and then later on I worked in an adult dental practice for another 15 years. I could see a difference in the children's teeth compared to an adult. The small amount of fluoride added to the water helps prevent tooth decay.
- That is what I am told by the Health Department.
- When we were in Sydney our kids had fluoride in the water and their teeth are much better than mine.
- Fluoride is in toothpaste and toothpaste is used to keep your teeth from getting decay. So must be safe.
- I am 73 years old and I still have my own teeth and I guess it has to do with the fluoride in the water.
- My family lived in Busselton and they did tests to say that the teeth of their children were very good.
- Our children all have strong healthy teeth compared to ours.

- It's been proven in the 60s and 70s. Decreased tooth decay when fluoride was in the water, then when it was taken out of the water supply tooth decay did return.
- Just what I have read in the papers. The West Australian and the local paper. They reckon that it is good for your teeth.
- Well because I go to the dentist and I can see the difference in the health of my teeth as I believe the fluoride helps the condition of my teeth. My dentist tells me I have good teeth for my age and I think it's cause of the fluoride.
- It provides protection to children. Even if they do not brush their teeth at least it is in the water.
- I have noticed a lot of Australian people have very bad teeth and the dental services here are very expensive, so adding fluoride to the water will help prevent some form of tooth decay.
- It has been proven that it prevents tooth decay, so I believe it does.
- People that are in poverty areas that don't clean their teeth will have the benefit of fluoride in their water.
- When the fluoride debate was on I read scientific articles on the subject and they supported this.
- Fluoride is helpful to people in preventing tooth decay. But you do not need to add it to the drinking water if you are brushing your teeth properly and using toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- My dentist believes it helps so I hope he's right.
- It is better for people under 20 years old but the whole population would have to drink the same water. Overall I guess I'm in favour of it.
- Well it was always drummed into us at school. I will find out from my dentist at my next visit.
- I read in the newspaper that fluoride can help prevent tooth decay and make it not get any worse.
- I lived in Europe for a long time and we always had fluoride there and my teeth are great.
- I know fluoride can make the teeth stronger and prevent tooth decay from years ago. Education from family.
- I grew up on a property in New Zealand and we had our own water tank and there was no fluoride in it and because of that I believe I had tooth decay problems growing up.

- We had fluoride tablets when we were kids so it has been known that it is important for good teeth for a long time.
- When I was young, my parents told me fluoride was good for my teeth and also it is found in toothpaste, so it must prevent tooth decay.
- Down in Busselton they have had fluoride added and it has had no ill effects. I have been in the public health centre in Busselton and it was discussed there with the public dentists as well as the dental techs when we took our kids to the school dentist.
- My children have very good teeth because fluoride was added to water when they were growing up and as far as I know it has not been proven to be unsafe.
- Everyone knows that fluoride is good for preventing tooth decay. Heard from the schools and dentist.
- They encourage us to drink water with fluoride. The water supply people who work for the government are the ones that encourage us in the consumption of water fortified with fluoride. So if they say it's okay I suppose that's okay for us. It doesn't really bother me.
- I have grown up with rain water all my life. All dentists tell me to add fluoride to help with the reduction of tooth decay. Fluoride is missing from rain water.
- I think that it depends on the teeth. I think it depends whether or not my teeth rot or not. I believe it depends on a person's make up. It may suit some but not others.
- I've been using fluoride in my toothpaste every day for decades and I've had no issues.
- They say it does; the people in the newspapers and the television.
- I think fluoride is the only thing that can help prevent tooth decay, that's why it is found in toothpaste.
- I have a friend who's a dentist and he's very convinced about this and tells me a lot about it.
- I'm a dental nurse and I see so many children with decayed teeth. Children eat so much more sweet stuff and cold drinks these days. There needs to be more education about brushing teeth rather than adding too much fluoride to the water.
- I was a shocker about not brushing my teeth when I was younger and they have not fallen out yet so must be fluoride.
- We use fluoride in our toothpaste and the dentist gives us fluoride, this is why I said yes.
- I remember in school chemistry that fluoride was advised to be beneficial. I have read statements to do with scientific reports that it does help with tooth decay.

- It has been documented that fluoride is beneficial to help tooth prevent decay.
- The town I came from in New Zealand had fluoride and I believe it was a help. It was a poor area and the kids didn't brush their teeth very well and there was no fluoride in the toothpaste back then. But nowadays there is enough education and fluoride in the toothpaste that having it in the water is not needed. I had double filtered water in my home so I can filter out the fluoride and other chemicals in the water here.
- I have read a bit about this over the years, saying that fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay.
- What I have read about it in journals. This is going back a good few years. I got fluoride tablets from the water authorities for my children to help prevent tooth decay as no fluoride was in the drinking water then.
- Because the kids need to have good teeth and fluoride in the water is an easy way to get it to all the kids. Not all kids are that good with brushing their teeth.
- Just from documentation on television and just from what I've heard over time from health authorities.
- I've got good teeth and have been drinking it all my life.
- I remember back to when fluoride was not added and there was more tooth decay evident in children I am a teacher and I noticed that after fluoride was added there was an improvement in the children's teeth. Since we lived on a farm I ensured my children received fluoride tablets since we drank rain water at the time.
- It's a proven fact. We always had fluoride in our water in Bunbury. People's teeth are a lot better since the addition of fluoride to drinking water.
- It would not be put in unless there has been lots of research and studies into what has happened in other towns where it has been added.
- The literature one reads points to it being good for prevention of tooth decay but I am not sure whether it is safe in other aspects hence my views.
- I think fluoride is in toothpaste therefore helps prevent tooth decay. But I am not 100 per cent sure.
- I believe that it is good to prevent tooth decay and I was happy that it was available to my children and they have good teeth as a result.
- If fluoride is not added people have to take supplements. From what I have heard and read I believe it is good to have it added to drinking water.
- I've got grandkids and great grandkids and I would like to see them have great teeth in their lives. I believe adding fluoride to the water will help them. It's what I've been led to believe.

- I believe that it helps because my teeth are good and I believe it has always been in the water I drank.
- I agree with the addition of fluoride because of all the benefits, especially to children for their teeth.
- I grew up in Karratha and I remember debates about fluoride and a professor from UWA gave a talk at our school about the benefits of fluoride and I thought if a professor flew all the way to Karratha from Perth then it has to be good and I cannot see a professor not standing behind his word so I believe that it is good in preventing tooth decay.
- I have been given fluoride for many years and fluoride has not been proven to be detrimental to dental care and my teeth are very healthy so I believe that it helps.
- I grew up in New Zealand and it was in our water supply.
- As a kid we were brought up with rain water but the kids down the road were on scheme water and they all had good teeth. They would open a beer bottle with their teeth. We eat too many lollies and have bad teeth.
- When we went to Port Hedland the fluoride in Port Hedland water was natural in terms of taste, we all couldn't tell the difference and people's teeth were really healthy. And that was more than 50 years ago. So I do believe that adding fluoride to water will help with tooth decay.
- As a child I know that the kids my age suffered with dental problems. They had to have fillings when they were only in primary school. These days the kids have much better teeth. I grew up in Bunbury.
- I came from Zimbabwe and fluoride was added in the water there. It was safe to drink and to use when cooking our food. It was really safe for kids too, it didn't affect the kids.
- Personal experience, I have lived in a place where we had fluoride without problems and my husband was a former civil engineer who monitored input of fluoride.
- Stuff I've read talking about the subject of fluoride. Articles saying that it is a prevention for decay.
- We were born on a farm and you can see the difference between us and those who had town water. Those in the town had better teeth because they had better water. I reckon they had fluoride in their water.
- I have previously read in newspapers that fluoride was safe and prevented tooth decay.
- Well that's what the Department of Health and Bunbury water board tells us.

- It is not scientifically proven that fluoride can prevent tooth decay.
- I have lived in areas where there was no fluoride and in areas with fluoride and the difference in the kids' teeth is very noticeable. Without fluoride the poor kids had a lot of trouble with their teeth.
- I remember the debate in Bunbury years ago about this subject. When you go to a dentist the dentist treats your teeth with fluoride treatment.
- We were on a farm as kids, so we were given a fluoride tablet every day to prevent decay. Now my dad has had his first filling and is 70.
- I lived in a town with fluoride in the water and I had a friend who live on a farm and had farm water. She had lots of issues with her teeth when she was a teenager. We both brushed our teeth and had check-ups but I had no problems. So I put it down to the fluoride in the water.
- Because I was born in Africa and we had to have fluoride added into our water and I still have all my teeth now. So it's from my personal experience along with my siblings and family that there is nothing bad about adding fluoride into water.
- When we were in Gnowangerup we had fluoride in the water and our children's teeth were excellent.
- Fluoride is supposed to be good for your teeth.
- When I grew up in South Africa we had fluoride in our water and when we grew up we didn't have tooth decay and think that fluoride contributed to good teeth.
- I believe that fluoride is healthy for your gums and your teeth and it will definitely help with tooth decay.
- None of my kids have bad teeth which could be due to fluoride in the water supply.
- My eldest daughter used cortisone which affected her teeth and she was given fluoride treatment by a specialist medical professional.
- We have been taught since we were little about the benefits of fluoride. I gave fluoride tablets to my kids and they had no problems with their teeth.
- When they introduced water fluoridation in Kojonup, it made a big difference to my children's teeth.
- I haven't heard any negative news about use of fluoride.
- I have brought up my children, when we had fluoride in the water at Bunbury, and they have good teeth.



- I have personal experience of living in New Zealand and we had it.
- I always believed that fluoride is an advantage with helping with tooth decay and I've always ran with that because it does help with tooth decay.
- From what I read and heard on the news it says that it will prevent decay. I think there was something on the ABC a long time ago about it. There have been reports in the local newspaper about the benefits. But I think if kids eat less sugar they would have better teeth.
- I believe something has changed to reduce the number of people who need dentures.
- Some people say it helps prevent tooth decay. During my time there was no water fluoridation so my teeth are very awful, but my brother has really good teeth because during his time there was fluoride added into the water.
- I think it does make a difference and makes there be less tooth decay. In the areas that have fluoride in the water there is less tooth decay.
- I think it can help with tooth decay. It will especially help the kids because they are young and they always need reminding to brush their teeth every day.
- Fluoride is meant to be good for kids' teeth. I think I read something years ago to that effect. I can't remember.
- All these scientific studies say that the addition of fluoride is good for the teeth and there are lots of places in the world where naturally there is fluoride in the water and the scientists have worked out that in those areas there are less instances of tooth decay and it must be due to the fluoride in the water. I am totally for it and think we should have it all over the world in all water supplies.
- I have had good dental health in my time in WA and most of that time was spent in areas that had fluoride was in water.
- Because I've always believed this, that fluoride will prevent tooth decay.
- Fluoride was added in our waters years ago, I think, and I still have all my teeth, every one of my teeth, and it will help with the kids especially because they need to drink water for a start. Kids are always fussy and they don't drink that much water because they like fizzy drinks and cordial so much. So adding fluoride will help people, especially children, with tooth decay.
- It has been proven that in areas that don't have fluoride in the water that the children have had tooth decay problems.
- My parent gave me fluoride tablets so I guess that I have grown up with the idea that fluoride was good for your teeth. When I went to the dentist as a kid they would put fluoride paste on your teeth.

- Experts say fluoridation of the water helps prevent tooth decay.
- Where I came from - Mount Barker - when my kids were little we had fluoride in our water, and my children have got really healthy teeth.
- I come from the eastern states and they have water fluoridation, it did help prevent tooth decay.
- It will be good, especially for children's teeth, the younger you start using fluoride the children's teeth won't rot as much.
- Because there are children that don't have very good dental care available to them and this is a way to help everyone to have good teeth.
- I have read about it in the newspapers and that is what I believe.
- I have noticed that people who drink fluoridated water have less dental decay.
- There is scientific evidence showing that water fluoridation can prevent dental decay.
- Because that is what the research tells me, fluoride in water prevents tooth decay.
- I think there is less tooth decay in the last fifty years, due to the addition of fluoride to the public water ways.
- Articles and newspapers have said fluoridated water helps prevents tooth decay.
- When I was in university there was some research done about fluoride being added to the water supply and about it being safe to do so. But in saying that, I think that the quantity of fluoride added to the water supply should be at a minimum. Everyone is different or can be sensitive in regards to reacting to too much fluoride in their body. That's all I can say right now.
- Mainly because my children grew up with drinking fluoridated water and they have been told by the dentist they have very strong teeth.
- My children grew up in Perth where there is fluoridated drinking water and not a single one of them has tooth decay.
- People who drink fluoridated water are less likely to get dental decay.
- I have been to countries before that do not drink fluoridated water and their teeth are shocking.
- I just think it's a proven fact that it helps with tooth decay. There was a period that shows better results for dental health with people within my shire.

- I lived in Melbourne for a few years and I noticed the water was not fluoridated and you could see a discolouration in young children's teeth. This was like 30 years ago.
- I am only going by what I have heard and seen in my community over the years. So from what I know, I believe adding fluoride to the water supply will help with tooth decay. I have seen something about it on TV many years ago. I think I saw an article about it in the newspaper many years ago.
- Just from what I have been taught in school about how fluoride is safe to use especially in drinking water and from the media like the newspapers, it proved that fluoride is safe. I do believe it will help with the prevention of tooth decay.
- I have seen results from other areas in WA that has had fluoride being added into their water supply, I think it was Busselton. A lot of people there gave positive reviews and it did not have any effect on them. I have also seen something on the newspaper about fluoride being safe and it won't affect people's health and that's why I feel positive about it.
- About 30 years ago England started to fluoridate their drinking water and the later generation of children have very good teeth and less dental decay, I think it has to do with the addition of fluoride to the water.
- Dental studies have shown that fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay.
- Well the experts say fluoridated water decreases dental decay.
- From what I have read in the newspaper, they say that it's safe and it will help with the prevention of tooth decay especially with children.
- Because there is a lot of data to support that from health authorities at the university I used to attend and now also because I am dentist. So I do very much believe that added fluoride will help with prevention with tooth decay.
- According to dentists it's true; when I had young kids this is what my dentist told me.
- My children are now in their 50s and when they were young I had the dentist apply fluoride to their teeth and they have healthy teeth today.
- I still have all my teeth, I have never been to a dentist in 40 years, and the government would not add fluoride if it was harmful.
- I have talked with my dentist often about adding fluoride to drinking water. My dentist tells me it is safe and helps to prevent tooth decay.
- The water itself down here is terrible anyway, but I understand from research shared in an ABC TV documentary that they had found evidence that fluoride helped prevent tooth decay.

- I believe what the so called experts tell us, for example on current affairs programs they have done tests and say that it is okay.
- Because of what I was told when I was growing up, we got told in school.
- I've read health reports from the Health Department and dentists.
- I did some research when I had my daughter and from what I read it did have some beneficial effects, but I am not sure about other side-effects.
- I've lived in other countries where it's the norm, and there have been studies on fluoride's effect on dental health.
- There has been quite a lot written up about the addition of fluoride to the drinking water and I think it's a safeguard against decaying teeth. This can be found in toothpaste etc.
- I think it has been proven along the way that fluoride does help. From what I have read and seen on the TV.
- Toothpaste has fluoride, and that's for teeth.
- Other countries have fluoride and tooth decay is much less.
- I have read something about this a long time ago that the addition of fluoride to drinking water helps prevent tooth decay.
- We used to take fluoride tablets as kids to improve the health of our teeth and reduce the number of visits to the dentist and we believe that fluoride tablets and that fluoride in your diet does assist and promote healthy teeth so I am very happy for fluoride to be added to the water supply.
- I am English and I am pretty sure the UK had fluoride added to its water supply without any negative effects.
- I have two children, my daughter had fluoride tablets and her teeth are excellent. My son, my second child, was born when there was some negative attitudes to the benefits of fluoride supplementation. He did not have fluoride tablets and his teeth are not as good as my daughter's teeth.
- I'm not a professional but dentists and TV advertising say fluoride is good for teeth.
- I trust people who have better knowledge than I have about the subject of adding fluoride to drinking water who say that it helps to prevent tooth decay.
- I have only had one teeth filling in my whole life, my father was a pharmacist and he believed that chewing fluoride tablets would prevent dental decay.

- I have read articles that mention fluoride prevents tooth decay.
- That is the reason why fluoride is added to the water, to help prevent tooth decay.
- I have heard that it helps.
- From what I have read, fluoridated water helps to prevent dental decay.
- My children took fluoride tablets daily when they were growing up and they have never had problems with teeth. I never had fluoride and had a devastating time with my teeth.
- They put it into toothpaste so it has to be good.
- I use to drink tap water when I was a kid and fluoridated water helped with my teeth, I don't have any fillings till this day.
- I have read information that states that in areas where no fluoride is added to water children have a higher incidence of tooth decay.
- I have heard that it does help tooth decay. I heard this on the news and I read it in magazines.
- From all the things I have heard and read, my personal opinion is that it does help, especially for the younger ones.
- I have seen studies reported and Bunbury is a hot spot where tooth decay in children is very high and that is because no fluoride has been added to drinking water.
- I have friends in the dental profession and I take professional advice from them.
- It has been proven and is a scientific fact.
- There is no benefit from fluoride in the water. If it is used topically then there is some benefits. It is a bleach so it is a poison.
- Evidence in places where fluoride has been added to drinking water is enough to convince me that it is safe and that it has the desired effects on reducing dental problems.
- This has been taught to me by my parents.
- I grew up in the UK where fluoride was added to the water and the condition of people's teeth were good. In regional areas of Australia where fluoride is not added to water there is a lot of tooth decay.
- I think studies have shown that it works in the past.

- Just going on previous experience and back in the earlier days where there wasn't any fluoride our teeth were terrible back then.
- Fluoride added to the drinking water helps in preventing tooth decay. This is obvious is it not?
- With my children growing up having it in the water, I believe their teeth are pretty good as compared children in other areas not growing up with it.
- I have researched about this and there has been studies about this that shows proof that it works.
- I came from an area that had fluoride in the water and because of that I believe I grew up with great teeth and even the dentist I go to has agreed so.
- Adding fluoride to drinking water may help in preventing tooth decay. But this is a personal choice whether to take fluoride or not to take fluoride.
- As far as I know Busselton does not add fluoride to their drinking water and there is a high rate of tooth decay.
- I read all the articles about it in the newspaper and they said that it was safe and adding fluoride will help in the prevention of tooth decay.
- They say it helps. It may help kids who eat lots of sweets. I am not sure I want to drink it, as I am against all chemicals.
- Years ago I had to take fluoride tablets to prevent tooth decay. Since the addition of fluoride in the drinking water I do not need to take fluoride tablets to prevent tooth decay. This is my perception and not based on facts.
- Fluoride helps with the prevention of tooth decay, that is what I know.
- I have read that the addition of fluoride helps with the prevention of tooth decay. I read about it in newspapers. Also it's what I read online when I put in a search for the addition of fluoride to drinking water.
- It is better for your teeth, it prevents tooth decay.
- Because they add it to toothpaste so it must work.
- The people that should know are saying that it works. The dentist mainly.
- My kids grew with fluoride in the water and because of that I believe they have good teeth.
- Just what I heard. I remember my parents talking about it. We have never had fluoride in the water because we only had rain water. It's in toothpaste so it must be okay.

- I just think it would act as a general rule, for families that don't have access to fluoride to have it for the betterment of their children's health, and teeth I believe it would help a lot.
- Good for our teeth. I was brought up with fluoride in water in another country and I have great teeth.
- I feel like it's a second layer of protection for our teeth and I've heard about it before from our local dentist.
- I've read about it and heard about it and I have been led to believe so.
- I believe it's something that's been around for a while now and has made some positive differences to people's teeth.
- I've been having this for over 60 years and I believe it has helped me with preventing teeth decay.
- Because I have all my own teeth at 88 years of age and I believe that fluoride helps with keeping my teeth.
- I've got no scientific proof for it but over the years through seeing research and news, I've been lead to believe so.
- I appear to have clearer and cleaner teeth after drinking the water.
- Between the time when I was a child and did not have fluoride until now there has been an improvement.
- When I was pregnant with my children and I was prescribed to take fluoride tablets and I believe this has helped my children's teeth over time.
- Done a lot of work for the Water Corporation and they were keen for fluoride in the water. They did studies etc. And it all seemed okay.
- Well, I gave all my children fluoride tablets when they were growing up to help in their tooth care and to prevent tooth decay, but I do not want to have fluoride added to the mains water supply as it will be another chemical that is in our drinking water and who knows what else they have go in the water supply already so I do not want it.
- We didn't have fluoride in our water back in the day compared to our children growing up today and I found that there is a huge difference between our teeth and theirs as they have been exposed to using fluoride in their routines.
- I have a medical background and I have known for over 30 years that the addition of fluoride to drinking water helps to prevent tooth decay.

- I think that that is the only reason why the government is thinking about putting it into our water.
- Lot of kids don't have a good diet these days so the addition of fluoride in the water would help. We were given fluoride tablets as children and my teeth are okay.
- I think it has been tested and proved by doctors that it works and it is cost effective.
- Because I read the articles in our local newspaper. Also on television over many years. I can't remember the programs though. I have heard that there have been problems with adding fluoride to drinking water worldwide.
- It has been proven in doctors trials that it is safe and effective but I'm not sure about it. I feel that the water that comes out of my tap is full of chemicals and not what I want to drink so I feel adding fluoride is just one more chemical.
- Well it is in our toothpaste so it makes sense that it would be good in our drinking water.
- Yes when I was a child I lost my teeth and so I think fluoride in our water may help prevent tooth decay.
- It is just what you hear. Don't really know much about it.
- If it's fluoride it must be good as it's in our toothpaste. I think it will help our young ones as they drink more water than we did.
- I think that people's lifestyle today does not include brushing teeth. So fluoride in the water may help these ones.
- Studies have said that there are some benefits. It is not good for the general health. I have read studies that say that parent still need to teach their kids good dental health.
- I have looked at this a fair bit from the local media and medical books.
- I think the evidence says yes from public health reviews in the past.
- I have not had any problems with my kids and we lived in Victoria where they put fluoride into the water there.
- It's in toothpaste so it must be okay.
- My children had fluoride tablets when they were young and they never had fillings or cavities and they are in their 40s now. So it's a good idea to put it into the water to help others.



## **Appendix F: Respondents' comments – Disagree that adding fluoride to public drinking water can assist in preventing tooth decay**

All comments are presented verbatim.

- I believe a person's diet has a lot to do with tooth decay, adding fluoride to water will not make a difference.
- I said no because not many people drink the local water in the area as it has a funny odour to it and it comes out brown sometimes.
- People eat too much sugar anyway so the fluoride will not be able to counter for that.
- The fluoride is meant to be treating the teeth to an extent but having it in the water supply we are forced to swallow into our system and this can be very damaging on our health.
- I think it is up to the person that is cleaning their teeth. A person could be having a lot of sugary products, they could chip their teeth and the decay can still set in. I feel that it is up to the individual to look after their own teeth.
- I don't think it really works in any degree because I believe rainwater is a lot cleaner than having any chemicals in my drinking water.
- I think that there are lots of things that you can do to get fluoride without putting it in the water supply. E.g. Dentists can apply it.
- The scientific evidence isn't specifically showing that it is absolutely safe to use and that it does work. I think it comes down to safety of the children and their health. I think having it in toothpaste is enough.
- I don't think fluoride will help as it is not sugar or acidic so it should not make any difference if it is added or not.
- I say no because there is enough fluoride in toothpaste which has been indicated via the dentist and through a number of studies. I can't recall the specific studies.
- I say no because children are drinking water, yet they still have tooth decay.
- When they first started putting it in there was some misinformation but they have just kept it in. Because it just kept the public happy. It does no good for the teeth.
- For people like me who don't drink water a lot I don't think it will help much.

- I was brought up on a farm and drank rain water and my teeth were always good so I don't think fluoride helps.
- I have heard of studies that say that fluoride does not help prevent tooth decay.
- I have seen people live in places where fluoride is put into water and they got white marks on their teeth and it affected their bones so I do not believe it is good.
- I think if you are brushing your teeth properly you do not need anything added to the water supply.
- Because we have not had fluoride in our water supply and have noticed no difference to the state of our teeth.
- I don't have a filling in my mouth and I never had fluoride in the water at Walpole where I grew up.
- I don't think the addition of fluoride adds value to the prevention of tooth decay.
- There are plenty other places that are running on fresh water and their teeth are fine. It all depends on lifestyle basically.
- Because my kids still have tooth decay regardless of the fluoride.
- I think people look after their teeth a lot better than they used to, and if it did prevent tooth decay they would be saying a lot more about it in the media.
- Oh I don't know really. I mean I reckon I have drank a lot of water in my time and I mean you know the water from the mains supply and the condition of my teeth are not good so even if there is fluoride in the water it does not help hey. I don't reckon any addition of anything can help your teeth.
- The risks are great. Fluoride in large quantities is toxic. It is an added chemical that is not needed. Just brush your teeth correctly and you'll have no problems.
- Might help with tooth decay, but other health issues might come up from it like arthritis.
- People should take better care of their teeth and not depend on the addition of fluoride. They should take responsibility themselves and I am unsure of the long term effects of fluoride being added, hence I am not a fan.
- I think personal hygiene is up to the person and not to the government to take control, the people should decide themselves. I have seen news reports on TV about fluoride on TV and they say it is not very beneficial.
- I just do not think it would. I do not have any information on it. I just do not know.

- I don't think it is effective. I read up on it. Says it doesn't do anything. Tablets are better.
- Because I had most of my teeth out when I was 14 and I imagine that Bunbury already had fluoride then.
- I am not a fan of adding anything to our water supply. I have heard too many bad reports.
- There should be other methods of keeping children and people safe. My children grew up in Bunbury without fluoride added in the water and they turned out fine, we all turned out fine. That is all I have to say.
- I grew up without it and I still have my own teeth.
- It is not good for my health. I don't drink fluoride.
- What I have read in the newspaper many years ago about fluoride being added into our drinking waters was very scary for many of us. In the article I read it shows that they have done a lot of research about fluoride and how it can affect our health.
- Personally I'm saying no, why use fluoride? Isn't there any other safer way? It sounds wrong for us to drink it. Sounds wrong but I don't know much about the whole thing, I'm just saying that's all.
- No, because, I think it comes down to yourself and how you teach your children to look after their teeth every day and by eating the right foods. Adding fluoride to our public water supply is unnecessary. My children were raised in Bunbury and their teeth are fine and very healthy.
- I do not think fluoride helps to prevent dental decay. There are other ways of preventing dental decay.
- From personal experience, having lived with fluoridated water as a child. I had plenty of tooth decay.
- They are adding more chemicals into the water and I don't think that it is healthy for our bodies in general. There are other ways to prevent tooth decay.
- I can't see how adding fluoride to the water supply will help, people are better off to drink more milk and eat a lot of fruit and vegetables. Not rubbish food.
- Because there are other things that we can do that probably will have more of a benefit than adding fluoride in our water supply. Because it's full of chemicals and it won't be good for our children as well.
- I am not convinced that it (fluoride) [sic] is what we should be putting into the water supply. This is an opinion formed over the years reading articles both for and against.

- I don't believe it is safe.
- Too much fluoride causes tooth decay that is what I believe.
- I do not really know. I think it is something they want to put in the drinking water. It tastes terrible.
- I have done a lot of research into the addition of fluoride into drinking water. The government was going to put in the wrong fluoride into the water. They were going to put sodium fluoride into the water and this is a cheap by product. Calcium fluoride is the one that should be added but it has to be mined and it is expensive.
- It is a poison, fluoride is the poison. If people used good dental hygiene they would not get tooth decay.
- It is up to the individual to look after their dental health. People drink varying quantities of water, how can you monitor the amount of fluoride that is required to prevent tooth decay?
- There are a lot better options than to have fluoride in our water. For example, to have your own dental health techniques.
- I've been brought up with rainwater growing up and I've found that it tastes much better than water with fluoride in it. I don't think it makes a difference to the health of our teeth.
- Parents should be teaching their children about looking after their teeth from the start and also limiting sugars in their food so we don't need this in our water.
- Fluoride causes other problems and I don't use fluoride in toothpaste. Not sure what problems but I'm not going to risk it.
- Because a dentist told me it cannot prevent tooth decay.
- You are swallowing it not only brushing your teeth with it. I don't think it is safe to drink fluoride.
- I think it will prevent tooth decay in children only and fluoride can help kids' teeth.
- It is just something that I have grown to believe. Not sure why. I believe that dental hygiene is a personal responsibility.

## Appendix G: Respondents' information sources – On the addition of fluoride to public drinking water

Please refer to Section 3.4 for more information.

### Other forms of information

Other information sources	Number using this type of information
Family and friends	10
Personal experience (Living interstate or overseas)	6
At school/ studying	6
Work	5
Discussion with others	4
Pamphlets	4
Water authorities	4
Academic literature	3
Local council	3
Health professionals	2
Word of mouth	2
Alternative health practitioners	1
Podcast	1
Public debate	1
Social media	1

### Websites

Website	Number using this type of website
Google	7
Facebook	7
Health related website	5
Department of Health	1
Blog	1
Can't remember/ Don't know/ Unsure	8

(This page is intentionally blank)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

© Department of Health 2018

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.