

Water Filters for Every Household in Canberra

12/06/2024

Mr. Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister & Treasurer

ACT Government

Via Email: budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

Dear Mr. Barr,

I am writing to express my concern regarding recent reports that have revealed the presence of dangerous cancer-causing chemicals in Australia's drinking water, including in Canberra. The contaminants, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), have been detected in tap water across every state and territory, as reported by The Sydney Morning Herald and Channel 9.

Experts have recommended that Australians use water filters to safeguard against these harmful chemicals. However, the cost of water filters is another burden that many Canberra households cannot afford. Therefore, I am requesting that the ACT government take proactive measures to address this public health issue by providing grants for water filters or by installing water filters in every household in Canberra.

Taking this initiative would demonstrate the ACT government's commitment to leading from the front in offering support and solutions to pressing health and environmental problems. Ensuring safe drinking water for all residents should be a priority, and the ACT government has an opportunity to prevent exposure to these harmful contaminants.

It is also a fact that Canberra tap water is simply undrinkable and smells of chlorine every time you fill a glass. This issue is so obvious that, while reading this submission, if you fill a glass of water and leave it for a few minutes, it will smell and taste like chlorine.

Furthermore, this situation raises questions about Canberra's building standards, where we consider environmental factors by installing rainwater tanks but do not ensure clean drinking water. On top of everything we already pay for, now Australians are faced with the potential cost for access to safe drinking water, a basic human need. This is the only thing left where Australians will be charged for something so fundamental.

Moreover, by implementing a solution such as water filters installed in Canberra households or offering grants, we can reduce the reliance on bottled water, which generates millions of plastic bottles and has a detrimental impact on the environment. Providing water filters not only protects

the health of Canberra residents but also supports environmental sustainability by minimising plastic waste.

Additionally, the ACT building standards and environmental laws should mandate the requirement for water filters to be installed under the kitchen sink in every household. Changes should be made to building laws to ensure that every new dwelling has a water filter installed.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the ACT government to take immediate action to address the presence of PFOS and PFOA in our water supply. By offering grants for water filters or installing filters in every household, and by updating building standards to require water filters in new constructions, the government will protect public health, support environmental sustainability, and lead by example in tackling this critical issue.

Thank you for considering this submission. I look forward to your positive response

Yours sincerely,

Asim Awan