

Media release
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Let's make 2016 the year of 'water-only schools'

Nelson Marlborough Health CEO Chris Fleming encourages school principals and chairs to accept the call to remove sugary drinks from schools.

Head of the Ministry of Education Peter Hughes, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, asked all school leaders to consider becoming a 'water-only school' in an email sent this morning.

Mr Fleming says that while Hampden Street School and Nelson College for Girls are leading the way to healthier pupils with their own water/milk-only policies, many other schools in the Nelson Marlborough regions offered sugary drinks for sale. He says the effects to children's health can be devastating.

"Soft drinks, fruit juice and pre-packaged smoothie drinks contribute to tooth decay, type-2 diabetes and heart disease," Mr Fleming says.

"Every year we surgically remove rotting teeth from 250 kids, under general anaesthetic, and that's 250 children too many.

"This is why Nelson Marlborough Health was the first district health board to remove sugary, artificially-sweetened and corrosive drinks from our cafes, shops and patient meals.

"Nelson Marlborough Health is here to improve the health of our communities. We need to walk the talk and I challenge our school leaders to do so also."

Further information

- [The education.govt.nz website](http://www.education.govt.nz) provides infographics, information and policy templates to help schools make the transition to water-only
- Media enquiries for the Ministry of Education can be sent to [mailto:media@education.govt.nz?subject=Water only schools](mailto:media@education.govt.nz?subject=Water%20only%20schools)

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