

Flannery on amalgam fillings in DT 29May12

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/professor-tim-flannerys-climate-fix-is-now-like-pulling-teeth/story-e6freuzr-1226370604306>

## Professor Tim Flannery's climate fix is now like pulling teeth

by: *By Gemma Jones* from: [The Daily Telegraph](#) May 29, 2012 12:00AM



Yank 'em out ... Professor Tim Flannery. *Source:* The Daily Telegraph

**TOOTH fillings that Professor Tim Flannery wants pulled from dead people using \$2 sets of pliers have a fraction of the amount of mercury contained in energy-saving street lights.**

The Climate Commissioner told the Australian Medical Association fillings should be yanked before cremation to stop mercury getting into the ocean.

But energy-efficient street lights contain up to 1000mg of mercury compared with 325mg in the average amalgam tooth filling, the Australian Dental Association said.

And Australians were likely to consume more lead in fish over their lifetime, with the New South Wales Food Authority yesterday saying there was 1mg of lead per kilogram in large fish, including swordfish, shark, gemfish, southern bluefin tuna, barramundi and ling.

NSW Division of the Australian Funeral Directors Association president Warwick Hansen was shocked by Professor Flannery's appeal to have all amalgam tooth fillings yanked from dead people.

"Funeral directors are contracted by families to reverently and respectfully carry out whatever is necessary to prepare the body - washing, cleaning and preparing for viewing," he said.

"The idea of pulling teeth does not come under that category. If it is that simple, how come it takes a dentist years to be qualified to remove teeth from a living person? The ethics of this need to be questioned."

He said crematoriums used natural gas to limit emissions and there was no requirement for teeth to be removed in Europe where cremations were more common.

Professor Flannery told AMA representatives that when mercury tooth fillings, which are benign in solid form, are burned they escape into the atmosphere and mercury blows over the ocean and could infiltrate fish that reach dinner tables.

He said the solution was for undertakers to remove them, adding: "You just need a set of pliers. It is a \$2 solution."

His spokeswoman did not return calls or an email from *The Daily Telegraph*.

Meanwhile, a parliamentary estimates committee heard the \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation could lose hundreds of millions of dollars. The corporation, to be funded by the carbon tax, has a failure margin of 7.5 per cent.

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**Comment:** At what stage in the post-mortem handling of human remains is Professor Flannery planning to remove the amalgam fillings? Even the NSW Coroners Act required dignity of deceased persons.

## **Coroners Act 2009 No 41**

Current version for 16 November 2011 to date (accessed 31 May 2012 at 21:26)

[Chapter 8](#) [Part 8.1](#) [Section 88](#)

### **88 Dignity of deceased person to be respected**

(cf [Coroners Act 1980](#), s 53AA)

- (1) When a post mortem examination or other examination or test is conducted on the remains of a deceased person under this Part, regard is to be had to the dignity of the deceased person.
- (2) If more than one procedure is available to a person conducting a post mortem examination to establish the cause and manner of a deceased person's death, the person conducting the examination is to endeavour to use the least invasive procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.
- (3) Without limiting subsection (2), examples of procedures that are less invasive than a full post mortem examination of the remains of a deceased person include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - (a) an external examination of the remains,
  - (b) a radiological examination of the remains,
  - (c) blood and tissue sampling,
  - (d) a partial post mortem examination.