

MEDIA RELEASE

Horizons Regional Council

Wednesday 13 December 2017

Drinking water work programme established for the Horizons Region

Horizons Regional Council, in partnership with territorial authorities and MidCentral Health drinking water assessors, recently commissioned a stocktake of water supplies in the Horizons Region to prioritise actions for minimising the risk of contamination.

Horizons natural resources and partnerships group manager Dr Jon Roygard says the recent inquiry into the contamination of Havelock North public water supply highlighted areas for improvement in the management of public water supplies throughout the country.

“There are a number of different organisations with responsibilities for managing and monitoring potable drinking water in New Zealand, including regional councils, city and district councils, and drinking water assessors,” says Dr Roygard.

“Maintaining and supporting a continual flow of information between organisations is key to ensuring any risks to public health are identified and communicated to the right people at the right time.

“Horizons is working to ensure that this communication is well-established and the relevant relationships between these organisations are maintained. A workshop with all parties was held in late September to discuss the findings of the Pattle Delamore report and agree to the next steps.”

Last Tuesday a presentation was made to the chief executives of the Region’s territorial authorities where the results were discussed alongside a draft programme of work for the next six months.

Horizons chief executive Michael McCartney says that valuable lessons have been learnt from Havelock North.

“While we are unaware of any incidents in our Region, there is no room for complacency,” says Mr McCartney.

“It is critical that our communities have safe drinking water supplies and that is why operational and technical staff across councils are working together to ensure public drinking water supplies in the Region are secure, and that appropriate monitoring and regulation is in place to provide assurance to the public.”

The Havelock North drinking water inquiry findings will also be taken into account as part of the work programme development, which will be presented to Horizons’ Council in the new year.

Dr Roygard says a further piece of collaborative work (across the city, district and regional councils) is planned to be completed over the next six months.

It is likely that a Memorandum of Understanding between MidCentral Health, the regional council and city and district councils to further define roles, responsibilities and communication pathways will also be developed.

The Horizons Regional Council commissioned drinking water supplies stocktake and report by Pattle Delamore Partners Ltd can be found at: <https://www.horizons.govt.nz/managing-natural-resources/water/drinking-water>

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