



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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12 July 2018

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RE Official information request WCDHB 9154

We refer to your email dated 14 June 2018 requesting the following information under section 12 of the Official Information Act (the 'Act') from West Coast DHB regarding the Westland District Council Water Supply.

1. Has the West Coast Community and Public Health office fielded any complaints from Westland District residents about their council water supply in the past six or so months?

Yes there has been at least one phone call made to the West Coast Community and Public Health Office about the temporary chlorination at Kumara. We strongly support the planned water supply upgrade works at Kumara and the Ministry of Health has also provided a financial subsidy towards the costs of this upgrade. We also support the need for temporary chlorination of the existing supply on public health grounds until the new treatment plant is commissioned, as it appears the source has deteriorated and now has regular *E.coli* events.

Source water deterioration can happen especially when large storms cause erosion events and sometimes temporary disinfection needs to be put in place until a permanent solution is built. The Drinking Water Assistance Programme Facilitator is working with the Council on progressing the upgrades of the Kumara and Whataroa supplies, as both of these have received Ministry of Health subsidies. Progress on these upgrades is monitored by the Ministry of Health which is aware that both projects have not met their original timeframes for completion.

2. Does Community and Public Health have a watching brief on the way Westland is managing its public water supplies?

Yes, it is part of their role as a Community and public health unit reporting to the Ministry of Health.

Our Drinking Water Assessor is responsible for monitoring compliance of drinking water suppliers with their obligations under the Health Act and the Drinking Water Standards. This includes the conduct of the annual compliance survey. You can find the results of last year's survey here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-report-drinking-water-quality-2016-2017>

3. If so, are there any particular concerns with management of those supplies?

While there have been a number of problems with Council water supplies in Westland, the Council has taken a number of positive steps in recent months to address these, including the appointment of a three waters engineer. The draft infrastructure strategy proposed in the Council's Draft Long Term Plan also addresses the issues of maintenance and upkeep of Council water supplies.

There are still a number of outstanding compliance issues identified in last year's Annual Survey and these are being addressed with the Council.

4. Should the public be concerned?

No. Provided the Council is taking all practicable steps to protect public health in the event of drinking water transgressions (e.g. detection of *E. coli*), such as the imposition of a boil water notice and/or temporary chlorination, there is no need for any immediate concern.

Disruptions and subsequent transgressions happen from time to time in water supplies and if the disruptions involve the source water they can take a long time to resolve because it can be difficult to find a good, reliable alternative water source of sufficient quantity and acceptable quality. There is also the cost of land acquisitions, land use consenting processes and engineering work to be done to get a new source up and running.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the West Coast DHB website ten working days after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support