

5 September 2011

Sally Gilbert
Manager Environmental + Border Health Protection
Ministry of Health
P O Box 5013
WELLINGTON

Dear Sally

COMPLETION OF s12-DWS 2005 (08)

The Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007 allows the Minister of Health powers to revise drinking water standards. Section 12 of the current standard, covering Rural Agricultural Drinking – water supplies, remains incomplete.

S12 currently states ‘drinking water standards... are in the course of preparation and consultation and, when completed, will form section 12 of the Drinking-Water Standards for New Zealand.’

In June 2009 the Minister of Health announced that the timelines for compliance with the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2007 had been deferred three years while the costs and benefits of the legislation were being reviewed.

The revised timelines require compliance for Rural Agricultural Drinking-water supplies by 1 July 2016, or the date on which the drinking water standards are amended to include them, whichever is later.

We understand that assessment of the costs and benefits of the legislation have been completed.

The water supply managers whom we represent must plan for water supplies under 10 year long term plans specified in the Local Government Act. These managers are now reviewing requirements for the 2012 – 21 plans. Prudent planning requires that they identify the capital works required along with associated costs.

Our members are hampered in their planning by lack of clarity and uncertainty created by non-completion of this standard. They have requested that we approach the Ministry of Health for information.

Specific areas where clarity would greatly assist water supply managers include:

- confirmation of standards for point of entry devices (including installation and operation);
- statutory purview if such devices were installed distal to on-site supply tanks, ie the Building Act or the Local Government Act?; and
- under S69H(1)(a)(ii) defining “affordability” against the Acts’ requirement “to take all practicable steps.”

Water New Zealand respectfully requests urgent action on completion of s12. We can quickly source technical resource on this matter to assist the Ministry of Health in doing so.

Yours sincerely

Murray Gibb
Chief Executive