



Media Statement

16 August 2016 – for immediate release

COUNCIL APPROACH TO WATER CRISIS CORRECT

Water New Zealand says the Hasting District Council responded quickly and appropriately to the outbreak of campylobacter in the Havelock North water supply.

Chief Executive, John Pfahlert said today that the approach being taken by the Hastings District Council following the outbreak of campylobacter disease in Havelock North was entirely appropriate in the circumstances.

“The Council moved swiftly to chlorinate the town water supply to prevent further infection.

“They backed this up with boil water notices and are actively looking to identify and remedy the cause of the problem. Their clear focus is on working with the District Health Board on the health and wellbeing of the affected community.”

He said that while there is some concern in the community about the speed of the Council’s reaction to the crisis, the evidence shows that the Council took appropriate action as soon as possible after they were aware of the problem.

“The Council notified the District Health Board as soon as they discovered the contamination in the water system. It was shortly after then that the extent of the outbreak became known.”

Mr Pfahlert said that while the current outbreak was particularly serious because of the high number of people affected, cases of campylobacter were in fact quite common in New Zealand.

“The number of water-borne cases has almost halved since new Drinking Water Standards were introduced in 2005, but with 6837 cases in 2013 the matter was still of significant concern.”

Mr Pfahlert said that the industry would welcome an enquiry into the event, as it would allow a dialogue on a range of issues related to urban water treatment. These included the absence of any

government financial support for small rural communities to upgrade their water treatment systems and the support provided by the Ministry of Health to District Health Boards for drinking water assessors.

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For more information contact Water New Zealand Chief Executive, John Pfahlert on 021 150 9763 or Communications Advisor Debra Harrington 04 495 0895

Water New Zealand is a national not-for-profit organisation which promotes the sustainable management and development of New Zealand's three waters (freshwater, wastewater and storm water). Water New Zealand is the country's largest water industry body, providing leadership and support in the water sector through advocacy, collaboration and professional development. Its 1,600 members are drawn from all areas of the water management industry including regional councils and territorial authorities, consultants, suppliers, government agencies, academia and scientists.