

Havelock North scare shows need to chlorinate Tararua water

Ross Setford

The Tararua District Council is planning to chlorinate all council water supplies in the district to reduce risk of illness.

Waterborne gastro illness outbreaks in Hawke's Bay have prompted the Tararua District Council to get a move-on in chlorinating its water supplies.

Pahiatua and Norsewood are the only areas in the greater Manawatu region to have council-provided water supplies that are not chlorinated.

But that is set to come to an end.

The Tararua District Council confirmed at a meeting on Wednesday they were working towards chlorinating both water bores.

A woman from Pahiatua told *Stuff* she had two children attending Havelock North High School who became sick in the gastro illness outbreak in the town.

Toni, who declined to provide her surname, said she had no idea that the water supply in Pahiatua was not currently treated.

She hoped the Tararua District Council would learn from the situation in Hawke's Bay, communicate well with community members and be transparent so people were well informed about what was happening with their water.

People deserved the right to safe, clean water, she said.

Since the gastro bug hit Havelock North, the Tararua District Council has increased the amount of sample testing of the water supplies.

Toni said she was pleased the council had increased testing

drinking water where chlorination was not used.

"We are proceeding to chlorinate the Pahiatua bore regardless and there is also testing going on at the Norsewood bore to see if we can chlorinate that as well, after discussions with MidCentral Health," chief executive Blair King said.

The council was also looking at options to provide an additional barrier to waterborne risks. One option was adding ultraviolet light to deal with micro-organisms.

The Dannevirke treatment plant was expected to be fitted with a UV disinfection unit in the upcoming weeks. However, turbid and partly cloudy water required pre-filtration or clarification to ensure UV disinfection worked.

Pahiatua resident Helen Vickers said she had recently moved to the town from Papamoa.

She said the water in Pahiatua was "a lot better" than what her family previously used to drink.

"[In Papamoa] it was really white, murky water and it stunk."

She considered the water in Pahiatua to be "clear as", and since the family had moved there, they had hardly used their water filter.

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