

Hon David Parker

Attorney-General



6 December

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM

MEDIA STATEMENT

Havelock North Inquiry – Stage two released

Attorney-General David Parker has released the second stage of the Inquiry into Havelock North's drinking water contamination.

"I received the inquiry into Havelock North's drinking water on Monday night," says Mr Parker. "It makes for sobering reading and the Government is now considering its 51 recommendations.

"The report highlights the quality of drinking water in New Zealand is often inadequate, and that regulation and enforcement have been poor. We must do better.

"Some of the recommendations can be addressed quickly. For example, the Government has today written to Mayors and DHBs throughout New Zealand. We've asked them to check the water they're supplying residents meets current standards, given the report finds significant non-compliance.

"There is nothing in law preventing councils immediately moving to improve the treatment of water.

"Alongside this, Minister of Health Dr David Clark will brief Cabinet before Christmas on the next steps – short and long term.

"This is a priority for us as a Government.

"My message to New Zealanders is that we are taking this seriously, and we will be responding quickly to address the issues raised.

"I want to thank the panel - Hon Lyn Stevens QC, Dr Karen Poutasi and Anthony Wilson - for their hard work to understand and report on issues of vital importance to the health of all New Zealanders. I welcome their detailed report and thoughtful and considered recommendations."

"We will take control of the mess left by the previous Government, address any regulatory gaps, and work with Councils to ensure water in New Zealand is supplied safely.

"We need to get this right in order to avoid a repeat of the series of failures which has led to so many people in Havelock North, and other areas of New Zealand getting sick," says Mr Parker.

The report can be found <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Government-Inquiry-into-Havelock-North-Drinking-Water>

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Notes:

The inquiry was set up in September last year, following the widespread outbreak of gastroenteritis in Havelock North in August 2016, with more than 5000 people falling ill.

Stage 1 of the inquiry identified the cause of the Havelock North contamination and assessed the actions of the local authorities and others in Hawkes Bay.

Stage 2 looked at systemic issues for drinking-water regulation and provides recommendations which will be relevant to all communities.