

### Havelock North Gastro meeting: 'Jinxed': water still needs to be boiled

By Kaysha Brownlie - Hawkes Bay Today



Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule at a public meeting addressing the gastro crisis.

Havelock North people will have to keep boiling water for now.

Hastings District Council chief executive Ross McLeod last night apologised to the crowd at a public meeting saying he may have "jinxed it" the night before when he announced the likely lifting of the notice.

The notice was issued after thousands of people had already fallen ill from drinking water which had tested positive for E.Coli. The council chlorinated the water and asked Havelock North residents to boil it before washing or drinking. That was almost three weeks ago.

Water testing yesterday showed that the full flushing of the Brookvale bore water from the Havelock North system had not been completed, right to the furthest extremities of the Havelock North network, Mr McLeod said.

It requires three days of clear results to ensure Hastings water is completely through the Havelock North reticulation network.

This means at least three more days of testing will be required before the boil water notice is lifted.

Mr McLeod asked those who turned up to last night's meeting to help with that flushing.

"If you can all go home and flush the toilet a couple of times you would be of extreme help."

Hundreds of people, including Green Party members again turned out to listen to and question the authorities' actions during the crisis.

Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule told the crowd the council was doing everything it could to find a source.

The council wish to remain "completely transparent", he said.

Hawke's Bay District Health Board chief executive Kevin Snee acknowledged that lessons had to be learnt on how news of the contamination was given to the community 14000 - 5200 of whom became ill. The health sector was now getting "back to business", with the worst of it over, Dr Snee said.

Hawke's Bay Regional Council Interim Chief Executive Liz Lambert said the council was not ruling out anything in its investigation into what contaminated the water. The government was conducting its own inquiry.

Ms Lambert said public speculation had linked the contamination to the quality of the Tukituki River. While the quality of the river was not good enough and had not been good enough for a number of decades she said it was not easy to remedy. The regional council has repeatedly said that it was unlikely that the contamination came from the Tukituki River.

A woman struck down with guillain barre syndrome, who cannot yet stand, attended the public meeting. She is suffering not only from the serious, potentially fatal secondary illness of campylobacter, but also reactive arthritis.

Kerry Mackintosh fell ill in July with the bug and had since spent time in hospital and taken several trips back and forth to doctors for her ongoing issues.

Her concerns lay with biofilms that can grow in cracks of boars and the potential for future like outbreaks.

She was told the likelihood of such things were slim.



Another woman, who also had reactive arthritis since having campylobacter asked how long she would be unwell for. She was told the effects could last weeks, months or even a year.

The DHB was expecting the peak of people experiencing secondary illnesses from the gastro outbreak was yet to come.

The expert explained that anybody who felt tingling in any part of their body, after having had the waterborne disease, should see a doctor immediately.

Meg Rose, of Transparent Hawke's Bay, addressed the meeting asking for a show of hands in favour of a moratorium to rebuild trust and understanding of the statutory management and condition of the region's water security.

However most were not in favour.

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