

# The New Zealand Herald

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# The New Zealand Herald

## Hastings District Council responds to inquiry findings

By - Hawkes Bay Today



Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule (left) and chief executive Ross McLeod have admitted failings in providing safe drinking water.

Hastings District Council has admitted failings following the government inquiry into the contamination of Havelock North's water supply last year but says it is clear the council did not cause the contamination.

Havelock North Water Inquiry panel chair Lyn Stevens QC today said a higher standard of care should have been in place to prevent thousands of people falling ill from a bacterial infection in the suburb's drinking water.

He listed the failings of all agencies charged with supplying safe drinking water and said had it not been for a lack of coordination and strained relationship between Hawke's Bay Regional Council and Hastings District Council "a different outcome may have occurred".

Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule said the inquiry's findings indicated a "very strong probability" the outbreak was caused by contaminated surface water from a pond close to a council bore that infiltrated underground water considered naturally protected from surface water.

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Hastings District Council chief executive Ross McLeod said the council acknowledged deficiencies in its water-supply operations.

"While not the cause of the contamination and gastro outbreak, the Inquiry has examined and highlighted a number of areas where Council's performance was not up to standard", he said.

"These include maintenance inspections and maintenance record-keeping, the standard of planning and contingency documentation required under the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards, compliance with requests from the Drinking Water Assessors, and the effectiveness of working relationships with other agencies involved in drinking water safety.

"Council is fully committed to addressing and fixing the deficiencies highlighted by the inquiry to ensure the safety of drinking water in the future."

He said there were wider lessons and improvements to be made for managing drinking water nationally.

He listed initiatives underway or in place to ensure water safety and address shortcomings including:

*More water testing.*

*Engaging international independent expertise on drinking water safety.*

*Installing a treatment plant on Brookvale Bore Three.*

*Making financial provision for further treatment plants across the network, along with funds for investigating new water sources and increasing network capacity.*

*Improving risk management and legal compliance systems.*

*Participating in the Joint Working Group on Drinking Water Safety.*

*Further age testing of aquifer water.*

*A water operations review underway on water operations to ensure the adequate quality and quantity*

Mr Yule said the outbreak had a "huge impact on our community".

"We feel deeply for those people affected by the outbreak, particularly those families who lost loved ones and those that are afflicted by ongoing impacts. We are already in the process of addressing Inquiry findings, and we will keep the public and the Inquiry informed as we do."

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### 6 comments

I would encourage the public to read the Inquiry findings 250 to 339

Alleged Faults, Failures and Breaches of Standards

<https://www.dia.govt.nz/Government-Inquiry-into-Havelock-North-Drinking-Water>

Then draw their own conclusions.

Mugwump - 07:41 PM Wednesday, 10 May 2017

As long as there's tourism & Art Deco who honestly gives a rats a\*\*\* about the public safety! Not Napier Council for allowing s\*\*\*\* wastewater to flow freely into Ahuriri Pond that's for sure! Not to mention the huge amount of "s\*\*\*\* water" pouring 7x24 out of Napier's off shore wastewater outfall @Awatoto. Absolutely Third World!

Davebosley - 11:31 PM Wednesday, 10 May 2017

"but says it is clear the council did not cause the contamination." no one causes an accident, but the council should of saved us in time... that is the issue not how it happened

Chunky Soup - 11:31 PM Wednesday, 10 May 2017

"While not the cause of the contamination and gastro outbreak, the Inquiry has examined and highlighted a number of areas where Council's performance was not up to standard",

But if HDC had moved the bores when they were told to, this incident would never have happened!

Given that it was known that the dirty pond and the bores were connected wat back in 2008 at least, it was just a matter of time till something like the outbreak happened.

Angel - Hawke's Bay - 10:59 AM Thursday, 11 May 2017

"Installing a treatment plant on Brookvale Bore Three."

No!!

We should be abandoning the Brookvale bores, which are still sucking water from a contaminated aquifer, like should have happened ten years ago (it's being treated, but what are the e coli levels like before that? The people of Havelock North are just drinking dead bacteria now)

Angel - Hawke's Bay - 10:59 AM Thursday, 11 May 2017

Resign Mr Yule...

cut.it.out - 10:59 AM Thursday, 11 May 2017