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**TODAY**

### Havelock North Water Inquiry: More systematic approach on reporting transgressions suggested

By Nicki Harper



Hawke's Bay District Health Board medical officer of health Nicholas Jones said there should be formalised systems about transgressions in water. Photo / File

The first week of the Havelock North Water Inquiry wrapped up yesterday with a focus on the systems surrounding minimising risk to the safety of the water supply.

Discussion included suggestions for a more formalised system of reporting transgressions in the drinking water supply, in reference to a series of readings of e-coli in the Brookvale bores' water supply between 2007 and 2016.

This was endorsed by Hawke's Bay DHB medical officer of health Nick Jones when asked if the system should be improved so that someone had responsibility to review the transgression data.

Dr Jones said that was currently covered off in annual surveys that were conducted, but in theory something could be in place to focus more attention on emerging risks.

He was also asked by inquiry chair Lyn Stevens whether once it was picked up the transgressions were recurring, if someone should have investigated more deeply what was going on.

Dr Jones said there would be scope for that, and also for determining whether the source or sources of the transgressions had been identified or not.

Drinking Water Assessor (DWA) Peter Wood also took the stand, and along similar lines was asked if he thought DWA should have a closer relationship with water suppliers, including more frequent visits between annual reporting.

In evidence, Mr Wood had said that in the 2013/14 year the Havelock North water supply had a higher number of transgressions than any other large water supplier in the country.

He added that transgressions were also high in the 2015/16 year, numbering three which didn't appear to be connected.

Mr Wood said there would be a lot of benefit to more frequent interactions with water suppliers, and a more holistic overview of such data.

Gaps in information and communication failings were visited extensively during the five-day hearing this week, during which scientific assessments pinpointed the cause of the outbreak to have most probably come from sheep faeces in the Mangateretere pond entering Brookvale bore 1.

Throughout the week, there was extensive discussion about the condition of the Brookvale Rd bores, and a lack of co-operation between the Hastings District Council and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council was also highlighted in terms of both historic events and last year's outbreak.

Next week the hearings resume on Tuesday to consider the impact on the people who fell ill, how the outbreak was managed, if there was adequate contingency planning and the adequacy of the response to the outbreak by those involved.

The inquiry is scheduled to report back by March 31.

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## 2 comments

"Holistic"?

I hate that word. Holier than thou perhaps?

Mission-critical systems where people are involved need hard rules, failsafe procedures and significant punishment for failure.

Think of it like the military, everyone should understand their role and the processes need to be robust and never, ever fall down due to incompatible personalities, someone forgetting something or a communications failure.

Paul - Napier - 03:29 PM Saturday, 4 Feb 2017

Maybe if HDC and HBRC had done their jobs and properly investigated the link between the Mangateretere pond and the bores once they realised there was a link way back in 2008, 5000+ people wouldn't have been made sick and 2 people wouldn't have died.

ABS - Hawkes Bay - 03:29 PM Saturday, 4 Feb 2017

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