

Water quality riles residents

EMMA DANGERFIELD

Seven months on from Kaikoura's earthquake, many residents are still without clean drinking water.

November's 7.8-magnitude quake damaged several of Kaikoura's water supplies, particularly in the rural areas, and boil water notices remain in place for Fernleigh, Peketa, Oaro, Kincaid, East Coast and Suburban supplies.

Rick Irvine is on the Suburban scheme and said every time it rained his water was undrinkable.

There were many others in the same boat, who were paying for bottled water or boiling water on a daily basis.

Irvine questioned why he was still being charged for a service which he was not getting.

"I understand it's a massive task [for the council] but we are basically paying for washing crap down the drain.

"It's the principle of the whole thing. I encourage people not to pay their water bill until they have water they can use."

Irvine said he would be happy for council not to deliver water to his property until they could fix the damage.

He was also concerned about the affect the dirty water was having on his appliances and pipes.

Kaikoura District Council chief executive Angela Oosthuizen said council realised it was frustrating to live with a boil water notice.

Council was doing everything it could to get people's water quality issues sorted as soon as possible, she said.

"We know it feels unfair to be asked to pay for water you can't drink but the reality is that the

"It's the principle of the whole thing. I encourage people not to pay their water bill until they have water they can use."

Rick Irvine

earthquake caused significant, expensive damage.

"In addition, there are operational costs (maintenance, sampling and testing, power, treatment etc) which have continued since the quake.

"Since the quake we've sought and received significant funding from our insurers and the Crown towards the repairs.

"Ratepayer contributions help cover the operational and capital works costs not covered by the Crown or insurers."

Earlier this month the council met Community and Public Health and agreed the remaining actions that needed to be taken to get the boil water notices lifted for Fernleigh, Peketa, Oaro and Kincaid.

"KDC staff are now working through the details of how and when it can get those actions completed," Oosthuizen said.

"We are intending to complete the final repairs and lift these four notices within the next few weeks."

The East Coast and Suburban supplies were more complex and would take longer to fix, she said.

If residents were not sure about the status of the water for their area they could call KDC on 03 319 5026 during office hours to check or visit council's website for the most up-to-date information, she said.



Rick Irvine is fed up with paying for water which is undrinkable.

PHOTO: EMMA DANGERFIELD/STUFF

Drinkable water versus the version coming from Rick Irvine's taps.