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Napier City Council: Rates increase will fund water improvements

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An increase in Napier City Council rates will help to accelerate improvements to Napier's drinking water network, says Mayor Bill Dalton.

Five drinking water transgressions so far this year have motivated Council to invest in a new programme of work that will see an accompanying average rates rise of 4.9% in 2017/18. NCC passed the resolution to increase its rates during the adoption of its Annual Plan today. It's a sound decision, says Mayor Dalton, and one that has been made based on feedback from the Napier community that drinking water quality must be given top priority.

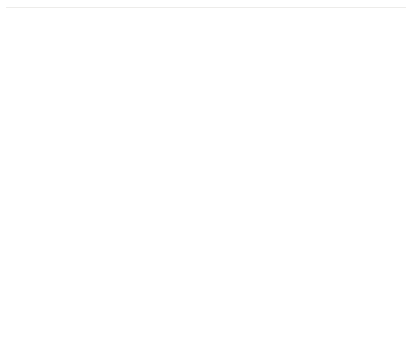
"Safe drinking water is one of the very fundamental commitments we make as a Council - and what we've discovered over the course of the last few months is that we are not able to guarantee an unchlorinated supply out of our current network. This programme of work puts public health first and gives us the best chance of maintaining a chlorine-free drinking water network," he says.

The \$502,000 now provided for in the Annual Plan will fund network improvements, as well as upgrades to the sampling points at which daily testing occurs. NCC also plans to purchase portable chlorine dosing stations and UV treatment equipment as a backstop in case of further positive e.coli readings requiring urgent water treatment. Enhanced water quality management requires expert resource so a portion of the approved funding will be used to target staff with specific skills in this area.

Overall, says Mayor Dalton, rates remain extremely favourable when compared to similarly sized cities around New Zealand.

"Understandably, there are heightened sensitivities around water quality since the Havelock North gastro event, and one of the positive outcomes of that event is a raft of improvements in general practice within the drinking water industry. As a Council, we're committed to meeting - and exceeding - those standards through our network improvements and beginning to future-proof it to a high standard. We want to make certain our drinking water network will perform well 10 or 20 years from now, but there is a cost attached that we need to meet through rates."

The finalised programme of work is yet to be set but will provide "a greater level of certainty around water safety to our community", says Mayor Dalton.



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