

DIRECTOR-GENERAL STATEMENT

HEALTH ACT 1956 s 69ZZZC

I, Chai Chuah, Director-General of Health, for the purposes of protecting public health and informing the public, issue the following statement.

In August 2016 an outbreak of campylobacteriosis arising from contamination of the Havelock North drinking-water supply affected around 5,500 people.

The Government Inquiry into the contamination event is now complete and the Stage Two report has provided important recommendations for the safe management of drinking-water supplies in New Zealand.

The Inquiry identified that the outbreak was caused by contamination of ground water that was provided to consumers as untreated drinking-water. The Inquiry identified that several parties with responsibility for the water supply system failed to adhere to the high levels of care and diligence necessary to avoid this occurring and to protect public health. Improvements to the drinking-water framework have been identified and need to be actioned.

I advise all drinking-water suppliers and drinking-water assessors that:

- Protection of drinking-water sources is of paramount importance and a founding principle of drinking-water safety;
- Every drinking-water supplier must contribute to the protection of drinking-water sources;
- The risk to the public is increased if drinking-water is untreated;
- To provide adequate protection to public health, suppliers providing drinking-water to untreated networked supplies should consider implementing appropriate and effective treatment without delay; and
- They should reconsider their reliance on secure bore water status as a means of providing safe drinking-water.

Chai Chuah
Director-General of Health

in Wellington this 20th day of December 2017.