



caring about you & your environment

Office of the Chairperson

File: B/1 9/6/1

28 October 1999

Dear

Petone Water Supply

As you are no doubt aware, the Wellington Regional Council (WRC) and Hutt City Council (HCC) have been discussing the future of Petone's water supply. In particular, we now have to consider the costs of changes to the wholesale water supply system if HCC indicates it prefers an unfluoridated water supply for Petone.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your views on implications of the cost issue, as your City purchases water from the WRC.

First, a brief background to the situation.

In 1993 WRC engaged an independent review panel of eminent citizens to consider water fluoridation. This review was triggered by HCC's proposal to build a new reservoir for Petone. The panel recommended that the WRC continue its fluoridation policy and extend it to the Petone water supply when the new reservoir was built. They also proposed that Petone should continue to receive aquifer sourced water, though this was not the WRC's plan at the time.

For various reasons HCC delayed the new Petone reservoir project. In 1998, following further representations from HCC, the WRC agreed to supply aquifer water from Waterloo to the new Petone reservoir. The WRC had earlier agreed to construct and pay for a new pipeline to the reservoir in accordance with our normal policy, at a cost of \$550,000. Supplying aquifer water by recommissioning an old pipeline along the Petone foreshore has cost an additional \$180,000. This also adds security of supply to the whole water distribution system. The new Rahui reservoir was commissioned by HCC in October this year.

Prior to completion of the new Petone reservoir, Petone was supplied with unfluoridated water from the Buick Street pumping station. This pumping station has now been closed because of its age and poor condition, and Petone water is now supplied from the aquifer, via the Waterloo Water Treatment Plant. This water is currently fluoridated (but not chlorinated).

In February this year HCC indicated it was keen for the WRC to carry out a public consultation process across the four cities to decide whether water should continue to be fluoridated. In May, after receiving advice from its health advisors, the WRC strongly endorsed its fluoridation policy and declined HCC's request for further consultation. It has been indicated to HCC though that if Petone requires unfluoridated water it could be made available, provided HCC pays. Costs are currently estimated at \$550,000. At present the wholesale water supply system has been set up as a fluoridated system. Separating out unfluoridated water, specifically for Petone, requires significant changes at the Waterloo and Gear Island Water Treatment Plants, and possible additional pipe work.

Hutt City Council is of the view that the WRC should pay the cost for changes to the wholesale water supply system if Petone residents decide, through a public consultation process, that they prefer unfluoridated water. The HCC is about to complete its own consultation in Petone. Because the wholesale water supply system is ring fenced, in a financial sense, then if the WRC paid for the changes, the costs would be borne, in time, by all four city customers.

An attachment sets out the pros and cons of whether or not the WRC should pay the estimated \$550,000 for system changes, if requested to do so by HCC. At present the WRC is of the view it should not pay for the changes in order to provide Petone with unfluoridated water. We have already committed \$730,000 to this project. However, if there was a consensus by our water supply customers that we should pay some or all of the cost of providing Petone with unfluoridated water, then I would take the matter to my Council for further consideration.

I would welcome your views on the payment issue.

Out of interest, I have attached an article on fluoridation, published this week by the American National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Yours sincerely



STUART MACASKILL
Chairman

Encl.

Copy to: Mayor John Terris
The Hutt City Council
Private Bag 3 1-9 12
LOWER HUTT.

