



Media Release

3 October 2007

Alexandra Water Supply –Taste/Odour Update

The taste and odour problems in the Alexandra water supply have continued for more than 10 days now. It was hoped that the situation would improve with the isolation of the affected boreholes, however this has not been the case.

The taste and odour appears to have migrated to all but one of the remaining boreholes which has made it very difficult to manage. Chemical compounds associated with taste and odour in water supplies often require just trace amounts to become unpleasant for consumers.

The initial test results have not revealed anything unusual which may be linked to the problem. The water clarity and residual chlorine levels are normal and have not changed to suggest any immediate public health concerns.

Council is consulting with relevant specialists to try and determine the cause of the problem, however this has been inconclusive to date. The most likely scenario at present is believed to be chemicals released into the water by microbes in the ground. This is often associated with the “earthy, musty” description and found to be a seasonal problem with many water supplies around the world. These chemicals only require trace amounts to trigger such taste and odour problems and are harmless in the quantities found. Further lab analysis is being carried out to confirm this possibility, however the samples will take at least a week to process.

Council will continue to monitor the situation and advise the public on any developments. The information received to date has not shown any risk to public health. As the source is within the groundwater, it is unlikely to be able to be isolated or removed. It is expected that source of the problem will naturally decline, however a possible timescale is not known.

For further information please contact:

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