



Media Release

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Water improvement investigations proceeding

The next stage of investigations into an alternate water source to address taste, odour and other issues with the Alexandra water supply is underway.

Low river flows are thought to be the likely culprit. While not uncommon in late summer, changes in underground hydrology can lead to water taste and odour issues.

Work will start shortly in the riverbank gravels just north of Alexandra, in the area known as Ngapara Pools. This area has previously been identified as a potential water source.

The Vincent Community Board (VCB) resolved in September 2011 that there was no scope for further development at the existing bore field. This decision was based on a report from environmental and engineering consultants URS. The report affirmed that the existing bores, while posing no present health risks, are not suitable for investing in improvement technology. While the water supply is safe, the report found that achieving an improved quality of water from the bores is not feasible.

“Historically the existing bores have generated complaints in terms of the water’s hardness, taste and occasional odour. These issues tend to increase when river flow is low and are thought to be the result of changes in the underlying hydrology,” said Central Otago District Council Water Services Manager Russell Bond.

“At times of low river flow, water flow into the bores appears to change, being more affected by underlying influences such as old coal workings in the Boundary Road area. While there is no evidence of any risk to health from these changes or infiltration from the closed landfill, changes in water taste and odour may be apparent.”

Investigations into an alternate source will be completed as soon as possible. The VCB has decided that any physical improvements will be programmed in accordance with compliance with proposed changes to the drinking water standards. Funding for any physical improvements is currently programmed for 2014-16 in Council’s long-term plan.

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