

**26 March 2010**

## **Westport Water Treatment Plant Strategic Review**

Buller District Council will next month consider the report that they requested be undertaken last year. The report takes a strategic view of the Westport water supply and what is required for the next 50 to 100 years. The existing supply has been in place now for over 100 years, being originally opened in February 1903. This supply has served the town reasonably well over this period of time. The supply was upgraded in 1985 by the Westport Borough Council and the treatment plant and process that was chosen met the drinking water standards at that time. The cost of that upgrade was around \$1 million which was a large amount at that time for the town. The other improvement that has been made was to install an alternative pumped supply that provides water from both branches of the Orowaiti catchment and was installed to minimise the effects of drought conditions and also in the event of a major blockage in the tunnels system. This pumped supply has been used this year while major work was undertaken in the number 4 tunnel.

The Council were conscious, following a series of dirty water incidents 12 months ago, that the supply not only needed to be upgraded but that a good long term view was required so that any upgraded supply would serve the town for the next 50 to 100 years.

The Council is also aware and needs to recognise that in this day and age the supply of untreated water to residents should not happen. To prevent this, if the existing trunk mains system is retained, additional reservoirs would need to be provided closer to the reticulation, or the mains replaced.

The review of the supply will take into account all the reports that have been undertaken to date and with a fresh set of eyes, make recommendations to the Council on the way forward. The strategic review will include:

- Risks associated with the tunnels
- Does existing supply have capacity for the next 50 to 100 years of growth
- Condition and age of the races and flues
- Capacity of storage lakes
- Condition, age and maintenance requirements of the two trunk mains
- Risks associated with the trunk mains
- Amount of water being lost from leaky pipes - is this adding to treatment costs
- Condition of reticulation in Westport and Carters Beach, particularly percentage of galvanised and cast iron mains
- What other sources should be considered before upgrading the existing supply

The Council will be considering the report, prepared by Opus International Consultant, in early April to determine the next steps toward providing a good wholesome water supply to the town. The Council has also included \$4.5 million in the 2010/11 budget to upgrade the supply to meet the current drinking water standards.

Councillors, staff and contractors accept and agree that dirty or untreated water is not acceptable in this day and age. The Council is committed to providing a high quality water supply for Westport. There is no quick simple fix to the problems currently being experienced with the plant in Westport. Council intends to put in place manual interventions to reduce the risk of further plant malfunctions, but it is an old plant that is at the end of its useful life and breakdowns may still occur.

**ENDS**



**Further information; Pat McManus – Mayor and Councillors  
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