



25 May 2017

Dear Awatere/Seddon water customer,

This is a note to let you know that Council engineers, working with scientists at the Cawthron Institute and public health officials from the District Health Board, are investigating why we are finding algae in the Awatere/Seddon drinking water network serving Seddon and the surrounding rural area.

As you know, we collect drinking water from the Black Birch Stream and treat it with chlorine. Residents are also advised to boil water for this supply, a notice that has been in place for a number of years.

Two weeks ago, Council started receiving reports of brown algal filaments appearing in the water. We immediately got samples from the river and reservoir tested at the Cawthron Institute laboratories in Nelson.

The Cawthron Institute reported back that they had found very low levels of five species of algae in those samples. The team at Cawthron is led by scientist Dr Susie Wood, a world expert in microalgae and algal biotechnology. Testing to date shows the algae to be coming from the stream.

The scientific advice provided by Dr Wood and her colleagues is that the health risk posed by the levels found in our samples is very low. However we are being extremely cautious and will undertake further testing to seek to confirm that there is little or no risk.

One thing that would be very helpful for us to know is **whether anyone has noticed either algal filaments in their water or a drop in their water pressure at home.** We believe such a pressure drop may be due to a home's water meter filter being affected by the algae, and we'd like to come and visit those people's properties and investigate, if that is the case. **Properties with point of entry treatment and filters or water purifiers with filters should consider having the filters cleaned especially if they are experiencing lower water pressure.**

People should call our call centre on 520 7400 and let us know.

As I'm sure you know, Council drinking water supplies are regularly monitored to ensure safety standards are maintained. The security of drinking water is the number one priority for this Council. Our water sources are tested at least twice a week and daily for the main supplies.

We're working closely with the Public Health Unit of the DHB and have kept them informed of the situation, and sought their advice. We have a detailed emergency response plan in place, and will act immediately if further testing should trigger an alert about drinking water quality.

I will keep you updated with any further news as soon as it comes to hand. We hope to have the second round of testing completed by early next week.

Regards,

Stephen Rooney

Operations and Maintenance Engineer