



Report **06.412**
Date 22 August 2006
File B/02/07/04

Committee **Utility Services**
Author **Alastair McCarthy Asset and Quality Manager,**
 Greater Wellington Water

Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Bill

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to gain committee approval to a submission on the Health (Drinking Water) amendment Bill prepared by officers

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

New drinking water legislation has been under consideration for several years. The Bill was introduced rather suddenly to parliament on 21 June, and received its first reading on 25 July. The Bill was then passed to the Health Select Committee which has called for submissions closing on 15 September 2006.

A draft submission is enclosed as Attachment 1.

Attachment 2 is an analysis of the Bill prepared by James Tennent, a management consultant, commissioned by Local Government NZ.

4. Comment

The Bill contains extensive powers for Drinking Water Assessors, Designated Officers (who could be Health Protection Officers or Medical Officers of Health) Medical Officers of Health, the Director General of Health and the Minister of Health. The duties and responsibilities of Drinking Water Suppliers are numerous and in some cases onerous, with fines up to \$200,000 applicable in some instances.

The regulatory regime described is very rigid, and consequently will draw heavily on District Health Board resources. Currently we do not believe that

the Health Boards have these resources available. The submission proposes that large suppliers with ISO 9001 certification be exempt from the adequacy of supply and Public Health Risk Management Plan aspects of the Bill, as a way of introducing some measure of self regulation, and allowing District Health Board resources to focus on higher priority areas. This is a similar concept to one contained in the recent Building Act amendments pertaining to dams, which provide for dam owners who meet certain criteria to become accredited dam owners, and to be self regulating.

5. Communication

Since the Bill is currently proceeding through the select committee process, it is not appropriate to make public statements about its contents until the submission has been heard.

In the letter accompanying the submission it is proposed to invite the Health Select Committee to visit the Te Marua water treatment plant so that the members can see the complexity behind a modern water treatment plant.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report and approves the submission of Attachment 1 to the Health Select Committee.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Alastair McCarthy

Acting Manager, Strategy and
Asset, Greater Wellington Water

Murray Kennedy

Divisional Manager, Water
Supply, Parks and Forests

Attachment 1: Draft submission on the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Bill

Attachment 2: Analysis of the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Bill prepared by James Tennent.