

20 September 2024

Preparation for the chlorination of Punakaiki's water supply underway

Buller District Council will soon start to prepare the Punakaiki water supply for the introduction of chlorine to ensure that users will have a secure, safe and compliant source of drinking water.

The Punakaiki water supply was designed in 1986 and is fed by Smiths Creek. Surface water sources such as Smiths Creek are prone to contamination from animal activity and runoff.

Pipework and other water supply components have aged over time, leaving them at risk, especially during natural hazard events such as earthquakes.

Due to these vulnerabilities and the water supply's large storage tanks, dosing with chlorine is necessary for compliance with the regulations, ensuring safe drinking water.

Chlorination is a legal requirement under the Water Services Act 2021, and no further consultation will be undertaken.

Contractor Manager Infrastructure Delivery Mel Sutherland says: "We realise this will be a topic of interest for Punakaiki residents affected by the change, and for some it might be an unwelcome development. But our priority is to provide safe drinking water for the community."

Timeframes will be communicated to the Punakaiki community as the project progresses. The main works will be scheduled to avoid the peak summer tourist season.

This chlorination is funded through Buller District Council's Long Term and Annual Plans. It was initially planned for financial year 2022/23 but was carried over to 2024/25 to complete due to insufficient funds.

Mr Sutherland says: "We understand Punakaiki residents will have questions about the chlorination process. There will be information available on council's website and at our service centres in the coming weeks, which we encourage residents to access. This will enable residents to keep themselves informed as the project progresses."

Those interested can also subscribe to project updates by signing up to Buller District Council's email list online <https://bullerdc.govt.nz/do-it-online/water-supply-update-sign-up/> selecting the Punakaiki option.

Staff at council's Westport office will have copies of the updates, Frequently Asked Questions and notices available. Queries can be sent to info@bdc.govt.nz with the subject line 'Punakaiki chlorination'.

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For further information please contact:

Community Engagement Team
Buller District Council

Media.Enquiries@bdc.govt.nz