



Attorney-General

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Minister for Economic Development

Minister for the Environment

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Andy Russell  
Ohakea Water Committee  
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Dear Andy

## Ohakea Water Committee Meeting Points

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 2018 on behalf of the Ohakea water contamination committee. I appreciate the time you took to share your committee's concerns with me.

I appreciate the understandable concerns which are felt strongly in your community. I also appreciate that the uncertainties which arise from dealing with PFAS, which is a relatively new issue for New Zealand, makes dealing with the issue harder for all involved. I want you to be assured that the All of Government group is working hard to respond to this complex problem, alongside Local Government.

As you note in your letter, Horizons Regional Council is responsible for managing soil contamination and water quality in your area. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) took the initiative to commission technical environmental consultants to carry out tests for PFAS at Ohakea, and at other NZDF bases, and has borne the costs for this.

It is good practice for any landowner that may have environmental concerns to take the initiative to conduct investigations, and it is particularly expected that Crown agencies would do so.

The All of Government programme that has been established is now responsible for coordinating and overseeing all aspects of this programme, including testing. The NZDF are part of this programme. All testing is undertaken by professional environmental consultants, and all information is reviewed by the All of Government group, including the Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries and local government so that they can give communities the best advice. I hope your confidence in the integrity of the testing program is growing.

All testing data, including summary and detailed data has been provided to both Regional and District councils by the contracted consultants. This has required balancing the privacy of individual landowner's information, with the need to provide Councils the data they need to fulfil their statutory roles and, ultimately, to support their communities.

Given the uncertainty associated with this issue, the All of Government group prioritised drinking water for affected residents. As you are aware, this began with NZDF providing bottled water, and I

am pleased to hear your positive feedback about progress on the water tanks they provided as the next step.

Beyond this, the All of Government group are working with the Manawatū District Council to investigate the feasibility of a community water scheme. I understand your desire to progress this study quickly. I agree and have asked my officials to work with the council to ensure this occurs.

Noting your comment about access to blood testing, the Director of Public Health from the Ministry of Health, along with the local Medical Officer of Health, has agreed to come to a community meeting to discuss any concerns with blood testing, including ease of access. The All of Government programme will work with you to finalise a date. I am also aware that the Australian Expert Health Panel on PFAS has recently released a report that may address some of the community's concerns, and I am sure that the public health officials will be able to discuss that latest research with you.

Finally, I am very conscious of the strain this complex issue is placing on the local community and I would welcome the opportunity to visit the Ohakea community again. I invite you to liaise with my office to find a suitable date.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Parker', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**