

# How well is your well?

## Protect the quality of your water supply



Bacterial contamination of bores and wells is a major cause of groundwater quality problems in Southland.

Contamination can occur when water from above ground flows directly into or down the side of your bore or well. This can carry with it a variety of contaminants including bacteria and other microbial pathogens. Taking 10 minutes to check the condition of your well could help prevent you, your family, or your stock from getting sick and will help protect the quality of our groundwater.

### Maintenance

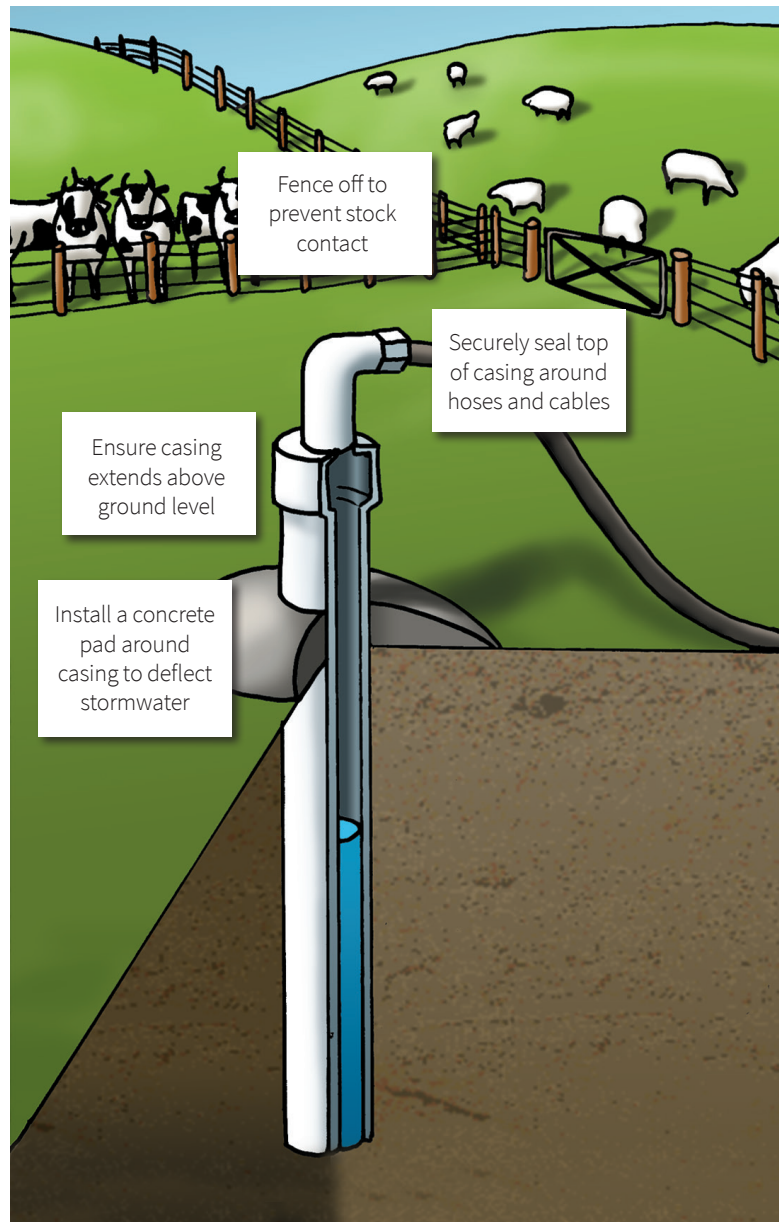
In many cases, problems with the reliability of bores and wells can be avoided by regular maintenance. Regular maintenance may also reduce pumping and equipment replacement costs. Here are some basic ways to maintain your water supply.

- Regularly flush out pressure tanks to remove sediment and ensure sufficient air is retained. Sufficient air helps maintain pump efficiency.
- Casing corrosion, sediment build-up and screen blocking can reduce the yield of your bore. Regular flushing may help stop it “running dry” and extend the life of your bore. Have your bore regularly flushed out by an experienced contractor.
- Naturally occurring bacteria commonly associated with iron in groundwater occur in many bores and wells. These bacteria can generate films and slime that can clog pumps, screens, and plumbing. There are treatments available for this problem, contact Environment Southland for more details. Simple treatment options are available to control slime growth in the bore or reticulation system.
- If you are having a new bore drilled, make sure it is located as far as practical from potential sources of contamination such as septic tanks, ofal holes, and effluent disposal areas.
- If renewing a pressure tank, explore the option of a fibreglass replacement. These do not corrode and will last longer than a steel tank.
- Add a backflow prevention device, especially if your water system is connected to stock water troughs or used to fill sprayers or tankers. This will prevent contaminated water flowing back into your water supply.
- Remember to prevent pumps, hoses and fittings from frost damage.
- Avoid spraying herbicide around your bore or well to control weed growth.
- Unused or abandoned wells and bores should be securely sealed and preferably filled according to correct procedure (contact a drilling contractor).

## Run through this checklist to see how safe your water supply is

- ✓ Check the casing extends far enough above ground to prevent stormwater runoff entering the bore or well.
- ✓ Place a sloping concrete pad around the casing to deflect stormwater and prevent weed growth.
- ✓ Check the top of the bore or well is securely sealed to prevent entry of any foreign material. (Tip: silage tape is excellent for sealing around pipes and cables to make your wellhead secure).
- ✓ Remove chemicals, fertilisers and other potential contaminants from around bores or wells and keep the area free of rubbish.
- ✓ Fence off the bore or well to prevent stock access.
- ✓ Check all pipes and fittings for leaks.
- ✓ Check pumps are not leaking oil or grease.
- ✓ Ensure drainage is sufficient so that water does not pond around the wellhead.
- ✓ Use a removable cap to allow sampling to take place.
- ✓ Test a sample of your groundwater once a year for faecal bacteria.
- ✓ Ensure water filters are regularly maintained.

If sample results indicate contamination contact Public Health South for advice on 03 211 8500.



### ? Did you know?

The usual life span of a bore is around 20 - 30 years. Using a metal casing as an earth for a fence or power supply increases the rate of corrosion and will shorten the life of your bore.