



BUSSELTON WATER

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### CHLORINATION – WHY THE DECISION WAS MADE

Busselton Water would like to provide the community with the key facts on why the decision to implement full-time chlorination was made.

1. Samples taken over the last few years have revealed the persistent presence of *Naegleria lovaniensis*, a non-harmful amoeba of the *Naegleria* species. If this amoeba is present then the conditions are right for *Naegleria fowleri*, a harmful amoeba, to also occur, as has followed in other documented cases. The *Naegleria* species thrives in warm environments, with reticulation networks that have water temperatures of 25°C or more for 4 months a year, classified as high risk. Busselton falls into this category.
2. Persistent flushing and spot chlorination have not removed this amoeba from the system. Research has proven that the best barrier to control any of the *Naegleria* species is chlorine, as only full time chlorination provides a residual that offers protection throughout the entire network.
3. Infection from *Naegleria fowleri* is a risk. *Naegleria fowleri* causes Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM) if it lodges in the nasal passages and is almost always fatal. Fifteen deaths, two in WA, have occurred in the past. The Board of Busselton Water does not want to risk the health of the community, and resolved to take a proactive approach, to attempt to minimize the risk of *Naegleria fowleri* developing within the system. Once it has been detected within a water supply, it is extremely hard to eradicate, hence the Board's proactive decision to act now.
4. The reticulation mains have increased significantly in size over the last 5 years. Problems with high water temperatures, slow moving pockets of water and cross contamination caused by either mains breaks or illegal connections will only grow as the network continues to grow and becomes even more complex.
5. No other options provide a residual disinfection. Alternative disinfection methods such as ozone and ultra violet light do not provide ongoing protection.

Busselton Water customers will be receiving additional information during this week which further outlines the decision making process, as well as providing more detailed information on the *Naegleria* species.

Ends

Media enquiries are to be directed to the Manager, Customer Services on 9781 0506 or [julie.rawlings@busseltonwater.wa.gov.au](mailto:julie.rawlings@busseltonwater.wa.gov.au)