



**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

**September 19, 2008**

## **Nitrates not a problem in Lumsden water supply**

Water from the Lumsden-Balfour water supply scheme does not have high levels of nitrate in it and is safe to drink, the Southland District Council and Environment Southland have reassured residents.

Reports in news publications have said there are high levels of nitrate in Lumsden water, which makes it unsafe for pregnant women and bottle-fed babies. These reports are incorrect, District Council Water and Waste Services Technical Officer Sarah Dowling said.

The actual problem relates to a rural area in the Balfour area, where Environment Southland monitoring has shown nitrate levels in the groundwater exceed the drinking water standards.

However, the intake for the Lumsden-Balfour water supply scheme is nowhere near this area, Ms Dowling said.

Environment Southland held a public meeting at Balfour earlier this week to discuss the results of its monitoring with the community.

The regional council has been monitoring groundwater in the Balfour area since 2001 in response to community concerns about whether land use changes and an increase in dairy farming would have an impact on domestic water supplies.

**ENDS**

**For further information please contact:**

Sarah Dowling  
Technical Officer, Water and Waste Services  
Southland District Council  
Ph (0800) 732 732

Karen Wilson  
Groundwater Scientist  
Environment Southland  
(03) 211 5115