

2018.12.03

**13 Senator S.W. Pallett of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding changing rooms at Fort Regent in which legionella had been discovered: [OQ.217/2018]**

Further to the discovery of legionella at Fort Regent, will the Minister provide an update on work to reopen the changing rooms near the gym at the Fort in which legionella bacteria were detected, including a timeframe for the reopening of these facilities?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

The changing room facilities were originally closed due to the discovery of asbestos debris in and around the air-handling units that supply these facilities. Following remediation work to remove asbestos materials, legionella tests were carried out prior to commissioning the area back into operational use. It was at this time the test showed a presence of legionella species. Property Maintenance then engaged with a contractor to carry out chlorination of the water system feeding these areas. The process would have addressed the problem of bacteria and allowed the facilities to reopen. However, prior to this work commencing, the contractor advised the existing pipework was in poor condition and would not tolerate the chlorination process. In their opinion, the entire pipework feeding these facilities should be replaced. I can confirm that steps have been undertaken to open the changing rooms for public use from the week commencing 19th November. Those facilities are now open, with the exception of the shower facilities remaining closed and isolated until further works are completed to ensure they are fit and safe for public use.

**3.13.1 Senator S.W. Pallett:**

I fully accept that and I thank the Minister for his answer. I fully accept that testing found some legionella in that pipework, but could the Minister state what testing procedures and management systems have been in place since January 2015 at Fort Regent to reduce any risk to the public? I do understand he may not have that information but if he does not, could he provide it to all Members, please?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

The system is only brought into play really when something is shut down. When an area is shut down for a period of time - this also happens with guest houses, hotels - legionella species, which is very, very low level, can build up in pipework and it is safe practice to flush it out with chlorine to make sure everything is safe. I will research that further if there is any further testing taking place, but unless a unit is shut down I am not sure what the testing regime is. All the pipework in the shower area will be replaced but that will take time because we do not want to disturb any other materials that may be sealed in the water.

**3.13.2 Senator S.W. Pallett:**

What I can take from that answer is that I think the Minister is telling us there has been no testing of legionella disease at Fort Regent since January 2015. A building of that size with the amount of waterpipes and hot water systems it carries, does he not agree that is a totally unacceptable to have carried out this way, putting the public at risk in the way I have suggested?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

You are referring to the shower system and area. The whole building itself does have several testing regimes. He probably knows more about it than I do, but there is regular testing regimes and I will get back to the Assistant Minister regarding that.