



# MEDIA RELEASE

Date: February 4, 2010

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*For immediate release*

## **WARNING TO LAKE WYANGAN USERS**

Unusually high levels of Blue Green Algae have forced a warning to be issued to all Lake Wyangan (North) users.

The warning, which has been issued by Griffith City Council and Murrumbidgee Irrigation, raises awareness to users of the Lake to take care when using the Lake be it for recreation or irrigation.

Council's Environment and Health Department has been monitoring the lake's water quality and has decided to enact the Murrumbidgee Regional Algal Committee Contingency Plan.

The Contingency Plan guarantees appropriate measures are in place, and has been developed with NSW Office of Water, the NSW Health Department and key stakeholders in the Murrumbidgee Regional Algae Co-ordinating Committee, including Griffith City Council and Murrumbidgee Irrigation(MI).

The plan allows for the closure of the waterway affected should levels reach higher levels; we are not currently at the levels that would require the Lake to be closed.

Griffith City Council General Manager, Peter Brooks, said the warning was more of a precautionary measure, due to the algal levels and continuing warm dry weather.

"It appears that conditions in the north lake are currently conducive to an increase in the growth of the algal bloom and this has contributed to a higher than normal reading of toxic components of the bloom," Mr Brooks said.

"It's in the best interests of the community that we warn lake users now, to ensure there are no immediate health hazards to people who would normally participate in water sports."

Regular users, such as the boat club and the sailing club, will be formally notified of the warning and all use of the water, including swimming, bathing, yabbying, fishing and any form of direct contact.

MI has initiated its algal management plan and notified customers who access irrigation water directly from the lake of the potential risk to livestock and human health from coming into contact with the lake water.

MI's Managing Director, Mr Brett Tucker said the Company's environmental team have commenced sampling of water from South Lake, which is used to supplement irrigation supply.

"At this stage the water is suitable for irrigation use," he said.

Landholders and pet owners are being warned to take care when their stock and animals are drinking the water.

While the recreational land, such as picnic areas, will remain open, Council has warned users to take care.

By working with Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Council has ensured that water used in toilets, for hand washing and to water the animals in the parkland area will not be affected.

This water is not suitable and has never been suitable for drinking and will be monitored for algal levels weekly.

Testing will continue on a regular basis to monitor algal levels with the current warning remaining in place until the current algal levels fall to acceptable standards.

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