



MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

LAKE WYANGAN CLOSED TO ALL USERS

Unusually high levels of Blue Green Algae have again forced the immediate closure of Lake Wyangan (North) to all users. Lake Wyangan North was re-opened to the public on 12 March from the previous warning however subsequent results have indicated that an algal bloom has re-appeared.

The closure, which has been issued by Griffith City Council, and means there can be no access or use of water coming directly out of the north lake until the levels have been reduced.

Council's Environment and Health Department has continued the monitoring the lake's water quality and has decided to again 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 and ensures notification of all water users.

Griffith City Council General Manager, Peter Brooks, said the closure is a precautionary measure, due to the rise in algal levels.

"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 close the lake 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 closure and all use of the water, including swimming, bathing, yabbing, fishing and any form of direct contact is prohibited.

MI has initiated its algal management plan and will notify 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.

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, but the lake will remain closed until the current algal levels fall to acceptable standards.

Warning signs are currently being erected at Lake Wyangan to alert users of the closure of the waterway, and brochures and information will be provided to visitors through the Griffith Visitors Centre.

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