

Hidden dangers that lurk beneath...

A shopping trolley. A car. A safe. Even a prosthetic leg.

These are just some of the unexpected items pulled from irrigation channels across the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, by crews responsible for maintaining the region's extensive water delivery network.

As temperatures climb and summer approaches, Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) is reminding the community that while irrigation channels may appear calm and inviting, they conceal serious dangers beneath the surface.

For MI Maintenance Manager Adam Valance, the annual safety warning is one that hits close to home. His team spends countless hours cleaning and maintaining channels and Adam has seen firsthand what lies beneath the water.

"If people saw some of the things we've pulled out of channels, they wouldn't even think about jumping in," Mr Valance said.

"We've found shopping trolleys, cars, dead trees, broken bottles and even a safe.

"One of the strangest things we've found was a prosthetic leg."

But discarded objects are only part of the risk.

"We also come across a lot of snakes in and around the channels," he said.

"That's the thing about channel water. What you can see from the bank is often very different to what's happening underneath the surface."

Murrumbidgee Irrigation CEO, Philip Holliday, said the community should never mistake a calm-looking channel for a safe place to swim.

"Irrigation channels might appear still and harmless, but they are unpredictable environments that can become dangerous in an instant," Mr Holliday said.

"Many of our channels are automated, which means gates can open or close without warning as water is managed throughout the network. When that happens, water levels and flows can change rapidly, creating strong currents, powerful suction and water surges that can overwhelm even experienced swimmers."

Mr Holliday said every summer MI shares the same message because the consequences of ignoring the risks can be devastating.

"We want everyone to enjoy summer safely and get home to their families at the end of the day," he said.

The following general swimming precautions could help save a life: don't swim in irrigation channels; avoid fast flowing water; beware of submerged objects; don't dive into water of unknown depth; know where young children are and never leave them unattended around water; and never swim alone.

Let's keep our community safe this summer - choose the pool, not the channel.

ENDS

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