



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ALGAL BLOOMS THIS SUMMER

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson is advising the public to watch for algal blooms and report suspected cases to local water management authorities or the NSW Office of Water.

Ms Hodgkinson said algal blooms are a summer time hazard that must be avoided to minimise any potential danger to people and animals.

“Blue-green algal cells are a natural part of aquatic ecosystems that are always present in the water and are generally harmless in small numbers,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“These cells can multiply or ‘bloom’ when there is the right combination of environmental conditions, including high nutrient levels, warm water temperatures, sunlight and still water.

“Under these bloom conditions, high concentrations of blue-green algae cells, especially toxic species, can affect both human and animal health.

“People should keep an eye out for algal blooms, and adhere to any ‘algal alerts’ issued by their local Regional Algal Coordinating Committee or water management authority.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the NSW Office of Water supports nine Regional Algal Coordinating Committees (RACCs) across the State that constantly monitor algal levels in NSW waterways and coordinate responses to blooms as they occur.

The average algal bloom will see blue-green algae scums that can vary from thick paint-like accumulations on water surfaces, to small green floating dots or a general discoloration of the water, and these are generally associated with a strong musty or earthy odour.

“While it is impossible to tell if the bloom may be toxic by visual means, people should practice caution and stay clear of a suspected algal blooms by not entering the water or drinking untreated water,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

The NSW Office of Water, in conjunction with local councils, RACCs, state agencies and community volunteers, conducts routine monitoring of water quality in the State’s major dams, rivers and streams. Further information about blue-green algae is available from the NSW Office of Water website - www.water.nsw.gov.au or the toll free algal information line on 1800 999 457.