

Media Release

Blue-green algae warning to communities that have dual reticulated water systems on the Darling and lower Barwon Rivers.

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Due to high concentrations of potentially harmful blue green algae presently being experienced in the Darling and Barwon River from Brewarrina to Wilcannia, residents are reminded that many townships in this area use dual reticulated water systems.

One system pumps treated water to the home for domestic and consumption purposes, while the other system uses water pumped directly from the river to the garden taps and is therefore untreated.

Due to these reasons, it is strongly urged that residents using these dual reticulated systems do not let children play with garden tap water and to not use this water for stock or pets as potentially harmful blue green algae may be present in the water.

The water should be suitable for garden purposes, however avoid spraying the water directly on to edible fruits.

Blue-green algae usually appear as green paint-like scums on the water, near the edges, or as greenish clumps throughout the water. It makes the water appear dirty, green or discoloured and generally has a strong musty or earthy odour.

Blue-green algae occur naturally and can reproduce quickly in favourable conditions where there is still or slow-flowing water, abundant sunlight and sufficient levels of nutrients.

It is not possible to predict how long the algae will remain at high levels. Regular monitoring will continue and the alert will be lifted as soon as the high levels of algae dissipate.

People who believe they may have been affected by blue-green algae are advised to seek medical advice.

Updates about blue-green algae blooms and red level warning areas can be obtained by calling **1800 999 457** or visiting – <http://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae>

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