



MEDIA RELEASE

31 December 2009

EXTREME BLUE-GREEN ALGAE ALERT FOR LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has issued an Extreme Alert Level for blue-green algae in East Basin, Lotus Bay and Yarralumla Beach in Lake Burley Griffin.

As exposure to this level of blue-green algae carries an increased risk, the water is closed to primary-contact recreation.

This action is in accordance with the *Lakes Ordinance 1976* and the *Blue-Green Algae in Recreational Water Management Strategy* and advice from ACT Health.

Primary-contact means recreation that involves whole-body water contact or submersion of the head. Examples include swimming, diving, waterskiing and windsurfing.

Secondary-contact (such as rowing, fishing, boating and canoeing) will still be permitted, however people should not engage in secondary-contact recreation unless:

- they are experienced;
- they are informed of the algae risks and what to do if contact occurs;
- they do not engage in primary-contact during the recreation; and
- shower facilities, with suitable water, are available for washing after the recreation.

In particular, contact with algal scum should be avoided. Clothing that has been in the water should be washed to remove any blue-green algae residue.

Water event organisers should ensure all participants are aware of the blue-green algae alert level, the associated exposure risks, and provide adequate shower facilities.

Pet owners should not allow their animals to swim in or drink the water, as blue-green algae can make pets very ill or even result in death.

Algae levels can change quickly. Water users should look for algae warning signs which indicate the current algae alert level. Warning signs are located at all Lake Burley Griffin major water entry points. Anyone concerned about possible symptoms of blue-green algae exposure following water exposure should contact their GP.

For further information on health issues please visit the *Blue-Green Algae in Recreational Water Management Strategy* on www.health.act.gov.au. Water quality updates for Lake Burley Griffin are available on www.nationalcapital.gov.au.