

Murrumbidgee Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

11 January 2013

Red alert for Blue-green algae at Lake Yanga

The Murrumbidgee Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (MRACC) today issued a red alert level warning (high alert) for blue-green algae for Yanga Lake in the Yanga National Park near Balranald.

RACC Chair Tony Burns said that routine sampling had detected very high levels of blue-green algae at eight of the Lake Yanga monitoring sites.

These levels are well above the safe levels for recreation and as such the RACC has issued a red alert for these waters.

“I wish to advise all water users that algal blooms can develop in a 24 hour period and can spread rapidly along a river or within storage such as Yanga Lake” said Mr Burns.

“It is not surprising given the spate of hot weather that we are currently experiencing.”

Mr Burns went on to say that all water users should avoid coming in contact with any water that appears bright green, where obvious green scums are present, or a distinctive odour is noticeable.

Landholders should ensure that stock have alternate watering points or that pumps for stock water are placed well below the surface where the concentration of cells tends to be lower.

There is some evidence that small quantities of algal toxins may enter fish flesh when a bloom produces toxins. Any fish caught in water affected by a bloom should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

People should not eat mussels, crayfish or the internal organs of fish from red alert areas.

“Blue-green algae are usually very obvious, appearing as clumps or specs in the water and are often associated with strong musty or earthy odours”, Mr Burns said.

Information updates about blue-green algae blooms and Red Level Warning areas can be obtained from the Regional Algal Coordinating Committee freecall Algal Information Hotline on 1800 999 457.