

## Hunter Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

15 April 2013

### **Blue-green algal alert for Fishery Creek and Wallis Creek – East Maitland**

The Hunter Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (RACC) today issued a high level blue-green algal alert for Fishery Creek and Wallis Creek at East Maitland.

Recent sampling in both locations has found that algae numbers are in the high range and are a potential health risk to people and animals.

The species of blue-green algae identified are potentially toxic and may cause gastroenteritis in humans if consumed and skin and eye irritations after contact.

Boiling the water does not remove the toxins produced by the algae.

Local residents should avoid any water that appears bright green, where obvious green scums are present, or a distinctive odour is noticeable. Blue-green algae are usually very obvious, appearing as clumps or specs in the water and are often associated with a strong musty or earthy odour.

People are advised not to enter the water, and are further advised not to drink untreated water whilst a red level warning is in place.

Landholders along Fishery and Wallis creeks are advised to remove stock from the affected area as blue-green algae are known to cause stock illness or even death.

Dogs are particularly susceptible as they ingest algae by licking their coats.

The Hunter New England Local Health District advises people who believe they may have been affected by the algae to seek medical attention.

Warning signs has been erected in known affected areas, but algal blooms may be present in other locations along the creeks.

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. Prawns should be cooled in clean water free of algal blooms.

Further sampling by the Hunter RACC will be undertaken to determine the extent of the bloom and advise the public as the situation changes.

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 or visit the NSW Office of Water website -[www.water.nsw.gov.au/algal alerts](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/algal-alerts)

**ENDS**