

## Hunter Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

17 October 2012

### BLUE-GREEN ALGAL ALERT FOR BOOLAMBAYTE LAKE – MYALL LAKES

The Hunter Regional Algal Coordinating Committee today issued a high level blue-green algal alert at Boolambayte Lake part of Myall Lakes.

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

People should not undertake recreational activities where they may be coming into direct contact with the water such as swimming or water skiing, as well as domestic uses including showering and washing.

Blue-green algae can be blown around the river with the prevailing wind conditions and people are advised to avoid areas where algae is obvious, as areas affected can change rapidly.

Blue green algae appears as green paint-like scum on the water and foreshore edges or clumps throughout the water and usually has a strong earthy odour. This makes the water appear dirty, green or discoloured.

Warning signs are being erected in the affected areas.

Blue-green algae may cause severe stomach upsets, nausea and skin irritation in people.

Blue-green algae may contain toxins – boiling the water does not remove the toxins produced by the algae.

Common sense would suggest not to consume fish caught in water affected by a bloom. 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.

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

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

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](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au)

**ENDS**