



# MEDIA ALERT

Thursday 7 February 2019

## Lake Burley Griffin Water Quality Update

The National Capital Authority (NCA) wishes to advise that additional areas of Lake Burley Griffin have been closed for primary contact due to extreme blue green algae and elevated bacteria levels.

The most recent water quality samples report that extreme blue green algae levels have been recorded at Yarralumla Beach, Lotus Bay, Ferry Terminal, East Basin and Central Basin and these areas are closed to primary contact recreation.

Weston Park East has returned high blue green algae levels and is also closed to primary contact recreation.

Weston Park West remains closed to primary contact recreation due to elevated bacterial levels.

Primary contact recreation includes activities which involve full immersion such as swimming, bathing, novice secondary contact recreation, or activities which pose a greater risk of swallowing water or having the face wet by spray (e.g windsurfing). These activities are not permitted at sites closed to primary contact.

The *ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality* explains that Extreme blue green algae levels, can cause a range of health issues. Secondary contact recreation such as rowing, fishing, boating and canoeing will still be permitted, noting ACT Health's advice below:

- there is an increased risk of adverse health events from water exposure for secondary contact recreation;
- symptoms of exposure may include skin/mucosa irritation, flu-like symptoms, and gastrointestinal illness;
- people should not engage in secondary contact recreation unless:
  - o they are experienced;
  - o they are informed of the algal risks and what to do if contact occurs;
  - o they do not engage in primary-contact during the recreation; and
  - o showering facilities, with suitable water, are available for washing after the activity.
- event organisers should ensure that participants are aware of the blue green algae alert level, associated exposure risks and provide adequate showering facilities after events.

Persons engaged in Secondary Contact Recreation should be careful to limit any water exposure and should shower immediately after contact with the water.

The affected areas of the Lake will remain closed to primary contact until algae and bacteria levels have reduced to safe levels. Only experienced Lake users can participate in secondary contact recreation activities, such as sailing, canoeing and rowing.

Lake user groups and relevant event organisers have been notified.

All Lake users should look for warning signs indicating the current alert level at our beaches or refer to the Swim Guide. Pet owners should not allow their animals to swim in or drink Lake water in areas where there are algal scums.

The NCA will continue to monitor lake water quality as per standard protocols with samples collected weekly. The NCA will provide further information over the coming weeks in response to changing conditions.

Under the *ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality*, two consecutive clear results must be received before lowering or removing alerts.

**WHAT:** Affected areas of Lake Burley Griffin closed to primary contact.

**WHERE:**

Central Basin	East Basin
Lotus Bay	West Basin/Ferry Terminal
Weston Park East	Weston Park West
Yarralumla Beach	

**WHEN:** Until further notice.

For explanations of alert levels and water monitoring protocols visit <http://www.nca.gov.au/national-land/lake-burley-griffin-management/lake-water-quality>

For up to date Lake Burley Griffin water quality information, restrictions, alerts and health warnings visit <http://www.theswimguide.org/>

For more information on the ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality visit <http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/public-health/recreational-water-quality>