



Department of Environment,  
Land, Water and Planning

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Ref: WB0730073

Mr Marcus Crudden  
Director, Water  
Essential Services Commission  
Level 37, 2 Lonsdale Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Crudden

**MELBOURNE WATER'S WATER QUALITY OBLIGATIONS IN THE QUIET LAKES AREA**

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2017 requesting the department's interpretation of its *2016-17 Blue Green Algae Circular* (the Circular).

As you may be aware blue-green algae is a natural part of most of Victoria's aquatic environments. A range of localised environmental conditions can trigger a rapid increase in algal numbers resulting in a bloom. The Circular sets out prevention, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for managing blooms across the state. Cost effective prevention of algal blooms is difficult, if not impossible in many environments. Consequently, the focus of the Circular is on monitoring and timely warnings to the public to minimise risk to public health and broader social and economic impacts.

While the objectives of the Circular include identifying actions to minimise future occurrences, the Circular does not seek to obligate nor restrict water managers from implementing specific measures to minimise the occurrence of algal blooms such as conducting bore flushing in the Quiet Lakes area. I understand that this proposal has considerable support from affected residents.

I also understand from your letter that Melbourne Water's tariff proposal outlines that without the bore flushing it believes that it is meeting its obligations under the Circular by monitoring, sampling and warning the public with signage and other information of any bloom. I support Melbourne Water's position.

In response to an Emergency Management Victoria lead debrief report on the Autumn 2016 Murray River blue-green algae incident, the department has committed to preparing an algal response plan consistent with the *Emergency Management Manual of Victoria*. The plan will update response arrangements historically described in the Circular. The opportunity will also be taken to review broader policy associated with blue-green algae.

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If you would like to discuss this matter further, I invite you to call [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



**Kate Houghton**  
**Deputy Secretary Water and Catchments**

9 / 5 / 17