



Department of Health and Human Services

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 650 172
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
DX 210081

HHSD/17/33729

ESC ref. c/17/7015

Marcus Crudden
Director, Water
Essential Services Commission
Level 37, 2 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Crudden

Thank you for your letter dated 28 April 2017 requesting advice as to whether Melbourne Water is required to conduct bore flushing in the Quiet Lakes area in order to comply with its obligations as outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water 2008*.

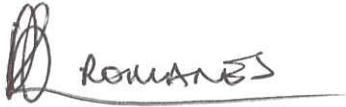
The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's leading expert body on promoting the development and maintenance of many public health standards. Accordingly, the *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water* are deferred to when considering public health impacts and mitigation measures regarding blue green algae blooms. As stated in the executive summary, the guidelines are not mandatory; rather, they have been developed as a tool for state and territory governments to develop management approaches for waters used for recreation.

The recommended risk management approach outlined in the guidelines is the application of a situation assessment and alert levels framework to allow for a staged response to the presence and development of blooms. *'The framework assesses the development of a bloom through a monitoring program, with actions in three stages linked to different alert levels. The levels use algal and cyanobacterial numbers as indicators to define the potential for hazard and to recommend appropriate actions, such as additional sampling and eventual warning of users should the guideline be exceeded'* (NHMRC 2008, p.130). The guidelines do not make any statement that specifically requires bore flushing to be undertaken in order to manage blue-green algae blooms. As a result it is our advice that adherence to those guidelines can be achieved without requiring bore flushing.

When guidelines values are exceeded, *'the local authority and health authorities warn the public through the media that the water body is unsuitable for recreation, and arrange for the local management authority to erect signs warning the public of the potential for adverse health effects'* (NHMRC 2008, p.131). As identified in your letter, Melbourne Water's management approach of monitoring, sampling and informing the community to avoid contact with algae affected water to prevent public health risk is consistent with the guidelines.

Should you have any further queries on this matter I recommend you contact [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the Water and Catchments
branch at the Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'F' followed by the name 'ROMANES' in capital letters.

Dr Finn Romanes
Deputy Chief Health Officer (Environment)
Regulation, Health Protection and Emergency Management Division

11/5/2017