
Challenging Summer for Water Supply Continues

South Gippsland Water continues to tackle the challenges that the regions numerous small local catchments and water supplies present. Anecdotally, this summer has been one of the most challenging for staff at South Gippsland Water in recent years.

This summer's conditions have led to challenges with regards to water quality in the form of algae blooms and manganese discolouring water. It has also seen warm dry weather, with Korumburra approaching Staged Water Restrictions and supplementary water supplies being activated for both Coalition Creek (Korumburra) and Tarra River (Yarram, Devon North, Alberton & Port Albert) Water Supply Systems.

All but two of the Corporation's 10 water supply systems have been affected by the warm, dry conditions manifesting as unfavourable taste, smell and colour of the water or low water storages/river flows requiring accessing supplementary water supplies.

Algae Bloom – Lance Creek Reservoir | Water is Safe to Drink

The Lance Creek Water supply system which had been recovering from an algae bloom earlier in January, has experienced another rapid bloom this past week and it is expected this will affect the taste of the water in Inverloch, Cape Paterson and Wonthaggi.

Water is safe to drink. There are many varieties of algae and any algae bloom that occurs within a reservoir is managed to ensure water supplied to customers is safe.

Human senses are very sensitive to the taste and smell that algae produce. Algae can give off a musty and muddy taste and odour. When algae are present in reservoirs, South Gippsland Water activates increased monitoring and treatment processes to remove it, however, due to human sensitivity (some algae can be tasted in parts per trillion, i.e. think of filling the MCG with water and then adding half a teaspoon of these compounds - that is how sensitive we are! It is therefore quite challenging to manage.

Managing Director South Gippsland Water, Philippe du Plessis, said today, "Customers should rest assured South Gippsland Water will continue to monitor the reservoir water and treatment processes and are constantly adapting to changing conditions and the changed taste in water. The taste and smell of the water is expected to fluctuate over the coming weeks as this latest occurrence is managed".

Discoloured Water & Manganese | Water is Safe to Drink

A number of customers in townships including Korumburra, Poowong, Loch, Nyora, Foster & Toora have reported discoloured water this summer. The colour in the water is due to the presence of a naturally-occurring mineral, known as manganese.

Summer conditions have led to high pressure and flows within water supply systems coupled with burst water mains which cause sediments to be stirred up and entered the flow to customers' taps. The manganese sediments tend to give the water a yellow through to brown or "dirty" appearance.

Mr du Plessis went on to say that, "Please be assured the *water is safe to drink*, however it is not advised to drink heavily discoloured water. South Gippsland Water has conducted flushing for 'hot spots' in systems where discoloured water is being reported. For Korumburra which has experienced widespread discoloured water, a full water system clean is underway currently utilising air scouring to clean the whole network, this work will continue through until April, 2018".

Mr du Plessis wished to reiterate that the Corporation is using all tools available to deal with both the effects of algae and manganese on our water supplies. However, I urge customers to please contact our friendly customer service team available 24 hours, 7 days a week, on 1300 851 636 to discuss any water quality issues or concerns.

[Photo Lance Creek Reservoir 23/2/18]

