

## Discoloured water: Frequently Asked Questions

### WHY IS THE WATER DISCOLOURED?

The Ross River Dam, Townsville's primary water supply, is currently experiencing an outbreak of Blue-Green Algae. Effects of Blue-Green Algae blooms tend to be worsened by hot weather and inflow from recent rainfall.

Whilst Blue-Green Algae outbreaks are common, this particular bloom is blocking filters and imposing treatment complications at The Douglas Water Treatment Plant.

Some microscopic particles of Blue-Green Algae pass through the filters. In addition, the soluble minerals available in the dam due to this bloom, contributes to the discolouration.

### IS THE WATER SAFE TO DRINK?

Yes, the water is safe to drink and bathe in. The network is extensively tested daily to ensure all water meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. We are also working closely with and receiving advice from Queensland Public Health and the Water Supply Regulator. **The discolouration is a visual issue and is not a health concern.**

### IS IT SAFE FOR MY PETS?

Yes.



### WHY ARE ONLY SOME SUBURBS IMPACTED?

Different suburbs (and sometimes different streets in larger suburbs) are pumped from various water supplies. Only some suburbs are being affected by the discoloured water and we are working to minimise affected suburbs.

### HOW LONG WILL THIS ISSUE OF DISCOLOURATION TAKE TO RESOLVE?

This issue depends on the weather and environmental conditions causing elevated levels of Blue-Green Algae in the dam. Council is continuing to do everything possible to alleviate the situation and continue to update the community

### WHO IS TESTING THE WATER?

Townsville Laboratory Services is testing the water multiple times a day. Townsville City Council Laboratory Services is a NATA accredited laboratory (National Association of Testing Authorities).

Results are confirmed and supplied to the Queensland Health (Townsville Public Health Unit) and the Water Supply Regulator's office.

### HAS THIS HAPPENED BEFORE IN TOWNSVILLE?

Not to this extent. In late 2018, Blue-Green Algae was detected in and flushed out during the 2019 floods. It was detected again mid-2019 and numbers have been fluctuating but steadily increasing.

### DOES THIS HAPPEN IN OTHER PLACES?

Yes. This is a worldwide issue. The long, hot summers experienced worldwide are compounding the problem (Mt Isa have had a bloom since 2014).

### WHAT IS COUNCIL DOING?

Townsville City Council is working to manage the impacts of the Blue-Green Algae bloom.