

# Recreational Use of Ross River Dam Policy

Local Government Act 2009

## 1. Policy Statement

Townsville City Council (Council) is committed to providing a safe and regulated environment for recreational use at Ross River Dam while maintaining water quality standards and minimising environmental impact. Recreational activities must align with public safety and environmental conservation priorities.

## 2. Principles

Council is committed to the following principles relating to recreational use of Ross River Dam:

- promote safe, responsible and sustainable recreational use of Ross River Dam in accordance with legislative obligations and Council's Ross River Dam Site Access Rules;
- maintain high water quality standards to protect public health and deliver safe drinking water;
- engage with stakeholders and the community to provide access to Council recreation facilities;
- when necessary, implement restrictions to approved activities based on safety guidelines;
- balance recreation with environmental conservation efforts; and,
- provide clear compliance measures and information for recreational users.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all recreational users of Ross River Dam, including but not limited to individuals, organised groups and approved operators engaging in permitted recreational activities.

## 4. Responsibility

Council is a water service provider under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* and is responsible for the provision of potable water in accordance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). Council's Water Services Department is responsible for monitoring water quality, treating water to the required standards and implementing safety measures in accordance with the ADWG and Council's Drinking Water Quality Policy.

Recreational users are required to adhere to all posted advisories, safety regulations and environmental protection guidelines when undertaking recreational activities at Ross River Dam. Council's Ross River Dam Site Access Rules are available on its public website.

Environmental authorities provide assistance and guidance to Council in monitoring and managing public health, water quality and ecological risks associated with recreational activities on the dam.

## 5. Definitions

**Cyanobacteria (Blue-Green Algae)** - naturally occurring organisms that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals.

**Manager** - an individual responsible for overseeing and coordinating specific functions, departments, teams, or projects within Townsville City Council.

**Primary Contact Recreation** - activities that involve full-body immersion, such as swimming, water-skiing and jet-skiing.

**Secondary Contact Recreation** - activities with incidental water contact, such as kayaking, canoeing, rowing, and fishing.

**Workers** - includes employees, contractors, volunteers, and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.

## 6. Policy

### 6.1. Approved Recreation Activities

Council has adopted a phased approach to the introduction of recreational use of Ross River Dam. The stages of recreational use are primarily based on the level of contact the activities have with the water, safe access for the public and the need for Council to sustainably manage water quality in the dam.

Council conducts regular water quality testing to assess the presence of cyanobacteria and other potential hazards. Water quality and conditions are monitored to determine if any recreational activity restrictions apply.

### 6.2. Restrictions and Temporary Closures

Council may close the dam for recreational activities at its discretion due to water contamination, severe weather, health or safety concerns.

Closure notices will be communicated through signage, Council's website and social media.

## 7. Legal Parameters

*Human Rights Act 2019*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

*Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*

## 8. Associated Documents

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

Drinking Water Management Plan

Drinking Water Quality Policy

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water

NHMRC Public Health Guidance on Algae Exposure

Ross River Dam Site Access Rules

Unreasonable Customer Conduct Policy

World Health Organization Recreational Water Quality Guidelines