Victorian Response to 2009 Murray River Algal Bloom

Greg Smith
Goulburn-Murray Water

Barmah-Millewa forests
Coordination – MRACC
Murray Region Algal Coordinating Committee

• MRACC prepares for and coordinates response to algal blooms along the Murray River, from the headwaters to the Murrumbidgee River.
• MRACC members – NSW Health, DWE, GMW, MDBA; water, health and local govt agencies
• Sunraysia RACC performs a similar role from the Murrumbidgee confluence to the SA border.
# Timeline of Red alerts (for recreation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 March</td>
<td>Lake Hume (&lt;10% capacity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Yarrawonga Weir (L. Mulwala)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 March</td>
<td>Hume to Torrumbarry Weir (400km)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 April</td>
<td>Hume to d/s Swan Hill (800 km)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>Hume to Echuca + Robinvale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 May</td>
<td>Corowa to Echuca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 May</td>
<td>Robinvale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May</td>
<td>end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timeline of Red alerts

6 April – Hume to Tooleybuc
13 March – Yarrawonga
26 March – Hume to Torrumbarry
5 March - Hume
Timeline of Red alerts

17 April

4 May

17 April

9 May
Communications

- MRACC+SRACC media releases weekly
- Signage – local govt & Parks in Vic
- Websites – DWE, GMW, LMW, Parks …
d/s Echuca
HARMFUL ALGAE MAY BE PRESENT IN THIS WATER
USE OR CONTACT MAY CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO HUMANS AND ANIMALS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Communications (cont.)

• FAQs by DHS
  – promoted other activities in region besides water sports.

• Telephone information lines
  – 300+ calls to GMW BGA Hotline
  – mainly holiday makers from Melbourne

• Email updates to agencies weekly
Impacts

• No reports of adverse health affects due to the bloom were received despite the continued use of the river and lakes by many people.

• Some impact on tourist numbers over Easter and school holidays.

• Town supplies were treated to safe stds
Debrief & Follow up

- MRACC debrief held 1 June 2009
- Victorian agencies debrief
- Minor improvements were identified
- Use of AIIMS approach recommended
- Overall response was appropriate and effective.