

Tuggeranong groups cry foul over



NOT A PRETTY SIGHT: Some of the filth that collects in Tuggeranong's lake.

By Breanna Tucker

Tuggeranong residents are calling on an army of volunteers to clear the rubbish-strewn banks and foul stench of the local lake.

Families and recreational groups say they are fed up with picking up rubbish from the Lake Tuggeranong foreshore and others have questioned why a local sea scouts group exists when the waters are constantly closed due to blue-green algae outbreaks.

Tuggeranong Community Council

president Daryl Johnston said he had taken dozens of complaints from families up to 5km away about the stench oozing from its waters.

"I've had residents from Kambah, East Greenway and Wanniasa complaining about the smell that wafts across when the wind is blowing in the right direction, it's just horrible," he said.

"People don't realise whatever they drop into the gutter or the street ends up in the stormwater system, flushed down into the lake where it rots and provides nutrients for all the

organisms that feed blue-green algae. A local kite surfer tells me he is always pulling junk out of the water and our poor sea scouts can't get on to the water at all because it is closed most of the time.

The Tuggeranong Community Council has called on all Tuggeranong residents to join them for a huge rubbish collection effort on Clean-Up Australia Day on Sunday March 4.

Mr Johnston said he hoped it would be the first of an ongoing effort to keep the lake clean, including

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stench coming from their lake

generating support for a long-term goal of re-establishing wetlands that once fed into the lake.

"Before Tuggeranong was established, we had beautiful wetlands that attracted native wildlife but then the government built concrete channels to funnel stormwater down to the lake in the late '70s or '80s," he said. "At the time it was considered an engineering feat and won an engineering award, but now ... a torrent, a real torrent runs through those channels.

"If we re-established the wetlands

we could do away with the channels, the wetlands would act as filters for the water and we won't suffer the problem of the lake being closed all the time due to algae."

The Tuggeranong Community Council, Southern ACT Water Catchment Group and Water Watch have all made submissions to local MPs and Chief Minister Katy Gallagher calling for the wetlands but admit it will be a long process before any work is started.

"It is an ambitious plan but one that will be much more successful if

we start to gather community support now," Mr Johnston said.

The Clean-Up Australia Day team is set to meet at the Tuggeranong Community Centre, on Cowlshaw Street, at 9.30am and split into two groups to work their way around the lake. Both teams would then finish at the Tuggeranong Sea Scout Hall, where the scouts will be doing their own clean-up of the lake, for a lunchtime sausage sizzle.

Volunteers can register for the team at www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/Tuggeranong+Lake