

Lake conditions are rubbish

Residents urged to clean up acts

By Meredith Clisby

SOUTHSIDE residents are being asked to clean up their acts and stop contributing to the disgusting condition of Lake Tuggeranong.

Those blowing leaves and grass clippings into stormwater drains and littering rubbish such as chip packets and plastic bottles are contributing daily to the filthy state of the lake, says the local catchment group.

The Tuggeranong Community Council has also called for action to be taken to return the lake to its rightful state as an attraction of the area.

Southern ACT Catchment Group Waterwatch coordinator Martin Lind said it was important for people to remember that everything entering a stormwater drain would end up in the lake.

"Rubbish is our first problem," he said. "Blowing leaves down drains is one of the worst things we can do."

Mr Lind said rubbish being flushed into the river also contributed to the recurring problem of blue green algal blooms in the lake.

The ACT Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate issued an extreme alert for Lake Tuggeranong in the first week of January.

The lake was closed for primary-contact recreation activities such as swimming and water-skiing.

Mr Lind said the nutrients flowing in the water as rubbish and garden waste broke down and provided the perfect breeding ground for the algae.

"Blue green algae are always there, they're always in the water to some



Tuggeranong Sea Scouts group leader Michelle Taylor and with Cubs and Scouts who are angry about continual lake closures due to algae affecting activities.

extent, it lives in the sediment," he said.

When nutrients build in the river and the weather warms up the blooms "go ballistic" and turn the lake toxic, Mr Lind said more regular cleaning out of the lake's gross pollutant traps would help the situation.

Tuggeranong Sea Scouts group leader Michelle Taylor said the annual closure of the lake due to blue green algae impacted on the activities the club could run.

She said the closure was always a huge inconvenience to members and she had people leave the group because

they didn't get enough time on the water. While she said the group was allowed to use the lake under strict conditions during some types of closure it still impacted on the children because any activity had to stop once they came into contact with the water.

"It's a known fact that term four is

usually our best opportunity to get on the lake," Ms Taylor said. "We don't think the ACT Government seems to be doing enough to fix the lake, there doesn't seem to be any strategy."

Picture: Elena Lee

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