

# "DON'T LET COUNCIL THROW IN THE TOWEL ON LAKE HUGH MUNTZ"

## A LAKE HUGH MUNTZ CARE GROUP NEWSLETTER



### Summary

- **Lake health failing:** The environmental health of the lake is deteriorating.
- **Council is responsible:** City of Gold Coast is responsible for lake maintenance as the asset owner.
- **Lake status to be changed:** The CoGC/Council has advised their intention is to treat/maintain the lake as a secondary contact water asset, **NOT a primary contact water asset (NO SWIMMING)**, contrary to the Lake Management Plan intent.
- **Lake is a community asset:** The lake is a community asset regularly used by a wide range of community organisations and community residents and its health is of benefit and a responsibility to all who use it.
- **Community inaction on appropriate lake maintenance will likely have wide ranging and serious impacts:** If the community does not come together to take action to ensure the lake's environmental health, economic and social consequences may follow for our community.

*Images below highlight the degradation in water quality*



### **ACTIONS - CONCERNED COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS:**

If you are a concerned community organisation email us your contact details to [lakehughmuntz@gmail.com](mailto:lakehughmuntz@gmail.com) We will contact you shortly.

### **ACTIONS - CONCERNED RESIDENTS:**

If you are a concerned resident, please send us an email to [lakehughmuntz@gmail.com](mailto:lakehughmuntz@gmail.com) We will add you to our mailing list and keep you up to date on developments.

## Details

Recently the LHM Care Group representatives met with Councillor Paul Taylor and Council Officials to discuss the recent lake closure due to Algae Outbreaks.

The Care group raised concern that this is an indication of a further decline in the quality of the lake. While Algae outbreaks can occur in any lake, high nutrient levels that are present in LHM act as a trigger, making the lake far more susceptible to regular outbreaks.

At the meeting we were advised that Council is **no longer prepared to maintain the lake for Primary Contact – in other words suitable for swimming**. Council indicated that the lake was never intended from Primary Contact anyway.

The engineering division, who looks after the lake indicated they have other lakes in far worse condition than LHM and the resources would be better spent in those areas. That LHM has received more than its fair share of funds. Engineering indicated the water quality flowing out of the 16 drains into the lake is difficult to manage.

Another revelation was that the reed beds after several years of testing have offered no improvement in water quality. A \$200k investment with NO return. A decision is yet to be made regarding possible removal of the reed beds.

## Water Quality Tests.

Every year, the Care Group have gone through persistent communication just to get ongoing water quality analysis that relate to the health of the lake including water visibility and nitrogen etc. The results are important feed back to the community to keep water quality on the agenda when it comes to Best Practices within the catchment area. To date, 2016 results are still unknown! The concern is that council are not even actively monitoring, analysing and if necessary reacting to lake health issues at all as no results are available. At the meeting, the Community health Department indicated an automated water analysis program for all GC catchment areas is being developed and should be online in 2018? We are sceptical of this deadline since being promised bi-annual reports for 2014!

## History.

- From 1982 to 2007 the lake was left largely to its own devices with declining water quality.
- To Council's credit, in 2007 a management report was commissioned to address the ongoing decline in water quality over the past 10 years. The community meeting survey at the Presentation of the management report revealed 79% rated primary contact as high importance.
- For the next 4 years and after numerous inquiries to Council it was clear that there were no plans to implement any improvements in the report while the lake continued to decline.
- In 2011 after public outcry over the closure of the lake, Reed beds were suggested by Council as an option to improve water quality.
- In 2012 the reed beds were installed and the Care Group formed.

Since 2012, the Care Group have lobbied Council and helped in getting actioned the following improvements. To Paul Taylor's credit, the funding has been made available for many of these improvements out of his own budget.

- Drains painted – Water flows into lake sign.
- Buffer vegetation in Pre School area.
- Gully Baskets to collect leaf litter in drains.
- Notice Board.
- Soil Stabilisation around drain in Bel Air park.
- Under tree planting of shade tolerant grass in Bel Air Park.
- Extra Bin and Doggy Bag Dispensers in Lamington Park.

**With "No Plan" and without the intervention of residents and the Care Group, this work would not have happened.**

## Engineering Maintenance 1982-2017.

- 2012. Reed Beds Installed.
- 2014. Gully baskets Installed.
- 2014. Foreshore sand replenishment carried out.
- 2017. Surface Weed Removal
- Several top ups of sand in swimming area at Bel Air Park.

Clearly, there has been minimum maintenance and costs over the life of the lake. With no improvements from the reed beds it is questionable that the cost be even included as expenditure or maintenance in LHM!

In respect to LHM and any other waterways, it is far more cost effective to maintain a lake in healthy condition than try to restore after deterioration. With the recent algae outbreak, surface weed began forming over areas of the lake. With council's decision to reduce the level of service, it will only be a matter of time before increased maintenance including surface weed removal, cleaning of foreshores and mosquito/midge treatments are regularly required.



The Care Group realise that there are ongoing costs involved in maintaining the lake for swimming but what are the costs to the local community if not maintained?

LHM offers a unique training and recreational environment used by many groups including;

- Australian Institute of Sport. (Triathlon team train every Monday)
- Surfers Paradise Triathlon Club
- Mermaid Beach SLSC
- Nobby SLSC
- Burleigh SLSC
- Burleigh Mowbray Park SLSC
- Kurrawa SLSC
- Merrimac Sailing School etc.

A spokesperson for the Surfers Paradise Triathlon Club indicated they have Membership that includes many water front residents and residents in the immediate vicinity of LHM. Our current members also include Former Triathlon Olympic Gold & Bronze Winners Emma Snowsill/Frodono (Gold), Emma Moffatt( 3 time Olympian) and Courtney Atkinson ( 2 time Olympian) and Ashley Gentle 2018 Commonwealth Games Team member

Surf Lifesaving Australia has booked the lake for the WHOLE YEAR as a bad weather alternative venue – Are competitors going to put at risk now that there preferred backup will not be available?

Lake Hugh Muntz was to form an integral part in the upcoming Commonwealth games. LHM has been recommended as a training venue for athletes from many visiting countries - where will they train now?

***“If the lake continues to decline this unique swimming area will be lost forever”***

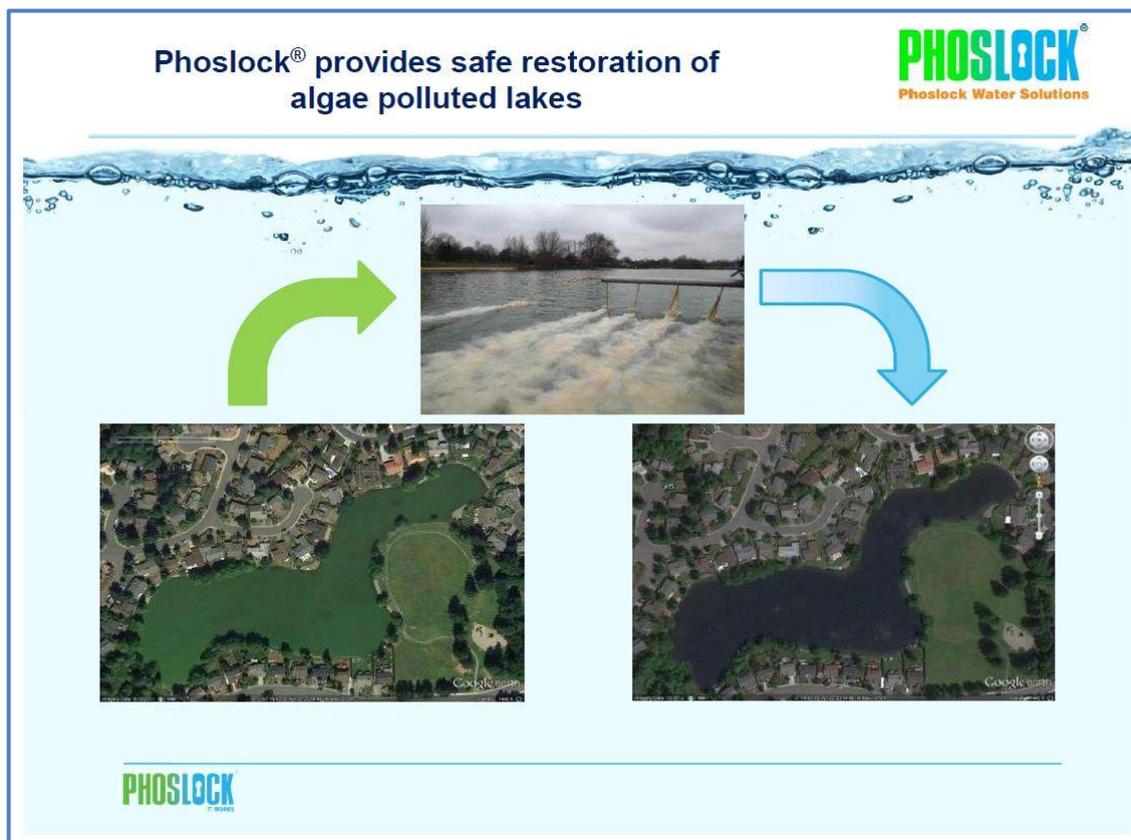
Many residents have specifically chosen to live within walking distance of the lake to have access to the amenities.

But what are the costs to the waterfront owners? Clearly, ongoing deterioration in water quality and the resultant loss of swimming activities will have a negative effect on real estate values.

### Solutions.

There are many solutions outlined in the Management Report that are available to council to turn around the decline in the lake. One possible solution can be provided by an Australian Company called Phoslock. Phoslock is an environmentally-friendly tool in algae management. It was developed in Australia by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Phoslock is a natural product which starves algae of phosphate, thereby preventing its growth. Unlike many other treatments for blue-green algae, no chemicals are used. It works by locking away the phosphate present in the water body, permanently preventing its re-release for use by algae.

**Phoslock was successfully used to restore the triathlon lake before use in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.**



The Care group will continue to have discussions with Council focussing on;

- Reversing Councils decision to change the lake use from Primary to Secondary contact.
- Clarify Engineering Priorities of expenditure on other non-swimming lakes.
- To implement a “PLAN” to reverse the decline in water quality.

It is important now more than ever to continue environmentally sound practices within the lake catchment including;

- Pick up all dog Droppings.
- Go easy on the fertilizer.
- Don't wash anything down the drain except clean water.
- Make contractors aware of the sensitive nature of the area.

**Lake Hugh Muntz  
Care Group**

Website: <http://lakehughmuntz.com.au>

Contact: [lakehughmuntz@gmail.com](mailto:lakehughmuntz@gmail.com)