

LAKE IN CRISIS - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

For the second year in a row, Lake Hugh Muntz was closed this summer for high levels of algae! In the 35-year history of this swimming lake, these consecutive closures are unprecedented with the last recorded algae outbreak before 2016/17 and 2017/18 closures way back in 2006!

Enquiries with council revealed that prior to the second closure, algae levels remained in the orange warning zone for an extended period. Clearly two consecutive closures highlight the poor condition of the lake and the inability to recover.

Will the Lake be Closed Next Year?

YES! The conditions in the lead up to the second algae outbreak were not unusual: A normal spring leading into a warm summer with the lake level relatively high for this time of year. The lake went into the Red/Closed level in December well before the hottest part of the season. It has NO capacity to survive the hottest month of the year, January or beyond into February for next year and subsequent years! Only in cooler, wetter months can the lake gasp for life.

Council Blame Environmental Conditions!

Prolonged hot weather was determined by council as the main environmental cause of the first outbreak. But why have other lakes not suffered under the same environmental conditions? Practically within walking distance of Lake Hugh Muntz is another freshwater lake with many similarities. Like LHM, West Lake in Robina is in a highly urbanised area, has drains from surrounding streets flowing into the lake and receives minimal flushing. Reed beds are installed as well as gully baskets to some of the drains. This lake also has several aerators installed. This lake has *not* suffered from any algae blooms over recent times with far better water quality than LHM.

A striking comparison of the two lakes in the images recently taken below highlights the appalling state of LHM.

Lake Hugh Muntz 7/1/18

West Lake 9/1/18



Why No Aerator or Other Solutions Investigated in LHM?

As an example of other solutions in use, West Lake and Robina Lakes have an extensive installation of Aerators. Aerators increase diffused oxygen in the water, which in turn supports and encourages the growth of beneficial aerobic bacteria. These beneficial bacteria break down organic matter and consume excess nutrients which helps to balance and improve water quality and **reduce algae blooms**.

What is Council Hiding?

The Care Group requested water quality results over 7 months ago after the initial algae outbreak. Previously, Council have provided results but now refuse our requests. Out of desperation, we have requested information under the "Right to Information Act 2009." Under the circumstances, we have no confidence in Council providing an unbiased report on the ongoing condition of the lake. In the light of NO explanation by Council we are raising funds to seek an independent analysis.

Lake Now Toxic!

Algae danger levels are measured in several ways. By the number of algae cells per volume of water and by the percentage of toxins in a volume. Council advice indicated the lake is now in the red from excessive toxin levels.

How Much is Your Property Worth Now?

For the broader LHM community who paid a premium choosing to live near and enjoy an environmentally healthy freshwater lake, look at the comparison photos of LHM vs a healthy lake and ask the question “how much has your property value declined and why should you pay for Council’s mismanagement?”

History.

- LHM has suffered from 20 years of excessive nutrients under Council’s mismanagement.
- After 10 yrs of increasing nutrients, the LHM Management Plan was released in 2008. The stated brief: *To achieve a healthy and aesthetically valuable environment, indicative of a freshwater lake system in a sub-tropical setting.*
- The implementation of the LHM Management Plan to maintain a healthy lake was largely ignored.

Council’s Non-Plan to Reverse the Decline.

There has **NEVER** been a plan to implement the Council Approved management plan! The Care Group’s numerous requests for a “plan” were ignored. Improvements were only the result of resident complaints and the determination of the Care Group to get some progress.

Main Solutions implemented that could have a measurable effect on nutrients;

- 15 years into the decline – trial of reed beds – no measureable improvement.
- 17 years into the decline – Drain baskets fitted – Poor results, secondary treatment catchment required.

Too little too late! These solutions alone were NEVER going to turn around the decline!

So What are Council Doing in This Crisis?

In a meeting with Council one year ago (in March 2017), Cr Taylor and Council officers advised:

- NO further funds are available to spend on LHM.
- They will not be changing maintenance – *the same level that has proven to be inadequate.*
- They were downgrading the lake status from primary contact (swimming) to secondary (no swimming).

Council Have Signed a “Death Sentence” for LHM!

The ongoing closures are a disaster for the health of the lake as well as the community who regularly use this public asset. The dependency on this lake for users and local clubs is highlighted by the fact that many are still swimming in the lake despite the risk to their health – for some users, there are no other suitable training areas available! Ongoing lake health issues need to be addressed **URGENTLY!**

YOUR URGENT ACTION REQUIRED!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

STEP 1. COULD YOU PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION ON OUR WEBSITE THAT STATES;

- Council formally classifies the designation of the lake (set out in the Lake Management Plan 2008) to be a PRIMARY CONTACT water body and suitable for swimming and related recreational activities at the request, and for the benefit, of the local community; AND
- Council seriously and expeditiously investigates all available technical solutions to returning the lake on a sustainable basis to pre-2007 water quality levels to enable reliable use as a PRIMARY CONTACT water body.

STEP 2. COULD YOU PLEASE SHARE THE WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE WITH YOUR CONTACTS to get as many signatures on the petition as possible and spread the word on the possible Death of Lake Hugh Muntz!

STEP 3. COULD YOU PLEASE COMPLAIN AND COMPLAIN LOUDLY TO THE DECISION MAKERS BELOW on the points above including;

- Why has Council, the asset owner, let this unique freshwater lake deteriorate to such a poor condition?
- Why the Management Plan was not implemented in full?
- Why Council have no plans to rectify the ongoing decline?

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SAVE LAKE HUGH MUNTZ