

# Blue Lake Water Care

FACT SHEET | JULY 2014



The Blue Lake and regional groundwater is one of the main reasons for the strength and prosperity of the region.

The Blue Lake is at risk of being taken for granted. The very community that relies upon it also lives and works on the land surface through which the rainfall recharge must pass to replenish the Lake.

Therefore, caring for our Blue Lake water is paramount for the health and prosperity of the region. By applying the below information, the quality and sustainability of The Blue Lake can be secured.

## Did you know?

The Blue Lake contains 36,000 million litres of water?

### Industries within the Capture Zone

The number one rule is to make sure that any stormwater that leaves your business site is pure rainwater! Check the entrance and exit points to your site - is there any chance of pollutants escaping?

Even temporary business sites such as building sites are important. It is estimated that in Adelaide, building sites contribute more pollution to the stormwater system than any other industry. For more information on building sites, please visit Clean Site :[www.kesab.asn.au/cleansite.html](http://www.kesab.asn.au/cleansite.html)

Be careful with storing and moving chemicals. There are guidelines for the storage of different types of chemicals, such as the use of a bunded container (ie, a container with an outer wall or tank designed to retain the contents of an inner tank in the event of leakage or spillage). Ensure that you have relevant material data safety sheets on hand and that you have contingency plans. Remember, if there is an accidental spill you want to be absolutely sure nothing nasty gets into Mount Gambier's groundwater!

Make sure that anything which is exposed to rain (outside) is within the current Environment Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines. For example, waste oil has to be covered from rain to keep it from escaping into the environment. The revised Code of Practice for industrial, retail and commercial stormwater management is a good guide to what you need to know for your business so you can protect the Blue Lake and avoid a fine or Environmental Protection Order at the same time.

The EPA has information sheets for all types of businesses, with practical advice on keeping stormwater clean. Look them up and see if your business type is covered: [www.epa.sa.gov.au/businesses](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/businesses)



## Commercial businesses in Mount Gambier

Do you wash down the street in front of your shop or premises?

First you need to check with SA Water as under current water conservation measures you are not able to wash down cement in this way. Unless you get a special licence, you have to limit your street clean up to broom or outdoor vacuum.

Also, the rubbish you sweep up in front of your premise is not to be swept into the gutter. Even little bits of rubbish such as cigarette butts are damaging and can poison stormwater.

Did you know that waste oil cannot be stored outside without a cover? If waste oil drums are exposed to rain water they risk polluting stormwater.

The Environment Protection Agency has information information sheets for all types of businesses with practical advice on keeping stormwater clean. Look them up and see if your business type is covered: [www.epa.sa.gov.au/businesses](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/businesses)

## Keep Stormwater Clean

Everyone in Mount Gambier is a stakeholder in the Blue Lake.

There are many things you can do around the house to help protect the Blue Lake – and all these things are important if you are on mains (Blue Lake) or bore (Blue Lake aquifer) water.

To keep contamination out of stormwater you can:

- Fix leaking cars quickly – the oil that your car loses can pollute stormwater
- Make sure that no chemicals – radiator fluid, fertiliser, weed killer or otherwise can run down the driveway and into the gutter from your house
- Reduce your use of poisons in the garden. Most people use too much and don't consider that there are other ways of doing the same job
- Make sure you clean up your paint brushes correctly (the dirty water should not run down the driveway and into the gutter)
- Wash your car on the lawn (where the water can help the grass, to ensure that detergents don't pollute the stormwater)
- Pick up after your dog.

Keep lawn clippings out of the gutter. Leaf litter and lawn clippings may seem innocent but they will foul the water supply, adding to the nitrate loading on the lake and robbing the system of oxygen.

## Save water in the home and garden

The South East are subject to permanent water conservation measures from SA Water. You can be fined for not following these guidelines so it is a good idea to make sure you know what the rules are! Visit <http://www.sawater.com.au/sawater/>

Beyond following these guidelines there are also many water-saving things you can do around the home to help take the pressure off the Blue Lake. For example a water-saving shower head can save you 11 litres of water a MINUTE!!

- Did you know that more than 40% of household water use is outside? Let your lawn die off in summer. Consider planting drought-resistant lawns or making areas which are inefficient to water lawn-free, such as slopes, where a native groundcover will do better and look great.
- If you have to water your lawn, water once every 10 days – a good soak every now and then encourages drought resistance. When mowing, keep lawns at least 2cm tall. The shade will protect the roots from the sun and the lawn will require less water to keep in shape.
- Mulch can help as well. It can prevent 73% of evaporation loss, reduce weed growth (weeds compete with plants for water).
- Ask your nursery about hardy plants that don't require much water – you will be surprised at the range a waterless garden can contain.
- Fix leaks! That drip drip sound is telling you something – that you are wasting the Blue Lake.
- Have shorter showers – 30% of water used inside the home goes down the shower drain.
- Make sure your dishwasher and washing machine are full before using them.
- Don't leave the tap running when doing a few dishes, washing vegetables or brushing your teeth. There is no good reason to waste water this way.
- Consider buying a front-loading washing machine as they can save up to 100 litres per wash compared to their top-loading cousins.
- If you have a pool always keep it covered. You can reduce evaporation by 80%, saving lots of water.

More tips are available at: [www.sawater.com.au/sawater](http://www.sawater.com.au/sawater)

For more information, or if you are a business or industry needing assistance in Blue Lake Water Care, contact Natural Resources South East on 08 87351177

