

Media Release:

13.09.11

Elevated Result of Bore Water Testing Received

Preliminary readings from a bore water sample submitted from the Lake Bennett area under the Territory Government's free community bore water testing for private bore owners, has shown an elevated level of arsenic of 0.188 milligrams per litre.

This reading is above the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) health threshold value for arsenic of 0.007 milligrams per litre. A sample taken from a second bore showed a reading below the guidelines. Water from these two sources comes together in a tank before being piped out for usage.

Samples taken from tap water supplied to the units gave a preliminary reading of 0.004 milligrams per litre, and while this result is below the ADWG threshold and thus poses no immediate danger or risk to public health, repeat samples are being taken to confirm the water quality of the bore. Further advice can then be provided to landowners on those results, including long term drinking water options and health information by Government officers.

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) Director for Water Resources Ian Lancaster said NRETAS received the preliminary results yesterday from the sample submitted for testing by a member of the Lake Bennett body corporate.

"Upon receiving the preliminary results NRETAS immediately ordered a second test and have today attended the site with Department of Health officers to take further samples of water from the bores, water tanks and the lake," Mr Lancaster said.

"The water supply for the privately-owned units at Lake Bennett is from a water tank that is filled from two bores, and samples from each of these three water supplies were received for testing.

"The second bore received a preliminary reading of 0.005 milligrams per litre, and the water tank received a preliminary reading of 0.004 milligrams per litre; both below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

"Based on this information, it may be that the preliminary reading of 0.188 milligrams per litre recorded for the first bore is an anomaly, and it is essential that it is retested.

Results for the second sample taken today by Government officers are expected within 24 hours.

"NRETAS and the Department of Health have been in contact with Lake Bennett body corporate to advise of the initial results, further action and advice.

"Lake Bennett Wilderness Resort do not use bore water however NRETAS have contacted the resort to advise them of these preliminary readings, and NRETAS have today taken samples of the lake water for testing as a precaution."

To date, 13 samples submitted for testing under the free one-off Territory Government private bore water testing offer have recorded traces of arsenic above the Guidelines from a total of 782 results so far received, and all 13 bore owners have been notified.

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines set conservative health or aesthetic guideline values. The Guidelines use current knowledge to determine the concentration of a water characteristic that does not result in any significant risk to the consumer over a lifetime of consuming water from that source.

Ends

Issued: 4.10pm Tuesday, 13 September 2011.

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport

Aimee Cadan Ph. 8999 4730

www.nt.gov.au/nreta