

Media Release:

29.09.11

Update on Results of Bore Water Testing

An additional two sample results received by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) have recorded traces of arsenic above the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG), from a total of 1197 bore owners that sent samples for testing as part of the recent bore water testing conducted by the Territory Government.

This brings the total to 26 samples out of 1167 results so far received that have recorded traces of arsenic that have exceeded the ADWG threshold value of 0.007 milligrams per litre.

The Department of Health advises that these bore owners should take repeat samples to confirm the water quality and drink bottled water until their water quality can be assured.

NRETAS Director for Water Resources Ian Lancaster said all bore owners that have results with readings of arsenic above the ADWG had been spoken to regarding their results.

"I have spoken with all bore owners to inform them of their initial sample results, and the detailed results have been sent with an accompanying letter of explanation and fact sheets," Mr Lancaster said.

"The level of arsenic found in these samples was above the health guideline value recommended in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, which have been developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council."

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines' health threshold value for arsenic is 0.007 mg/L.

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.

An additional 157 samples have revealed exceedances of some metals including barium, cadmium, copper, manganese, nickel, lead or antimony; believed at this preliminary stage to be due to the geology of the area or associated with household plumbing, which has transferred traces of metal to the water.

All bore owners that submitted samples for testing will be notified of their results as they are received from the Northern Territory Environmental Laboratory through NRETAS, and will be provided with recommended courses of action depending on the results of their bores.

The remaining results are expected to all be received by the end of September and bore owners will be notified accordingly.

Results from the samples that recorded traces of arsenic above the ADWG are as follows:

| Date released | Region | Milligrams per litre | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| 30 Aug 2011 | Howard Springs | 0.01 | | | |
| | Humpty Doo | 0.0205 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.0175 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.0285 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.0305 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.0075 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.024 | | | |
| 8 Sept 2011 | Adelaide River | 0.043 | | | |
| | Humpty Doo | 0.017 | | | |
| 15 Sept 2011 | Adelaide River | 0.013 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.014 | | | |
| | Noonamah (Acacia) | 0.025 | | | |
| | Lake Bennett | Bore A | 0.188* | 0.027** | 0.024*** |
| | | Bore B | 0.005* | 0.036** | 0.005*** |
| | Tank | 0.004* | 0.154** | 0.013*** | |
| 23 Sept 2011 | Darwin River | 0.014 | | | |
| | Fly Creek (Acacia) | 0.009 | | | |
| | Lake Bennett | 0.011 | | | |
| | Lake Bennett | 0.014 | | | |
| | Lake Bennett | 0.017 | | | |
| | Virginia | 0.085 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.01 | | | |
| | Livingstone | 0.085 | | | |
| | Humpty Doo | 0.018 | | | |
| 28 Sept 2011 | Noonamah (Acacia) | 0.009 | | | |
| | Darwin River | 0.036 | | | |

* Reading from community sample taken 17/07/11

** Reading from follow up testing done by NTG taken 13/09/11

*** Reading from second testing done by NTG taken 15/09/11

Ends

Media note – attached map identifies regions that bore samples were submitted from under the free community sampling.

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