

Media Release:

07.10.2011

Final Results of Bore Water Testing Received

Final sample results have been received by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS), from a total of 1197 bore owners that sent samples for testing as part of the recent free community bore water testing conducted by the Territory Government.

This brings the final total to 27 samples out of 1272 samples – or 2.1% of samples – received that have recorded traces of arsenic that have exceeded the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) threshold value of 0.007 milligrams per litre.

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.

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.”

A total of 174 other 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 associated with household plumbing or the geology of the area, 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.

All results have now been received and bore owners will be notified accordingly once the individual reports have been received from the laboratory.

Mr Lancaster said the free bore water testing program highlighted that many bore owners are not aware of their responsibility to maintain the water quality of their bores.

“Regular testing and maintenance of private bores is the responsibility of the bore owner and we will be exploring ways to further communicate this and raise awareness of other water quality issues to rural landowners,” Mr Lancaster said.

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

Date released	Region	Milligrams per litre			
30 Aug 2011	Howard Springs	0.010			
	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		0.0085			
Darwin River		0.010			
Livingstone		0.0085			
Humpty Doo	0.018				
28 Sept 2011	Noonamah (Acacia)	0.009			
	Darwin River	0.036			
6 Oct 2011	Darwin River	0.042			

* 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.

Issued: 3.05pm Friday, 7 October 2011.