

Have you seen a turtle or frogs?

Since remedial works have taken place at the Davidson Reserve Weir in Kapunda, the lake has remained full since the last rains and proven to be a popular venue for residents and visitors to the town. Prior to Christmas, a plant began to grow on the surface of the water. Initial indications are that the floating plant may be Azolla, a native floating fern that does not detrimentally affect the quality of water in the pond.

In fact the ducks in the pond are very fond of it and there are reports of frogs and turtle sightings.

The presence and rapid rate of growth of the plant in the pond most likely indicates high nutrient levels and a warm water temperature. Assuming the plant is Azolla, it acts by removing excessive nutrients from the water which in turn can control outbreaks of other unwanted nuisance plants and potentially toxic blue green algal blooms.

Council have been monitoring the plant and will continue to do so. Confirmation is also being sought from relevant experts for plant species identification along with water quality testing. Water sampling and analysis from the Australian Water Quality Centre will take place in order to determine why the Azolla is thriving so well. Water quality needs to be controlled and upstream influences such as fertiliser run off may have a negative impact.

So while the plant has changed the look of the pond, all indications are that it will not be a cause for concern, however until testing is completed, the public are advised not to touch the water or the plant. The monitoring of the plant will continue to control its growth and ensure it remains beneficial for the eco-system.



How can the community help reduce the impact of nutrients on waterways?

1. Pick up animal droppings from lawns and parks and place in a bin.
2. Do not feed the native wildlife. Human food attracts pest species which increase faecal waste and increase nutrients entering the water. Animals can also be reliant on human feeding and lose their ability to forage.
3. Dispose of garden waste appropriately and not in or near water. Otherwise weeds can enter the system and add excessive nutrients.
4. Don't wash cars on hard surfaces where water run off may enter the water disposal system.
5. Use fertilisers in moderation and in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.



Further information may be obtained from the following websites or by contacting Council's General Manager Infrastructure and Environment on 8525 3200

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/soil-and-water/water/farm-water-solutions/technical-resources/azolla-growth-in-farm-dams>

