



**Suzanne Orr MLA**

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water  
Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services  
Minister for Seniors and Veterans

Member for Yerrabi

# Arrangements Brief

<b>Function</b>	Consultation launch: Options for restoring Lake Tuggeranong
<b>Venue</b>	Lakefront near the Tuggeranong Community Centre
<b>Host</b>	Name: Dr Ralph Ogden, Healthy Waterways Program Manager Mobile: <i>Personal information</i>
<b>Date and time</b>	8:15am – 8:45am, Thursday 30 October 2025
<b>Your time commitment</b>	30 minutes, excluding travel time
<b>Catering</b>	None
<b>Dress code</b>	Business
<b>Your role</b>	To provide a short speech on the goals of the community consultation. Talking points are available at <a href="#">Attachment A</a> .
<b>Where to park</b>	Parking and event location map is at <a href="#">Attachment C</a> .
<b>Who will meet you</b>	Dr Ralph Ogden will meet you at the event location.
<b>Advisor attending</b>	Josh Milthorpe and Tim Mott
<b>Audience</b>	Approximately 15 attendees including media, Directorate officials and stakeholders.
<b>VIPs:</b>	<p>Martine Franco, Executive Officer, Southern ACT Catchment Management Group</p> <p>Martin Lind, Waterwatch Coordinator, Southern ACT Catchment Management Group</p> <p>Jim Daly, Chair of Lake Tuggeranong Sea Scouts</p> <p><b>Possible attendees:</b></p> <p><i>A pre-briefing with community council members take place ahead of the event on 27 October 2025 noting the new direction of the consultation paper and options report. Post pre-briefing with the council, the following members may be invited to the event.</i></p> <p>Jeffrey Bollard, President Tuggeranong Community Council</p> <p>Glenys Patulny, Vice President Tuggeranong Community Council</p>

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<b>Past involvement</b>	None
<b>Sensitivities:</b>	Improving the water quality of Lake Tuggeranong has been a long-term issue for the Tuggeranong community. In the current term of government, there is a commitment to develop a long-term plan for a healthier Lake Tuggeranong. Further talking points and FAQs are available at <a href="#">Attachment D</a> .
<b>Order of ceremonies</b>	<b>8:00am:</b> Arrival at site, meet and greet Directorate staff and VIPs <b>8:15am:</b> Deliver short speech to open the consultation <b>8:20am:</b> Key stakeholder to provide short speech on improving Lake Tuggeranong and benefits to the broader community <b>8:25am:</b> Media Q&A <b>8:35am:</b> Media photography or filming <b>8:45am:</b> Event concludes
<b>Social media accounts</b>	NA
<b>Media</b>	Media release at <a href="#">Attachment B</a>
<b>Outstanding regulatory issues</b>	NA

## Talking Points/Speaking Notes

### KEY MESSAGES:

- Welcome. It's wonderful to be here today on the foreshore of Lake Tuggeranong.
- We have made a commitment to restore Lake Tuggeranong.
- We are now seeking community feedback on the proposed options that will inform the development of a 10-year plan to restore the lake.
- We are right here in the heart of the town centre, surrounded by the library, arts centre, community centre and Lake Tuggeranong College and the rowing club, which just demonstrates how the lake provides a beautiful backdrop to so many diverse activities and businesses.
- Unfortunately, as we all know, the lake is not always pristine. The Lake does at some point, most years, suffer from blue-green algal blooms, especially in summer when we'd most like to be using it for recreation.
- The good news is that we now know what is causing the lake to experience significant algal blooms so often, and one of the major factors – nutrient pollution – is something that we can mostly control.
- We've done extensive research and have come up with 10 solid options that will reduce nutrient pollution – and algal blooms – in the lake.
- Now, we're inviting the community to have their say on the options – to tell us how implementing these options will impact them.
- We've already used a number of these options before – such as creating wetlands – and these have become valued places for recreation, enhancing the urban landscape with natural elements.
- The proposed options that we're consulting on range from new wetlands to stormwater recycling at sports fields to increased street sweeping.
- It's important for people to understand that, while there's no single option that will solve the problem, stopping the nutrient pollution at the source is the most effective way to keep the lake clean and healthy.

- This means the community has an important role to play in restoring Lake Tuggeranong, by reducing fertiliser use and preventing leaves and grass clippings from their gardens and verges entering driveways and gutters.
- We want to support the community to take up these waterway friendly behaviours, and part of this consultation is about hearing from households about what will help them the most.
- Whether you live, work or play near the lake, in the region or further afield, we want to hear from you.
- I'm looking forward to working together with the Tuggeranong community to make a healthier lake for everyone.
- Thank you.



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30/10/2025

# Media Release

## Consultation now open for a healthier Lake Tuggeranong

Consultation is now open for the community to have their say on a range of proposed options to restore and improve the water quality of Lake Tuggeranong.

Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water Suzanne Orr said restoring the health of Lake Tuggeranong is a key priority for the ACT Government.

“Lake Tuggeranong, like many of our waterways, is under pressure from nutrient pollutants that wash off gardens and driveways,” Minister Orr said.

“Fallen leaves, fertiliser, grass clippings and soil end up in stormwater drains increasing the risk of blue green algal blooms and lake closures.

“Since 2014, the ACT Government’s Healthy Waterways Program has built 9 large wetlands, upgraded stormwater systems, and delivered community education programs to improve water quality in Lake Tuggeranong.

“The wetlands have helped reduce nutrient pollution entering the lake from within the stormwater system, but we now know that the most effective way to reduce nutrients in the lake and prevent blue-green algal blooms is to prevent nutrient pollution at its source.

“This means that we must shift our focus from building infrastructure in the stormwater system to interventions that stop pollution at the source.

“Through this consultation, we are presenting a range of options that will require community action, from ~~reducing fertiliser use in gardens to storm water recycling at sports fields and increased street sweeping~~ adapting gardening habits to collecting leaves from road verges. The community will be invited to have their say on how the lake’s conditions affects them, how implementing these options will impact them and help identify the best ways to support residents to adopt practical solutions.

“The government already provides a range of ongoing services to help reduce nutrient pollution but we must also understand how the community is willing to help.

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“This feedback will help shape a 10-year plan towards to government’s goal to keep Lake Tuggeranong more consistently free of algal blooms by 2035,” said Minister Orr.

Community consultation is open from 30 October to 12 December 2025.

For more information and to have your say, visit the ACT Government’s [YourSay Conversations](#).

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## Attachment C – Parking arrangements

Public parking is available on the other side of Cowlishaw Street, in the Reed Street North carpark, approximately 200 metres from the location for the media event.



# Talking Points

## Issue

**Date: October 2025**

**Subject: Options for restoring Lake Tuggeranong – community consultation**

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### KEY MESSAGES:

- Lake Tuggeranong is under pressure from nutrient pollutants that wash off gardens, driveways and road gutters. Fallen leaves, fertiliser, grass clippings and soil end up in stormwater drains increasing the risk of blue green algal blooms and lake closures.
- The ACT Government will be working together with residents and business to prevent nutrient pollution entering Lake Tuggeranong so the community can enjoy a lake which is more consistently free of unhealthy algal blooms by 2035.
- The Tuggeranong community is invited to share feedback on potential options to improve Lake Tuggeranong, helping the ACT Government shape a 10-year restoration plan.
- Consultation will be open from 30 October to 12 December 2025. All Canberrans are invited to have their say. However, if you are a Tuggeranong resident, own a business or work from the Tuggeranong region or if you use the lake for recreation, we particularly want to hear from you.

### TALKING POINTS:

- Lake Tuggeranong can be a vibrant centrepiece for the local community, offering recreation, nature, and connection. These benefits can be compromised when the lake is closed due to algal blooms.
- Blue-green algal blooms are caused by excess nutrients from fallen leaves, grass clippings and fertiliser that enter the lake via stormwater drains.
- Since 2014, the ACT Government has invested over \$40 million through the Healthy Waterways Program (the Program) to improve water quality. This includes building nine large wetlands, upgrading stormwater systems, and delivering community education programs.
- The wetlands have helped reduce nutrient pollution in stormwater draining to the lake, but we now know that the most effective way to reduce nutrient levels in the lake is to prevent the stormwater from becoming polluted in the first place. This means that we must shift our focus from building infrastructure in the stormwater system to interventions that stop pollution at the source.
- Ongoing services to help reduce nutrient pollution at the source include street sweeping, removal of grass clippings after mowing, household green waste bin collections and working with businesses to prevent pollution from their operations.

- Community action will be required to improve the lake. The Tuggeranong community plays a vital role in reducing nutrient pollution entering the lake from homes, businesses, gardens, driveways and road verges.
- Through the consultation the community will be asked how the condition of the lake affects them, what small actions people are willing to take at home, work or within the community to support a healthier lake, and what would help people take the actions that are needed.
- Lake Tuggeranong was chosen for the first catchment plan because it has been the most severely impacted by blue-green algal blooms to date.
- The ACT Government is committed to long-term planning, working with the community and Traditional Custodians to develop a final plan that reflects local feedback.

### **FAQs**

#### **The consultation paper mentions changes to street sweeping in Tuggeranong, will this be part of the consultation?**

- The ACT Government already sweeps streets in Tuggeranong to remove leaves and debris from kerbs and gutters along the road network. Options to target and optimise street sweeping in the Lake Tuggeranong catchment will be considered in the development of the final plan.
- This consultation aims to gauge Tuggeranong residents' willingness to take community-led actions to improve the health of Lake Tuggeranong, beyond government-led initiatives like street sweeping.

#### **Why does the options paper mention the possible use of algicides in the future?**

- The report acknowledges that in the future, chemical treatments like algicides may be needed to manage severe blue-green algal blooms. However, their use could raise environmental concerns, and the report proposes further investigations to assess their effectiveness and potential impacts before any decisions are made.
- There are many other products that suppress algae through competition, and these will also be tested for their effectiveness and safety.

#### **Will the community be consulted about the use of algicides?**

- Not at this stage. The current focus is on reducing pollution from entering lake Tuggeranong. Consultation will occur on in-lake treatment options as these are considered for trialling.

#### **Does blue-green algae pose a health risk to Tuggeranong residents?**

- Contact with blue-green algal blooms can cause skin irritation, respiratory issues, and gastro.
- People should follow ACT Government directions regarding the closure of waterways within the Territory.
- Where a body of water is closed for primary contact, people should avoid whole-body water contact or submersion of the head, like swimming, diving, water skiing and windsurfing.

- If contact recreation is still allowed - like rowing, fishing, boating and canoeing - individuals participating in these activities should avoid direct contact with water as much as possible and immediately shower after coming into contact with water.
- Clothing that has been in the water should also be washed to remove any blue-green algae residue.
- Canberrans are also reminded to wait at least three days after heavy rain before swimming at ponds, lakes or rivers around Canberra.
- This gives our waterways a chance to clear out any harmful bacteria, so you don't get sick.
- Anyone concerned about symptoms of blue-green algae exposure following water exposure should contact their GP.
- Concerns have been raised in the media about a link between aerosolised blue-green algae and an increased risk of motor neurone disease in lake users and residents near affected lakes. No cause-effect relationship has been established and this is an active area of research. The steps the Government is making to clean up Lake Tuggeranong will help mitigate this risk.

**How is the ACT Government protecting people and pets from the health impacts of blue-green algae?**

- Testing is conducted and results are updated weekly during the recreational season (October to April) and the status of recreational water sites is published online. However, algae levels can change quickly.
- Before entering the water, or allowing pets to enter the water, Canberrans are reminded to check the water quality report and check the signposts. If no signs are present, they should assess the water for any changes in conditions or potential hazards.
- Pet owners should not allow their animals to swim in or drink the water if they observe floating lumps or mats of algae.
- The Water Quality Report is available by visiting [cityservices.act.gov.au](http://cityservices.act.gov.au) and searching water quality.

**We've seen ongoing issues at other lakes, which includes two dogs who have died in the last month due to blue-green algae poisoning in Lake Ginninderra. What is government doing to fix ACT waterways?**

- Natural waterways across the country can all be impacted by blue-green algal blooms.
- The ACT is more prone to blue-green algal blooms than many other Australian cities because, as an inland region, its lakes and rivers rely on limited rainfall and upstream flows, which can reduce water movement and allow nutrients to build up. Combined with warmer weather and runoff from urban and rural areas, these conditions create an ideal environment for algae to grow—especially in slower-moving water bodies.
- Lake Tuggeranong was chosen for the first plan for managing water quality because it has been the most severely impacted by blue-green algal blooms to date. Plans for Canberra's other two large urban lakes will follow in the next few years.
- ACT Government has a Healthy Waterways program which aims to improve the water quality across the Territory. The program works to:
  - build wetlands, ponds, and rain gardens

- facilitate an uplift in stormwater management by government, businesses and residents.
- improve our understanding of our waterways through monitoring and research.
- The Healthy Waterways Program has delivered 27 water quality assets across the Territory including, in the Lake Ginninderra catchment, the Belconnen Oval wetland and Yerrabi Pond floating wetlands.

**What is the government specifically doing to support the health of Lake Ginninderra and will government be creating a specific plan for this Lake as well?**

- The Healthy Waterways Program has delivered 27 water quality assets across the Territory including, in the Lake Ginninderra catchment, the Belconnen Oval wetland and Yerrabi Pond floating wetlands.
- In March 2025, ACT Government opened the new Belconnen Oval Wetland which was built with the aim to support the health of Lake Ginninderra.
- The wetland was designed to filter about 30% of sediments and nutrients from stormwater in the Emu Bank catchment before it reaches the lake. Nutrients in stormwater can stimulate harmful algal blooms.
- The wetland includes a subsurface element. It works like a hydroponic garden to target dissolved nutrients, which comprise 50% of total nutrient loads in Canberra stormwater.
- The performance of the wetland, and the contribution of the subsurface element, will be measured once its water plants, which act as nutrient filters, have become established.
- The ACT Government has contracted the University of Canberra to study Lake Ginninderra to understand the levels and sources of nutrients that drive algal blooms in the lake. Reports from this study and weekly samples have indicated Blue-Green Algae levels in the lake remaining at a steady level.
- The Government is also investing in ways to improve our capacity to monitor for poor water quality and algal blooms using sensors.
- The Government will produce a plan for managing and improving water quality in Lake Ginninderra in the next few years, after creating similar plans in Canberra's other two large urban lakes, which tend to have poorer water quality.

**Is the ACT Government consulting with Traditional Custodians?**

- Initial feedback has been sought from Traditional Custodians which will help shape the final plan and the implementation of restoration activities that arise from it.

**BACKGROUND**

- Since 2014, the ACT Government has invested over \$40 million in Lake Tuggeranong through Stages 1 and 2 of the Healthy Waterways Program (the Program) to address ongoing water quality issues.
- In the 2023-24 ACT Budget, the government committed to developing catchment plans that would consolidate learnings from the Program and present options to government to address water quality in four urban lakes and ponds, and one rural catchment.

- Through the Program and its productive collaboration with researchers from the University of Canberra and elsewhere, it has been established that blooms are being driven by excessive amounts of phosphorus entering the lake through stormwater inflows from many diffuse sources.
- Water quality models indicate that measures to prevent phosphorus entering stormwater at the source are more effective than removing it in the stormwater system.
- No individual management option is a 'silver bullet'. Multiple options will need to be implemented to achieve a meaningful decrease in the incidence of algal blooms in Lake Tuggeranong.
- Recently built wetlands and other water quality assets are intercepting around 15% of the nutrient pollution destined for Lake Tuggeranong. Water quality models show that constructed wetlands and other water quality assets are necessary to intercept unavoidable pollution, but on their own won't remove enough nutrients to solve the problem.
- The final version of the Plan, including options for investment, will be considered by government in 2026.

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**Action Officer:** Claire Addison

**Cleared By:** Kieran Lawton

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