

# Use of Treated Effluent from the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre

ACT Health supports the use of treated effluent from the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre (LMWQCC), provided public health risks associated with the use are understood and minimised.

ACT Health has developed this document to safeguard the public and assist businesses when using treated effluent from the LMWQCC.

## Public Health Risks

Treated effluent has the potential to contain organisms that may compromise public health. *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* cysts, for example, may not be completely removed by chlorination. Infection by either of these organisms may produce symptoms such as diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and fever.

## Uses for Lower Molonglo effluent

Treated effluent may be used for a variety of purposes, in areas where public access can be restricted. Such activities include:

- Construction sites (e.g. concrete batching, dust suppression and vehicle wash down)
- Irrigation of access controlled public sites
- Golf courses (e.g. irrigation, water hazards etc)
- Irrigation of commercial turf
- Drip irrigation of non-food crops
- Water features with disinfection
- Commercial landscaping

It is not considered appropriate to use treated effluent:

- At domestic properties (without additional treatment)
- For irrigation of foods that may be consumed uncooked
- In swimming pools and spa water
- In water features without disinfection
- For any application at childcare and aged care facilities

The treated effluent must not be used for drinking purposes or direct human contact.

## Storage of treated effluent

Storage of treated effluent for long periods is not recommended because of the high nutrient levels, potential for growth of pathogenic microorganisms such as *Legionella* and odour control. If the treated effluent is to be stored it should be chlorinated to maintain a minimum of 1.0 mg/litre free chlorine. Signage must be provided stating it is not potable water in accordance with Australian Standard 1319 – 1994, Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.

## Transportation of treated effluent

Transportation of treated effluent should be in appropriate water carting vehicles that are labelled accordingly. Treated effluent should not be transported in potable water containers.

## Using treated effluent

When using treated effluent, health risks can be minimised by:

- Not producing aerosols when distributing the effluent
- Not allowing the effluent to pool
- Maintaining a free chlorine level of 1.0 mg/litre in water features
- Appropriate signage placed where human contact may occur in accordance with Australian Standard 1319 – 1994, Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment
- Not irrigating food plants that are consumed uncooked
- Ensuring that the effluent does not leave the site

## Public Health Act 1997

The use of treated effluent has the potential to increase risks to public health. The *Public Health Act 1997* requires that users of treated effluent do not create an insanitary condition.

## Further Advice

For further information or advice regarding use of treated effluent contact:

Health Protection Service

Phone: 5124 9700

Fax: 5124 9305

Website: [www.health.act.gov.au/hps](http://www.health.act.gov.au/hps)

Icon Water

Phone: 6248 3111

Fax: 6242 1459

Website: [www.iconwater.com.au](http://www.iconwater.com.au)

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