

Circular

Title: Algal Bloom Update – August 2025

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Rowing South Australia is preparing for the official start to our season with our first official 2025 / 2026-time trial and club regatta scheduled for Saturday 23 August. The safety of our members and rowing community remains our highest priority.

We're aware of growing concern around the evolving algal bloom (*Karenia mikimotoi*) situation affecting South Australian waters. Rowing SA is staying up to date and aligned with current health and safety advice to ensure rowing activities can continue safely. This includes rowing training and regattas scheduled throughout the 2025/26 season.

The latest advice from State Government experts indicates that waterways remain open, and rowing activities can continue as planned.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and share updates as more information becomes available.

We have attached the SA Health fact sheet for your information.

For official updates and evolving advice, please visit:

 www.sa.gov.au/algalbloom

Marine Algal Blooms – *Karenia mikimotoi*

A significant, naturally occurring bloom of algae (*Karenia mikimotoi*) is affecting the waters around the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. The bloom has caused large scale marine life mortalities. Exposure to algal fragments produced from the bloom has caused transient health effects in the public.

A marine algal bloom causing water discolouration and the production of substantial foams was initially identified at Waitpinga and Parsons Beaches on 15-16 March 2025. The bloom was associated with reports of eye irritation and respiratory symptoms including coughs and shortness of breath among a large group of surfers. The bloom was subsequently identified as the dinoflagellate *Karenia mikimotoi*. The bloom can travel depending on weather and water conditions and has since expanded to Pt Elliot and Goolwa, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.

There have been previous blooms of *Karenia mikimotoi* in South Australia including a substantial bloom in Coffin Bay in 2014.

Similar blooms around the world have lasted from a week to several months, depending on wind, rain and ocean temperatures. This one is expected to persist until strong westerly winds arrive, which historically happens at the end of April. However, persistent high-pressure systems have delayed these winds.

State Government agencies and some Local Councils have issued advice on their websites (see below). Warning signs have been installed on beaches by the Alexandrina Council and for a period the Waitpinga and Parsons Beaches were closed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The beaches have since been re-opened.

Clinical features

Karenia mikimotoi is susceptible to damage by wave action releasing algal particles. Exposure to these particles in surf spray and other aerosols can cause eye irritation and respiratory symptoms such as coughing and shortness of breath. Skin irritation has been reported by people swimming in water containing the algae. These symptoms usually resolve within several hours of leaving the beach.

Residents who live close to Southern Fleurieu beaches have also reported eye irritation and respiratory symptoms. These can be resolved by staying indoors with doors and windows shut.

Karenia mikimotoi does not produce a toxin that is harmful to humans and does not cause long term harmful effects. However, it is toxic to marine wildlife by damaging gills and gill structures and the bloom has caused widespread and substantial mortalities of fish, sharks, rays, seahorses, pipis and other species.

While there is no evidence that people with asthma are more susceptible to symptoms caused by these algal particles, asthmatics are advised to adhere to their asthma management plan should they experience symptoms.



Investigations

- > Diagnostic testing is normally not indicated if the history supports recent exposure to the marine environment where algal material may be present.
- > Importantly, if a relevant exposure history and timeline is not available, consideration needs to be given to other causes of symptoms with testing focused on ruling out these causes.

Treatment strategies

Treatment is mainly supportive and symptom-directed.

- > For respiratory symptoms, provide supportive care.
- > For skin irritation, patients should wash their skin thoroughly with clean water after any exposure. Patients should avoid wearing contaminated clothing until clothing has been laundered using standard washing cycles. In severe cases it may be worth considering antihistamines or steroids for symptomatic relief.
- > For eye irritation that has not resolved by moving away from the area, advise patient to remove their contact lenses if used. Irrigate the eyes thoroughly with normal saline. Refer the patient to an ophthalmologist if eye symptoms persist after thorough irrigation and there is no further exposure.

Recommended strategies to reduce exposure to the marine algal bloom

The public is advised to:

- > avoid swimming and walking along beaches where there is discoloured water and foam. If you do enter this water, take care to wash in clean water afterwards.
- > leave the beach and adjacent foreshore if symptoms such as eye and respiratory irritation are experienced
- > if you are a resident and experience symptoms outside your home, stay indoors with windows closed, until symptoms resolve.
- > if you have symptoms that are severe or do not resolve, seek medical advice from your doctor. Call [000](#) in a medical emergency.

For More Information

Further information on the marine algal bloom included updates is available at:

- > SA Health
<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/water+quality/water+quality+alerts>
- > Department for Environment and Water
<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/news-hub/news/articles/2025/05/sa-harmful-algal-bloom-update>
- > Department of Primary Industries and Regions
https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/research/research_areas/aquatic_sciences/marine_ecosystems/harmful_algal_bloom
- > US CDC
[Patient Care for Illnesses Caused by Harmful Algal Blooms | Harmful Algal Bloom \(HAB\)-Associated Illness | CDC](#)

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For more information

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