



Gladstone Area Water Board

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MEDIA RELEASE

Lake Awoonga welcomes scaly new residents

Year 11 and 12 students from Rosedale School were on hand at Lake Awoonga this morning to help release some of the last Barramundi fingerlings for the season into the Lake.

Gladstone Area Water Board Chief Operating Officer, John, Tumbers, said over the coming week, 1,500 tagged fingerlings would be released into various locations across the Lake as part of the GAWB's restocking program.

"Each year we stock about 300,000 fingerlings into the Lake and these fingerlings will be the last of the season until we start restocking again in October or November," Mr Tumbers said.

"The fingerlings we are releasing today are about five months old and over 20cm in length; our data shows they thrive in the Lake and grow about 1mm per day, which is above average" Mr Tumbers said.

Today, Lake Awoonga is in stark contrast to how it looked just six weeks ago, after the deluge from ex-tropical cyclone Debbie was dumped in its catchment.

About 5,000 cubic metres of water per second flowed into Lake Awoonga, bringing with it tonnes of organic matter from upstream and taking the water level to 2m over the spillway.

Mr Tumbers praised the efforts of his team for returning the Lake Awoonga to normal so quickly.

"You wouldn't realise by looking today but six weeks ago, we had a 20m 'blanket' of organic debris, logs, weeds, hay bales, stretching out from the water's edge," Mr Tumbers said.

"Unfortunately, it was completely inaccessible to the public but our Grounds and Catchment Officers worked tirelessly to get the facility back open as quickly as possible and I can't thank them enough for that.

"They removed some 70 truckloads of debris in the first week alone; that's quite extraordinary!

"What was left is a lot of mud to clean away and safety checks to ensure the integrity of the entire area.

"Obviously, Lake Awoonga is a very important asset to our community, so to have it back open for the Easter Long Weekend and the Boyne Tannum Hook Up was a big priority.

Mr Tumbers said attendance at the Lake since the rain event had been on par with last year which was a great result and demonstrated the community use of the facility.

Apart from bringing the dam back to 100% capacity, the rain had another positive side effect, returning Blue Green Algae levels at the Lake to low.

“Generally, by this time of year when it’s starting to cool down, we see the levels drop to low but the influx of water into the Lake will have definitely helped that.” Mr Tumbers said.

Ends.

For more information, please contact:

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