

# Plant investigated over algal bloom

■ Glenn Cordingley

A water recycling plant in Broome is under investigation after an outbreak of toxic blue-green algae in Roebuck Bay.

Water from the treatment plant used to irrigate the Broome Golf Course will also be examined as part of the probe.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife has publicly warned people to avoid contact with the spreading blooms of *Lyngbya majuscula*.

The Department of Environment Regulation revealed it has

directed the Water Corporation to undertake hydrogeological studies relating to the Broome South plant.

The DER said it was also reviewing the plant's licence to determine whether any changes to conditions were required.

The Roebuck Bay Working Group is concerned that water from containment ponds and the golf course was leaking into the aquifer and contributing to high nutrient levels, which can trigger algae growth.

RBWG project manager Kandy Curran said the bloom was vast

and at its most intense on the intertidal mudflats between the Port of Broome and Town Beach.

"The seagrass meadows are the most heavily impacted and large floating mats are being seen across the bay to Crab Creek, covering sections of water, mangroves, mud and rocks," she said.

Water Corporation North West regional manager Rino Trolio confirmed the investigation, which includes groundwater monitoring and sampling.

Mr Trolio said the results would determine what, if any action was needed to ensure the plant was not

contributing to increased nutrients in Roebuck Bay.

*Lyngbya* can occur naturally at low levels in tropical areas but can also bloom, forming thick filamentous mats.

It may be triggered by wet season temperatures and clear skies, as well as high nutrient levels in the water column from contaminated water and stormwater run-off.

Shire of Broome environmental health co-ordinator Chantal Spittle said *lyngbya* had the potential to give humans and animals that come into contact with the filaments dermatitis.



Lyngbya majuscula was spreading in Roebuck Bay.



Yawuru rangers monitor the algal outbreak in Roebuck Bay. Pictures: Department of Parks and Wildlife Picture:

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## Resignation not tendered

■ Glenn Cordingley

A Shire of Broome councillor who verbally resigned last month after fellow members voted not to declare the authority "frack-free" had still not tendered her official resignation in writing by Monday.

Councillor Anne Poelina walked out of a council meeting on February 26 when an officer recommendation saying decisions on hydraulic fracturing rested with the State was carried.

Her alternative motion, to delay a decision until the results of a parliamentary inquiry into hydraulic fracturing were complete and more research into the practice had been carried out, was refused. Shire president Graeme

Campbell said this was because the successful motion was already on the floor and had been seconded.

Speaking to the *Broome Advertiser* on Monday, Cr Poelina said while she remained a councillor she had access to information and support through the West Australian Local Government Association and was "clarifying a few matters".

"I am trying to work through the process that I don't think I was treated fairly about (the alternative motion's refusal) with the help of council chief executive Kenn Donohoe, then I can put something out formally," she said.

Mr Donohoe said Cr Poelina remained a councillor until she resigned or her term expired.

## Home lost in Broome fire

■ Tayissa Barone

A Broome home was destroyed by fire last Sunday.

Firefighters were called to the Kapang Drive property in Cable Beach in the afternoon after reports of smoke coming from the roof.

When crews arrived the roof of the home was engulfed in flames and the blaze had spread quickly.

Firefighters were forced to protect nearby homes as the fire ripped through the house.

They brought the fire under control in about an hour.

It is not known whether anyone was inside the home at the time of the fire starting but a DFES spokeswoman said no one was injured in the blaze.

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