



PUBLIC NOTICE

BARCALTINE WATER SUPPLY – UPDATE 25 NOVEMBER 2025

Last week, Council's proactive water testing identified the presence of *Naegleria* species in our Barcaldine water networks. Importantly, tests have not detected *Naegleria fowleri*—the only species that has been shown to cause disease in humans.

Following further assessment and expert advice, Council will not be shock-treating the water network with chlorine. Council will implement other precautionary measures to manage the low-level risk associated with *Naegleria* species.

As part of this further advice, the Barcaldine Ski Park will reopen tomorrow, 9am Wednesday 26 November 2025. As with all warm freshwater locations, *Naegleria* species can occur in this environment, like creeks, dams and other natural water bodies.

How do we continue to use water safely? Residents and visitors should continue to take the following precautionary actions:

- Supervise children when bathing, showering, swimming or playing in any water, including creeks, dams, pools and other warm natural water – to help prevent water from going up their nose.
- If using water for nasal irrigation or nasal lavage, use water that has been boiled and cooled
- Ensure household swimming pools and spas are adequately chlorinated and well maintained

It's important to note that this disease cannot be contracted by drinking water, or through bathing, showering or person-to-person contact.

Council will continue an increased mains flushing program to maintain water safety and help reduce dirty water events.

For more information about *Naegleria* and the risk of amoebic meningitis in warm freshwater, visit the Queensland Health website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/parasites/naegleria-fowleri-qs-as>

Council continues to work proactively with the Water Supply Regulator and the Queensland Public Health Unit to develop cost-effective, long-term measures to manage water quality across our networks.

Why was the public notified of the naegleria test results?

Out of an abundance of caution, on advice from the Queensland Public Health Unit, Barcaldine Regional Council provided the public with information on simple things they can do to keep their families safe.

Following further advice and review, Council has implemented control measures to manage the risks.

How do I use town water safely?

- The town water supply in Barcaldine is safe to drink. It is not necessary to boil the water for drinking purposes.
- If tap water is used for nasal irrigation, it must be boiled and cooled before use, or bottled water could be used.
- Do not use tap water in medical devices such as CPAP machines. If the manufacturer's instructions allow the use of tap water, then only use cooled, boiled water or bottled water.
- Don't let water go up the nose when bathing, showering, washing the face, using hoses or using sprinklers.
- Teach children to avoid water from hoses or sprinklers spraying up their nose during water play.
- Ensure swimming pools are properly chlorinated.

Advice for recreation in freshwater bodies:

- Naegleria species can occur in any warm, freshwater body, so take care when swimming in creeks and dams.
- Avoid putting your head underwater in hot or warm springs.
- Avoid digging or stirring up sediment in shallow water and avoid splashing this water as the sediment can have high levels of Naegleria species.

Can I get a Naegleria Fowleri infection from showering?

Showering is safe. Infection is possible, but rare, if water goes up the nose but there is no evidence that Naegleria fowleri can spread through aerosol droplets or water vapour such as shower mist or vapor from a humidifier.

Can drinking fountains/water bubblers continue to be used?

Yes, drinking fountains and water bubblers are safe to use. There are no known documented cases of infection with Naegleria fowleri associated with the use of drinking water fountains. Care should be taken to minimise exposure when using a drinking fountain or water bubbler and water play involving their use should be discouraged.



FAQs continued

Can the town water harm pets?

Pets are unlikely to become sick from Naegleria species present in tap water. If you are concerned, please speak to your veterinarian.

Are private bores and water sources also affected?

Yes. Private bores and water storages may contain Naegleria species as it is part of the natural soil and water environment. All recorded cases of infection with Naegleria fowleri in Queensland have been associated with private water supplies. If you rely on a private water supply for drinking or non-potable purposes, you can refer to the Queensland Health publication safe water on rural properties for more advice.

Have there been any recorded cases of infection with Naegleria fowleri in Barcaldine Regional Council?

No, there have not been any cases of infection with Naegleria fowleri reported for this area.

Is the risk of Naegleria in drinking water only an issue for Barcaldine Regional Council?

No. There are other drinking water schemes in western Queensland that also supply unchlorinated drinking water. The Water Supply Regulator has asked these providers to assess the microbial risk from their water supplies which may involve testing for Naegleria species.

What do I do if I have more questions?

For further information on Naegleria species, please refer to the Queensland Health webpage <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/parasites/naegleria-fowleri-qs-as>

If you have health concerns, 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).