

Brave the Waves Submission on Algal Bloom

I am writing to you as a concerned South Australian resident and the founder of a local swimming group, *Brave the Waves*, to express deep concern over the ongoing algal bloom affecting our coastline, particularly at Moana Beach.

Five years ago, after the tragic loss of my daughter, I started *Brave the Waves* as a way to reconnect with nature and heal through community and ocean swimming. Every fortnight since then, our group (consisting of residents of all ages from youth to 60+) has met at Moana Surf Life Saving Club and swum the 1km stretch down to the Poles. For many of us, this group has become an essential part of our emotional well-being, a powerful form of natural therapy, and one of the great joys of living on the South Australian coast.

However, the recent algal bloom has made it unsafe for us to continue our swims. Beyond the heartbreak of being disconnected from this healing ritual, our group is particularly concerned about the **lack of consistent and transparent communication** around the health risks of swimming during these blooms.

Our key concerns are:

- **Lack of regular water quality testing and public reporting:** We do not know whether it is safe to enter the water. There is minimal clarity on when or where water sampling is occurring, and no clear avenue for the public to access this information in real time.
- **Health risks to the community:** We understand algal blooms can cause skin irritation, respiratory issues, and other health problems, yet this is not being clearly communicated at the beach or through community channels. We should not have to rely on social media hearsay to know whether we are at risk.
- **Social and emotional health impacts:** Brave the Waves is not just about exercise; it is a community of connection, grief support, resilience, and celebration of our natural environment. Being unable to safely swim has disconnected us from each other and the coast, especially during times when connection and well-being are more important than ever.

What we are asking for:

1. **Weekly water quality testing and public reporting for all major recreational beaches**, including Moana.
2. **Clear signage and digital communication tools (e.g. website, app, SMS alerts) for community updates on water quality and associated health risks.**
3. **Funding and policy support** for long-term strategies to address the environmental causes of algal blooms, including better stormwater management, reduced agricultural runoff, and climate resilience initiatives.

I urge the Australian Greens to advocate for stronger protections for coastal users and communities. The health of our ocean directly affects the health of our people—not just physically, but emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We would welcome the opportunity to speak with your representatives further about the lived impact of this environmental crisis and the need for greater transparency and action.

Warm regards,

Marie Sulda

Founder – *Brave the Waves*

Moana Beach, South Australia