

## Fact sheet: Copper Sulfate Code of Practice

In early 2020, Sunwater and the Department of Environment and Science are inviting feedback on the development of a new Code of Practice regarding the release of water from irrigation channels after it has been treated with copper sulfate.

The feedback will contribute to identifying best environmental management practices for undertaking copper sulfate treatments in the Mareeba-Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme (WSS) which will feed into the new Code of Practice and ensure any potential releases of copper sulfate to the environment are minimised.

### What is copper sulfate?



*Above: Algal blockage*

Copper sulfate is a common algicide used to treat problematic algal blooms in water reservoirs and other water supply storages or to reduce or remove algal blockages in pipes, drains or channels.

In Mareeba, Sunwater injects copper sulfate in solution form into our irrigation channels.

### Why is copper sulfate used in irrigation channels?

Irrigation supply channels are required to be treated with copper sulfate to suppress the growth of filamentous algae, which may otherwise threaten the reliability of water supply via blockages to irrigation infrastructure.



*Above: An untreated irrigation channel with algae*

Sunwater has invested in developing a reliable and efficient method for treating irrigation supply waters with copper sulfate, and recently obtained a new herbicide label for copper sulfate use in the Mareeba-Dimbulah WSS.

This new treatment method - along with planned works to minimise uncontrolled releases of irrigation water to the environment - will result in improved water quality for our creeks and rivers. Some potential remains for very low concentrations of copper to enter local waterways during a treatment period and therefore stakeholder feedback will help inform the actions Sunwater takes to manage the successful and practical use of the product.

### Why develop a Code of Practice?

The Code of Practice complements environmental protection laws and policies to provide guidance on how Sunwater will comply with legal obligations and identify and manage any risks undertaking copper sulfate treatments in the Mareeba-Dimbulah WSS.

### More information

For more information or to provide feedback email [karen.reid@sunwater.com.au](mailto:karen.reid@sunwater.com.au)