Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

15 January 2026

This Blue-green algal (BGA) alert report is based on routine monitoring at sites in the Murray & Sunraysia Algae Reporting Area. The sites are monitored by WaterNSW and local water authorities. Satellite imagery may be used to supplement the monitoring data.

Please see Table 1 for all red, amber and green alerts.

Red Alerts

- Lake Menindee Site 19
- Lake Menindee Outlet Regulator

Amber Alerts

- Lake Hume at Ebden
- Lake Hume at Heywoods Bay near Bethanga
- Lake Hume Dam Resort
- Lake Hume Dam Wall
- Mulwala Canal Offtake
- Murray River below Yarrawonga
- Murray River at Cobram
- Murray River at Tocumwal
- Murray River at Moama
- Murray River at Barham
- Murray River at Murray Downs
- Murray River at Tooleybuc
- Murray River at Euston
- Murray River at Curlwaa
- Gulpa Creek at Mathoura
- Edward River at Old Morago
- Edward River at Moulamein
- Wakool River at Wakool-Barham Road
- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet
- Darling River at upstream Weir 32
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Pooncarie
- Darling River at Burtundy
- Darling River at Ellerslie
- Darling River at Tapio

Climate Outlooks

For February, there is a weak signal indicated for rainfall across the regions, meaning there is a roughly equal chance of above or below average rainfall.

Maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to exceed the average across all the regions. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM))

Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth remains high, with high forecasted temperatures and long daylight hours creating very favourable conditions. Increased algal activity is very likely where waters are shallow or stagnant.

Satellite image observations start on page 4 of this report.

Table 1: Combined Murray and Sunraysia Alerts

Site	Description	Latest Sample Date	Cyanobacteria Total Count (cells/mL)	Cyanobacteria Biovolume (mm3/L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm3/L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
MURRAY RIVER SYSTEM										
	Corryong Supply - Raw Water Inlet to Corryong TP (NE Water)	29/12/2025	49,000	0.260	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
	Manus Lake (SVC) Lake pontoon	29/12/2026	20,929	0.220	929	0.080	GREEN	RED		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebden	5/01/2026	34,560	0.249	6,369	0.178	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	5/01/2026	86,463	2.177	52,396	1.465	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	5/01/2026	36,881	0.453	8,574	0.239	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	5/01/2026	47,700	0.417	7,777	0.217	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	6/01/2026	9,622	0.116	1,048	0.025	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	6/01/2026	3,351	0.064	1,021	0.024	GREEN	No Alert	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrawonga Weir (outlet) GMW	7/01/2026	24,850	0.921	1800	0.300	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum - coiled (≥6µm)*	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	6/01/2026	43,029	0.624	1,551	0.037	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrawonga	6/01/2026	25,408	1.195	2,439	0.072	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	6/01/2026	30,957	1.074	1,946	0.047	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	6/01/2026	13,282	0.548	402	0.104	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum - coiled (≥6µm)*	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	6/01/2026	36,281	1.501	1,529	0.134	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	1/12/2025	18,305	0.026	204	0.004	No Alert	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	6/01/2026	91,406	1.017	1380	0.230	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum - coiled (≥6µm)*	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	5/01/2026	32,360	0.482	459	0.051	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	12/01/2026	34,216	0.684	1276.000	0.180	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum - coiled (≥6µm)*	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	2/12/2025	13,836	2.210	136	0.015	AMBER	No Alert	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	6/01/2026	53,453	4.836	4,090	0.449	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	5/01/2026	879,667	5.600	1440	0.300	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum circinale*	
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	2/12/2025	38,573	6.265	1,870	0.193	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1064	Lake Benanee Rec Area	1/01/2026	15,242	0.043	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1028	Murray R. Euston (Robinvale)	30/12/2025	30,826	0.662	984	0.109	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1065	Murray R. Mount Dispersion	1/01/2026	108,374	0.300	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	5/01/2026	114,195	0.165	1,225	0.045	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Merbein (LMW)	29/12/2025	163,670	1.362	852	0.110	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum - coiled (=6µm)*	
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	5/01/2026	34,227	0.053	544	0.013	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	5/01/2026	96,578	1.102	2,477	0.060	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	5/01/2026	273,825	0.350	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
	Lock 9 (LMW)	22/12/2025	89,334	1.219	704	0.048	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	5/01/2026	78,212	0.137	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	5/01/2026	10,261	0.022	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		

Table 1: Continued

Site	Description	Latest Sample Date	Cyanobacteria Total Count (cells/mL)	Cyanobacteria Biovolume (mm3/L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm3/L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
BILLBONG CREEK, EDWARD & WAKOOL RIVERS										
N1020	Billabong Ck. Walbundrie	6/01/2026	14,827	0.054	408	0.009	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	1/12/2025	4,083	0.002	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	6/01/2026	41,713	1.800	544	0.041	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	1/12/2025	22,863	0.034	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	1/12/2025	10,416	0.802	342	0.040	AMBER	GREEN	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	2/12/2025	60,327	6.211	442	0.049	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	2/12/2025	28,244	0.486	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	2/12/2025	25,175	0.206	884	0.024	GREEN	No Alert	*Oscillatoriaceae/Microcoleaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	2/12/2025	15,242	0.020	0	0.000	No Alert	AMBER		
MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM & LOWER DARLING RIVER										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	6/01/2026	1,570,663	1.697	3,058	0.074	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	15/12/2025	32,852	0.127	680	0.085	GREEN	GREEN	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	15/12/2025	23,660	0.027	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	15/12/2025	28,305	0.095	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	15/12/2025	33,792	0.046	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1091	Lake Tandure Site 8	15/12/2025	13,610	0.025	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	15/12/2025	33,295	0.042	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1129	42510013 Centre Pamamaroo (Site 13)	25/11/2025	13,473	0.019	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	15/12/2025	10,009	0.027	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	16/12/2025	187,524	0.209	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19						RED	RED	*Red Alert raised based on satellite imagery*	
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	15/12/2025	149,478	0.870	0	0.000	RED	AMBER	*Red Alert raised based on satellite imagery*	
N1128	Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet	15/12/2025	755,004	1.092	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	16/12/2025	10,601	0.010	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	16/12/2025	588,881	1.119	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	6/01/2026	508,127	4.771	11,506	1.419	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	6/01/2026	323,928	2.358	13,985	1.743	AMBER	GREEN	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	6/01/2026	348,298	1.461	2,209	0.304	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	6/01/2026	243,406	1.069	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	6/01/2026	222,277	0.743	476	0.069	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
GREAT DARLING ANABRANCH										
N1350	Silver City Hwy	No water present. Isolated pools along this section of the anabranch have now dried out.					No Alert	RED		

Satellite imagery

*The key to the approximate total algae (blue green and non-blue green) concentrations using the Custom Algae Script can be found in Table 3. The actual values can potentially vary by a significant margin due to the geology of the waterbody, species of algae, turbidity, aquatic plants, time of day of the image capture, aerosols in the atmosphere, etc. This variability is a result of the nature of satellite imagery being a large-scale remote sensing format and is not function of the technology or the script itself. For this reason, these colours and descriptors are not the official **"Algae Alert Level"** but rather provides information on the **potential risk on algae formation.***

Table 3: Observed risk levels based on the estimated photosynthetic activity for Custom Algae Script

Map Colour	Risk Level -	Starting concentration guide range	RACC recreational alert values approx. equivalence
Blue	Very low	<0.05 mm3/L	No Alert
Green	Low	0.05 to 0.5 mm3/L	Green
Yellow	Medium	0.5 to 5.0 mm3/L	Amber
Red	High	5.0 to 20.0 mm3/L	Red
Dark red	Extreme	> 20 mm3/L	Red

Observations about the satellite images

Figure 1 indicates that Hume Dam had mostly very low-level phytoplankton activity on the 6th of January, with medium levels indicated in the Murray River arm. Smoke from bushfires can be seen in the upper right corner of the image and has blocked recent satellite imagery.

The satellite image from the 12th of January (Figure 2) shows mostly very low levels of algal activity at Lakes Tandure, Pamamaroo, Copi Hollow and Cawndilla. Significant increases to medium to low levels of algal activity were indicated across Menindee Lake. Mostly low to very low levels were indicated at Cawndilla Creek, Weir 32 and Lake Wetherell site 1. In the Darling River at Lake Wetherell at site 2, mostly medium levels of phytoplankton activity were indicated.

On the 12th of January, the Murray and Darling Rivers near Wentworth indicated mostly very low levels of phytoplankton activity (Figure 3).

Lake Victoria showed mostly very low phytoplankton activity on the 15th of January (Figure 4).

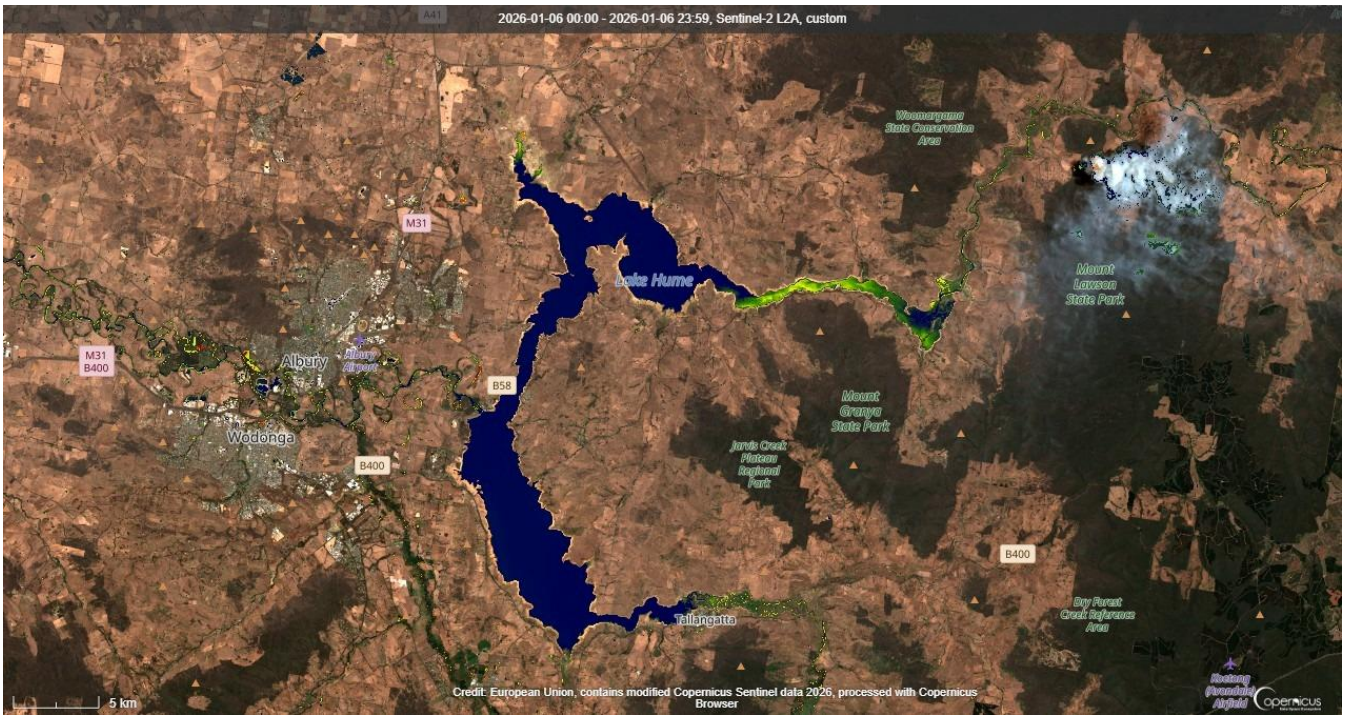
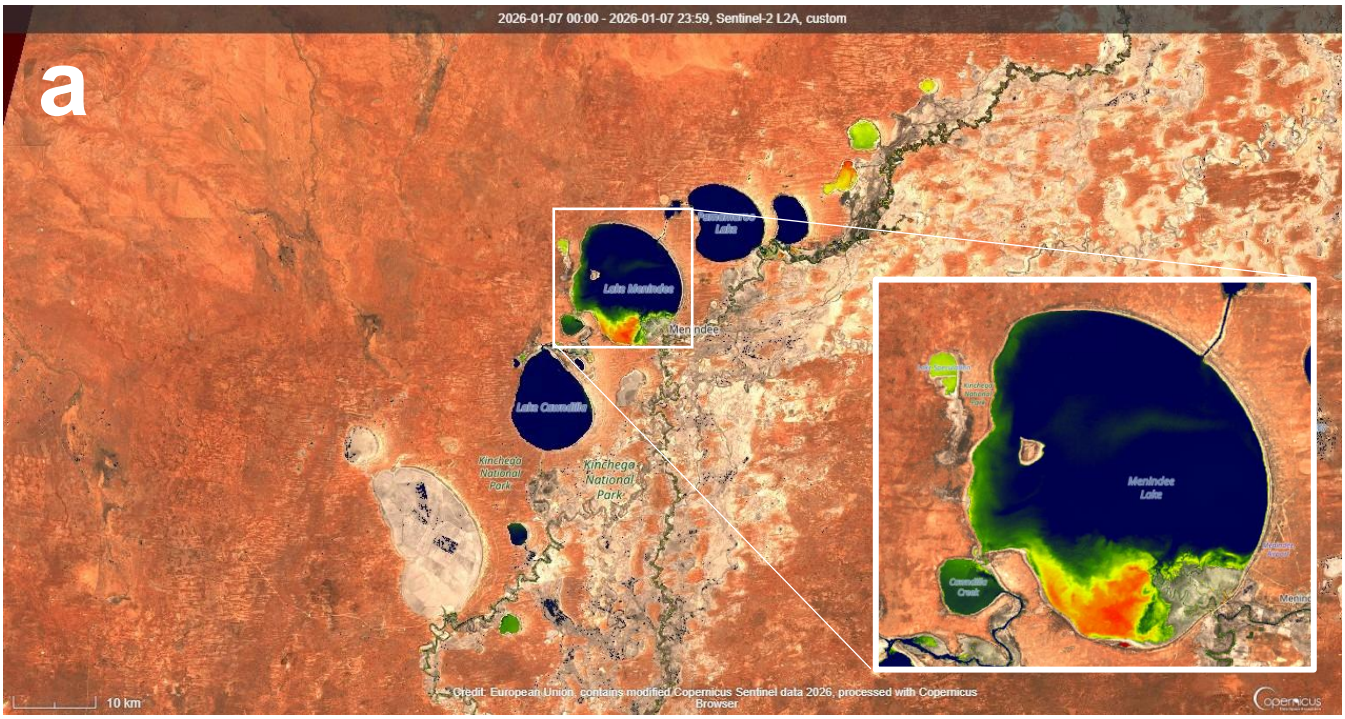


Figure 1: Hume Dam 06/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



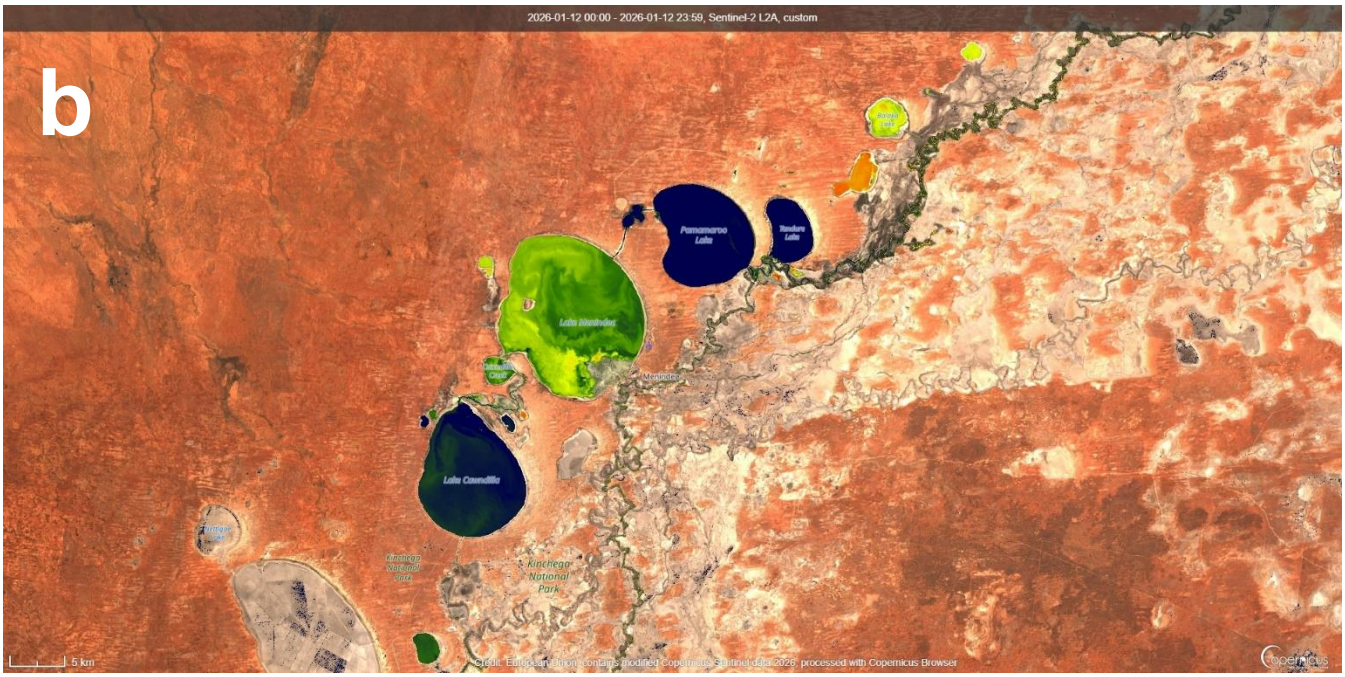


Figure 2: Menindee Lakes (a) 07/01/2026 and (b) 12/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

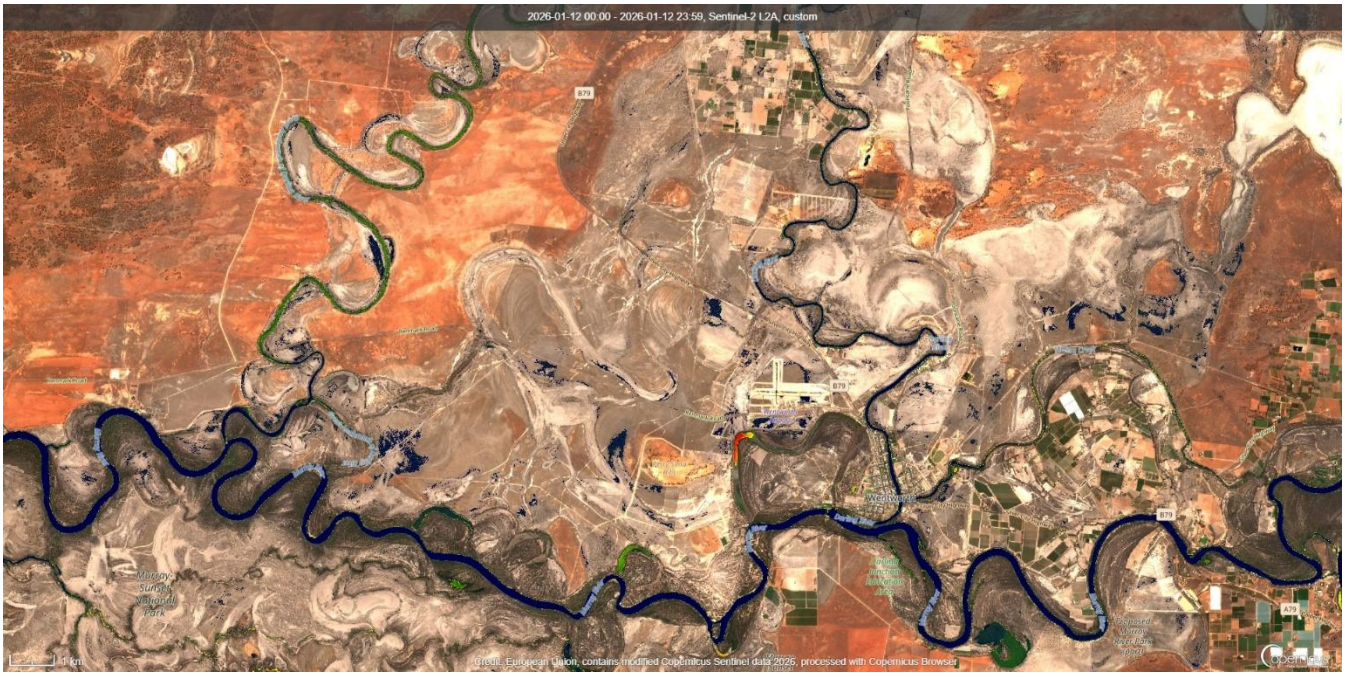


Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 12/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

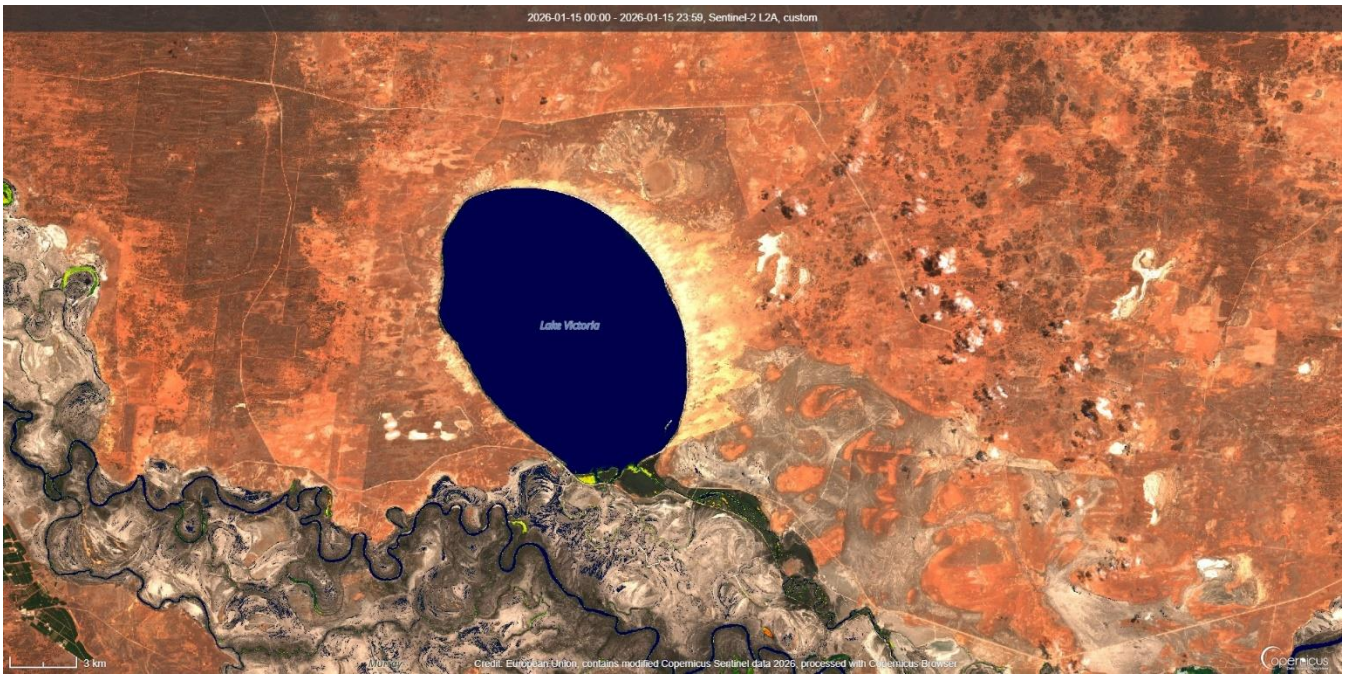


Figure 4: Lake Victoria 15/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

Alert Definitions for Recreational Waters

Alert Definitions as specified in The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Water* 2008.

The interim use of these guidelines is endorsed by the Scientific Subcommittee of the NSW Algal Advisory Group.

RED ALERT
These alert levels represent 'bloom' conditions. Water will appear green or discoloured and clumps or scums could be visible. It can also give off a strong musty or organic odour.
Algae may be toxic to humans and animals. Contact with or use of water from red alert areas should be avoided due to the risk of eye and skin irritation. Drinking untreated or boiled water from these supplies can cause stomach upsets. Alternative water supplies should be sought or activated carbon treatment employed to remove toxins. People should not fish when an algal scum is present. Owners should keep dogs away from high alert areas and provide alternative watering points for stock.

AMBER ALERT
Blue-green algae may be multiplying, and the water may have a green tinge and musty or organic taste and odour. The water should be considered as unsuitable for potable use and alternative supplies or prior treatment of raw water for domestic purposes should be considered. The water may also be unsuitable for stock watering. Generally suitable for water sports, however people are advised to exercise caution in these areas, as blue-green algal concentrations can rise to red alert levels quickly under warm, calm weather conditions.

GREEN ALERT
Blue-green algae occur naturally at low numbers. At these concentrations, algae would not normally be visible, however some species may affect taste and odour of water even at low numbers and does not pose any problems for recreational, stock or household use.

Key to Alerts for Recreational Waters

RED Alert ≥ 50 000 cells/mL toxic *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of ≥4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where a known toxin producer is dominant in the total biovolume OR The total biovolume of all cyanobacteria ≥10 mm^3/L OR Cyanobacterial scums are consistently present	• High levels of Blue Green Algae detected • Indicates "bloom" conditions • Toxicity should be presumed • Water will appear green or brownish and may have a strong musty taste and odour • Surface scums could occur • **Extreme care should be exercised, and contact with the water should be avoided** **Action** • Issue Media Release • Water supply authorities to increase filtering with activated carbon as appropriate • Local authority and health authorities to warn the public that the water body is unsuitable for primary contact recreation
AMBER Alert ≥5 000 to <50 000 cells/mL *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of ≥ 0.4 to < 4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where known toxin producers are dominant in the total biovolume OR ≥ 0.4 to < 10mm^3/L combined total for all blue-green algae where known toxin producers are not dominant	• Indicates blue-green algae are multiplying • Water may have a green tinge and musty taste and odour **Action** • Water supply authorities to consider filtering with activated carbon • Investigations into the causes of the elevated levels and increased sampling to enable the risks to recreational users to be more accurately assessed.
GREEN Alert > 500 to < 5 000 cells/mL *M. aeruginosa* OR biovolume equivalent of > 0.04 to < 0.4 mm^3/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria	• Low levels of potentially toxic species detected – suggesting base crop of blue green algae may be on the increase **Action** • Continue/increase routine sampling to measure cyanobacterial levels

Livestock Drinking Water Guidelines Based on ARMCANZ (2000), Orr and Schneider (2006) and WQRA (2010)

This guideline should be used when water is used for livestock drinking water purposes.

- If visual scums are present, then a High alert should be declared. This would be applicable for both farm dams and publicly managed water bodies (streams, rivers, etc). Such advice should also be given to farmers who phone the department seeking information on managing blooms in their dams.
- Where blooms dominated by ***Microcystis aeruginosa*** are present, then the ANZECC/ARMCANZ (2000) guideline of 11,500 cells/mL should be used. Excess of this cell count will constitute a High alert.
- Where blooms dominated by ***Dolichospermum circinale*** are present, then the Orr and Schneider (2006) guideline of 25,000 cells/mL should be used. Excess of this cell count will constitute a High alert.
- **Blooms of blue-green algae other** than *M. aeruginosa* and *D. circinale* are also common in NSW. These can be of either known potentially toxic species, or of species not considered to be toxin producers. When these blooms are present, a total blue-green algal biovolume in excess of 6 mm^3/L will constitute a High alert. (These are based on Very High alert recommendations for raw water sourced for potable human supply published by WQRA (2010), in lieu of there being nothing else available).

Further Information and Contacts

Links to websites of VIC and other agencies
Link to Snowy Valleys Council
Link to North East Water
Link to Goulburn-Murray Water blue-green algal alerts
Link to Goulburn Valley Water blue-green algal information
Link to Lower Murray Water blue-green algal alerts
NSW DPI blue-green-algae information for landholders
Manus Lake, at the Pontoon – Snowy Valley Council

Go to the WaterNSW Algal Website
www.waternsw.com.au/algae **or at WaterInsights (links below):**
Murray regulated river - https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/11904-new-south-wales-murray-regulated-river/updates
Lower-Darling regulated river - https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/updates

Contacts

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