

Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

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

Climate Outlooks

For February to April, rainfall is likely to be below average across the regions. Maximum temperatures are very likely to be above average (over 80% chance) and minimum temperatures are likely to (60 to 80% chance). (Source: [Bureau of Meteorology \(BoM\)](#))

Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth remains high, with heatwaves over the past week expected to continue over the weekend, creating ideal hot and sunny 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 (mm ³ /L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm ³ /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)	19/01/2026	177,741	0.942	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
	Manus Lake (SVC) Lake pontoon	29/12/2026	20,929	0.220	929	0.080	GREEN	RED		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebdon	5/01/2026	34,560	0.249	6,369	0.178	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> 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	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	5/01/2026	36,881	0.453	8,574	0.239	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	5/01/2026	47,700	0.417	7,777	0.217	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	6/01/2026	9,622	0.116	1,048	0.025	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	6/01/2026	3,351	0.064	1,021	0.024	GREEN	No Alert	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrowonga Weir (outlet) GMW	20/01/2026	57,200	2.543	3750	0.629	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> - coiled ($\geq 6\mu\text{m}$)	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	6/01/2026	43,029	0.624	1,551	0.037	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrowonga	6/01/2026	25,408	1.195	2,439	0.072	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	6/01/2026	30,957	1.074	1,946	0.047	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	6/01/2026	13,282	0.548	402	0.104	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Dolichospermum</i> - coiled ($\geq 6\mu\text{m}$)	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	6/01/2026	36,281	1.501	1,529	0.134	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	5/01/2026	58,768	2.746	1,341	0.079	AMBER	No Alert	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	6/01/2026	91,406	1.017	1380	0.230	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> - coiled ($\geq 6\mu\text{m}$)	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	5/01/2026	32,360	0.482	459	0.051	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	12/01/2026	34,216	0.684	1276.000	0.180	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> - coiled ($\geq 6\mu\text{m}$)	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	6/01/2026	47,235	0.990	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	6/01/2026	53,453	4.836	4,090	0.449	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	5/01/2026	879,667	5.600	1440	0.300	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum circinale</i>	
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	6/01/2026	63,121	2.833	1,461	0.144	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> 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	<i>Dolichospermum</i> 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	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Merbein (LMW)	19/01/2026	55,752	0.478	650	0.048	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp	
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	5/01/2026	34,227	0.053	544	0.013	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	5/01/2026	96,578	1.102	2,477	0.060	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis</i> 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)	19/01/2026	71,112	0.669	1362	0.275	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> - coiled ($\approx 6\mu\text{m}$)	
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 (mm ³ /L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm ³ /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	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	6/01/2026	41,713	1.800	544	0.041	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	5/01/2026	63,329	0.959	884	0.096	AMBER	No Alert	<i>Dolichospermum circinale</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	5/01/2026	25,303	2.501	1,326	0.144	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum circinale</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	6/01/2026	19,732	3.494	204	0.022	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	6/01/2026	3,606	0.056	476	0.053	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	6/01/2026	306	0.007	306	0.007	No Alert	GREEN	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	6/01/2026	8,302	0.008	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
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	<i>Microcystis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	15/12/2025	32,852	0.127	680	0.085	GREEN	GREEN	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae</i> 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		
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 Alert raised based on satellite imagery since 8/01/2026. Site has not been sampled due to being inaccessible.	
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	13/01/2026	1,628,295	15.345	19,784	2.499	RED	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic
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	13/01/2026	1,239,738	9.264	11,740	1.545	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	6/01/2026	508,127	4.771	11,506	1.419	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Dolichospermum</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	6/01/2026	323,928	2.358	13,985	1.743	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae</i> sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	6/01/2026	348,298	1.461	2,209	0.304	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Anabaenopsis</i> 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	<i>Anabaenopsis</i> sp.	Potentially toxic

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 mm ³ /L	No Alert
Green	Low	0.05 to 0.5 mm ³ /L	Green
Yellow	Medium	0.5 to 5.0 mm ³ /L	Amber
Red	High	5.0 to 20.0 mm ³ /L	Red
Dark red	Extreme	> 20 mm ³ /L	Red

Observations about the satellite images

Figure 1 indicates that Hume Dam had mostly very low-level phytoplankton activity on the 26th of January.

The satellite image from the 27th of January (Figure 2) shows mostly very low levels of algal activity at Lakes Wetherell (site 1, 3 and 4), Tandure, Pamamaroo, Copi Hollow, Weir 32 and Cawndilla. Mostly low levels were indicated at Cawndilla Creek. Medium to low levels of algal activity were indicated at Lake Wetherell site 2 and across Menindee Lake, with high levels indicated in the shallow areas of the lake near the outlet regulator.

On the 27th 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 27th of January (Figure 4).

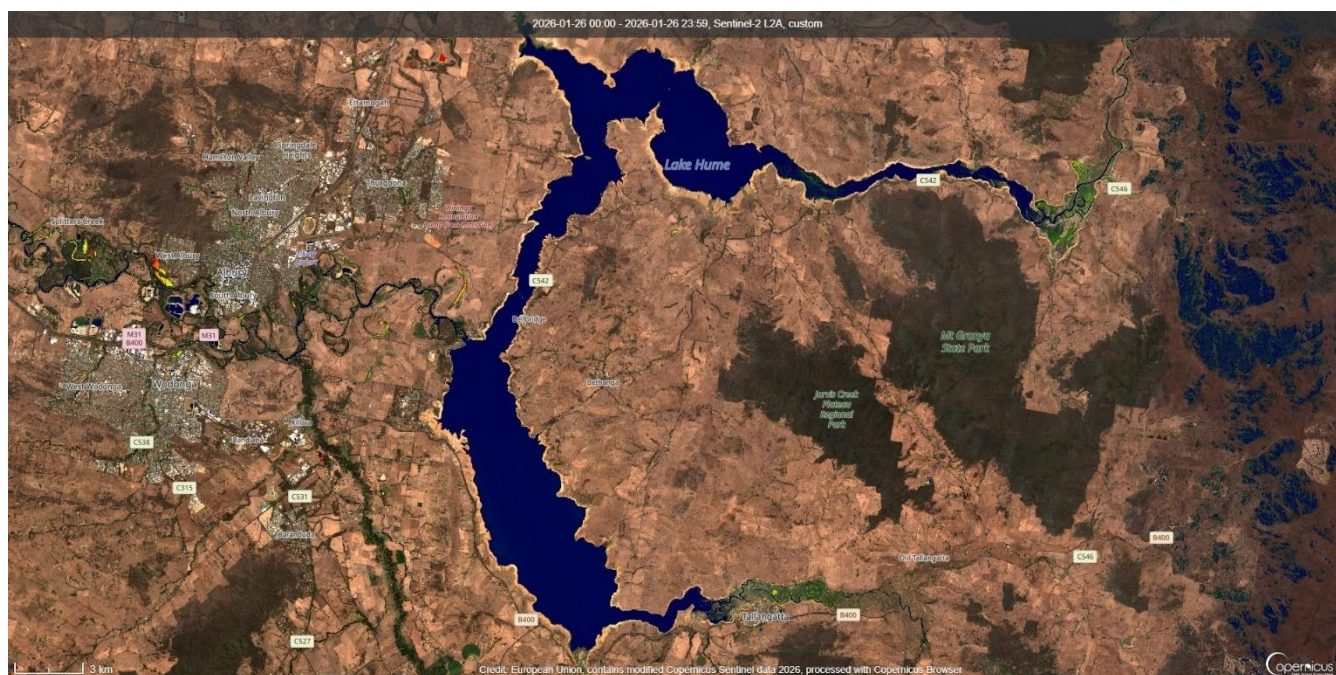


Figure 1: Hume Dam 26/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

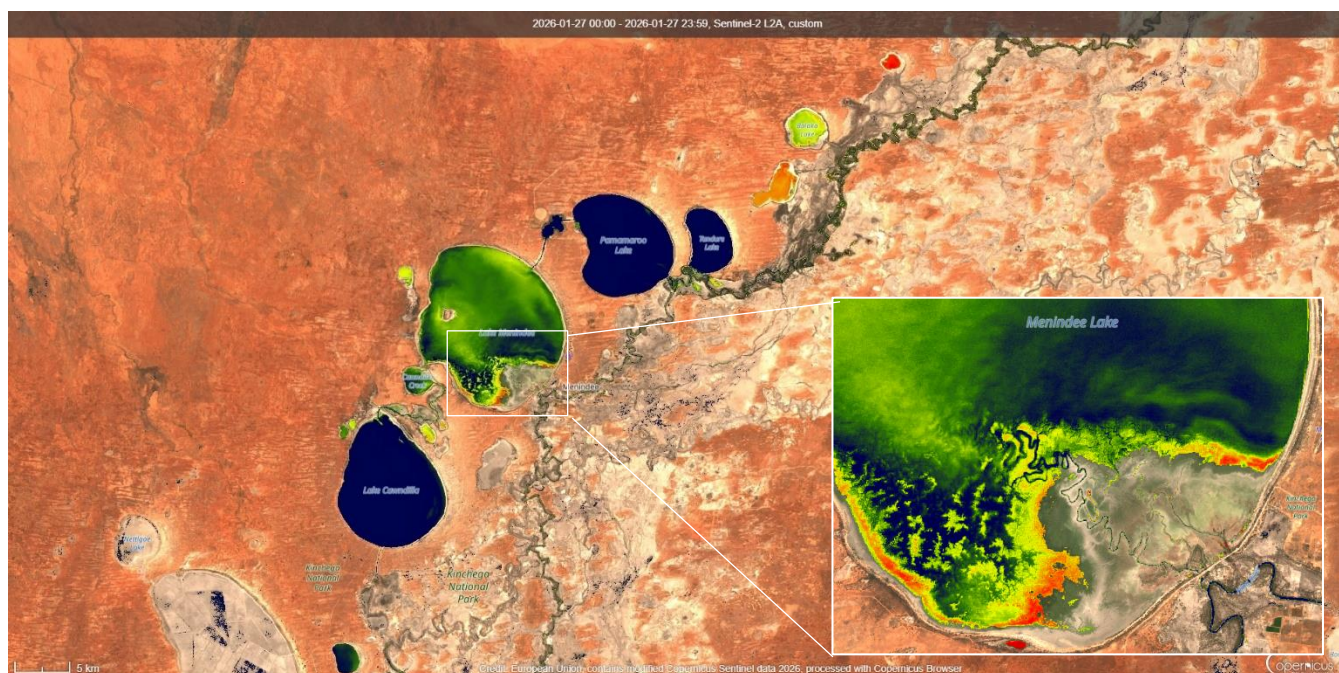


Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 27/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 27/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

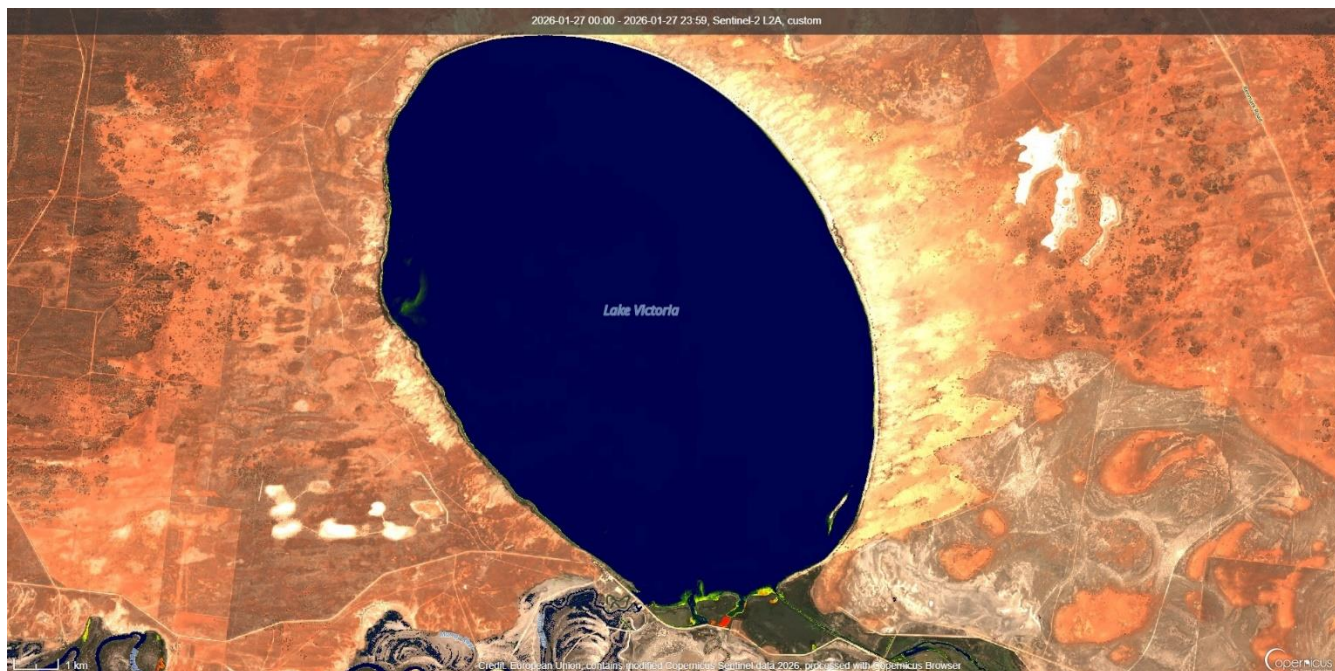


Figure 4: Lake Victoria 27/01/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

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

<p>RED Alert</p> <p>≥ 50 000 cells/mL toxic <i>M. aeruginosa</i> OR biovolume equivalent of ≥4 mm³/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 mm³/L OR Cyanobacterial scums are consistently present</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>AMBER Alert</p> <p>≥5 000 to <50 000 cells/mL <i>M. aeruginosa</i> OR biovolume equivalent of ≥ 0.4 to < 4 mm³/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where known toxin producers are dominant in the total biovolume OR ≥ 0.4 to < 10mm³/L combined total for all blue-green algae where known toxin producers are not dominant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates blue-green algae are multiplying • Water may have a green tinge and musty taste and odour <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>GREEN Alert</p> <p>> 500 to < 5 000 cells/mL <i>M. aeruginosa</i> OR biovolume equivalent of > 0.04 to < 0.4 mm³/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of potentially toxic species detected – suggesting base crop of blue green algae may be on the increase <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 mm³/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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