

# Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

16 April 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 Wetherell Site 1
- Lake Menindee Site 19
- Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip
- Lake Menindee Outlet Regulator
- Darling River upstream of Weir 32
- Darling River at Pooncarie

## Amber Alerts

- Lake Hume at Ebdon
- Lake Hume at Heywoods Bay near Bethanga
- Lake Hume Dam Resort
- Lake Hume Dam Wall
- Murray River at Union Bridge in Albury
- Murray River at Corowa
- Mulwala Canal Offtake
- Murray River below Yarrawonga
- Murray River at Cobram
- Murray River at Tocumwal
- Murray River at Picnic Point
- Murray River at Moama
- Lake Benanee Rec Area
- Murray River at Lock 8
- Gulpa Creek at Mathoura
- Edward River at Deniliquin
- Edward River at Old Morago
- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Wetherell Sites 2, 3 & 4
- Lake Pamamaroo Inlet
- Lake Pamamaroo Outlet
- Lake Copi Hollow
- Lake Cawndilla Outlet
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Burtundy
- Darling River at Ellerslie
- Great Darling Anabranch at Silver City Hwy

## General Comments

Ongoing bushfire contamination in the Murray River arm of Lake Hume after rainfall mobilised ash, debris and topsoil following the Walwa – Mount Lawson bushfires in early 2026.

Additional sampling is scheduled for the Darling River at Pooncarie and nearby sites. Sample results are pending for sites on red alert in the Lake Menindee system.

## Climate Outlooks

For May to July, there is no clear signal for either wetter or drier conditions, meaning there are roughly equal chances of above or below average rainfall. Maximum temperatures are very likely to be above average (> 80% chance), and minimum temperatures are likely to be above average. (Source: [Bureau of Meteorology \(BoM\)](#))

## Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth remains high in the Darling River and Menindee Lakes system, especially where flow conditions are low or waters are shallow. In the central and eastern Murray regions, there is a moderate risk for blue-green algal growth. Cooler ambient temperatures over the coming weeks may decrease this risk.

**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 <sup>3</sup> /L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm <sup>3</sup> /L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
<b>MURRAY RIVER SYSTEM</b>										
	Corryong Supply - Raw Water Inlet to Corryong TP (NE Water)	13/04/2026	109,384	0.580	0	0.000	AMBER	RED		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebden	2/03/2026	24,802	3.821	12,773	1.120	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	2/03/2026	17,391	1.184	10,180	0.722	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	2/03/2026	18,080	1.949	10,897	1.110	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	2/03/2026	21,939	2.740	11,990	1.015	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	7/04/2026	28,794	1.520	7,752	0.463	AMBER	AMBER		Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	7/04/2026	31,135	4.345	8,048	0.728	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrowonga Weir (outlet) GMW	7/04/2026	54,100	3.387	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	7/04/2026	113,989	3.644	973	0.023	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrowonga	7/04/2026	113,163	4.185	5,276	0.253	AMBER	AMBER		Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	7/04/2026	126,755	4.883	674	0.016	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	16/03/2026	48,164	1.389	5056	0.339	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight</i>	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	7/04/2026	208,984	8.958	21,917	1.323	AMBER	AMBER		Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	2/03/2026	192,729	5.896	14,303	0.853	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	17/03/2026	80,820	1.642	9884	0.664	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight</i>	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	2/03/2026	107,544	3.801	9,753	0.615	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	7/04/2026	14,004	0.093	0.000	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	2/03/2026	11,534	0.071	1,274	0.010	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Geitlerinema splendidum</i>	Potentially toxigenic
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	2/03/2026	36,226	0.062	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	7/04/2026	46,000	0.240	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	2/03/2026	118,761	0.160	68	0.001	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1064	Lake Benanee Rec Area	12/03/2026	348,868	0.500	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1065	Murray R. Mount Dispersion	12/03/2026	51,001	0.081	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	30/03/2026	40,465	0.118	646	0.053	GREEN	GREEN	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Merbein (LMW)	30/03/2026	92,886	0.587	722	0.052	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	30/03/2026	44,175	0.089	272	0.006	GREEN	GREEN	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	30/03/2026	116,100	0.154	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	30/03/2026	35,996	0.197	306	0.026	GREEN	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic
	Lock 9 (LMW)	30/03/2026	94,286	0.517	22	0.001	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae family - coiled (&lt;6µm)</i>	
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	30/03/2026	17,073	0.039	170	0.021	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	30/03/2026	2,041	0.002	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		

Table 1: Continued

Site	Description	Latest Sample Date	Cyanobacteria Total Count (cells/mL)	Cyanobacteria Biovolume (mm <sup>3</sup> /L)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Count (cells/mL)	Potentially Toxic Cyanobacterial Biovolume (mm <sup>3</sup> /L)	Current Status (based on Latest Sample)	Previous Status	Cyanobacteria dominant potentially toxic taxa	Cyanobacteria Comments
<b>BILLBONG CREEK, EDWARD &amp; WAKOOL RIVERS</b>										
N1020	Billabong Ck. Walbundrie	7/04/2026	5,443	0.011	136	0.003	No Alert	No Alert	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	2/03/2026	2,483	0.024	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	2/03/2026	156,344	2.915	8,030	0.507	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	2/03/2026	196,264	3.818	4,263	0.241	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Umezakia ovalisporum</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	2/03/2026	152,749	3.732	932	0.027	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	2/03/2026	46,699	0.067	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	2/03/2026	67,292	0.172	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	2/03/2026	14,712	0.017	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	2/03/2026	5,018	0.003	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
<b>MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM &amp; LOWER DARLING RIVER</b>										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	1/04/2026	97,120	0.891	4,650	0.175	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	23/03/2026	1,810,632	16.018	2,191	0.161	RED	AMBER	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	23/03/2026	46,952	0.058	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	23/03/2026	245,962	0.444	119	0.015	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	23/03/2026	372,529	0.634	102	0.005	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1091	Lake Tandure Site 8	23/03/2026	134,358	0.258	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	23/03/2026	922,962	1.694	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1129	42510013 Centre Pamamaroo (Site 13)	23/03/2026	148,415	0.208	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	23/03/2026	379,255	0.582	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	23/03/2026	418,585	0.604	102	0.013	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic
N1337	Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip	16/03/2026	7,575,714	45.746	34,771	2.322	RED	RED	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19						RED	RED	Red Alert raised based on satellite imagery and results of nearby sites. Site has not been sampled due to being inaccessible.	
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	23/03/2026	11,017,624	77.667	32,216	3.126	RED	RED	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic
N1128	Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet	24/03/2026	872,118	4.454	2,304	0.161	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	24/03/2026	107,313	0.161	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	24/03/2026	5,182,102	33.235	8,997	0.799	RED	RED	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	1/04/2026	1,815,959	9.584	7,451	0.512	AMBER	AMBER		
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	1/04/2026	2,522,372	10.030	12,301	0.847	RED	AMBER	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	31/03/2026	688,275	2.507	272	0.019	AMBER	AMBER	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	31/03/2026	417,069	0.858	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	30/03/2026	319,686	0.412	238	0.026	AMBER	GREEN	<i>Dolichospermum coiled species</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
<b>GREAT DARLING ANABRANCH</b>										
N1350	Silver City Hwy	23/03/2026	412,542	1.372	1,896	0.244	AMBER	RED	<i>Anabaenopsis sp.</i>	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 <sup>3</sup> /L	No Alert
Green	Low	0.05 to 0.5 mm <sup>3</sup> /L	Green
Yellow	Medium	0.5 to 5.0 mm <sup>3</sup> /L	Amber
Red	High	5.0 to 20.0 mm <sup>3</sup> /L	Red
Dark red	Extreme	> 20 mm <sup>3</sup> /L	Red

## Observations about the satellite images

**Hume Dam** (Figure 1): The satellite image from the 16<sup>th</sup> of April indicates potential low phytoplankton activity in the Murray River arm of the reservoir, while phytoplankton activity remains very low across the rest of the lake.

**Cloud cover blocked the most recent images of Menindee Lakes and Wentworth.**

**Menindee Lake System** (Figure 2) - The satellite image from the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, showed mostly moderate to high levels of phytoplankton activity across Menindee Lake, Cawndilla Creek and the inlet to Lake Cawndilla. Low levels of phytoplankton activity were observed across Lake Cawndilla and at Lake Wetherell sites 3 & 4. Very low levels were indicated at Lakes Tandure, Pamamaroo and Copi Hollow. Weir 32 showed primarily moderate levels of activity.

**Murray River at Wentworth** (Figure 3) - The satellite image from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April indicated very low levels of phytoplankton activity on the Murray, while the Darling River showed low to very low levels. The Great Darling Anabranch displayed mostly moderate levels of phytoplankton activity.

**Lake Victoria** (Figure 4) - On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, mostly very low phytoplankton activity was observed across the lake.

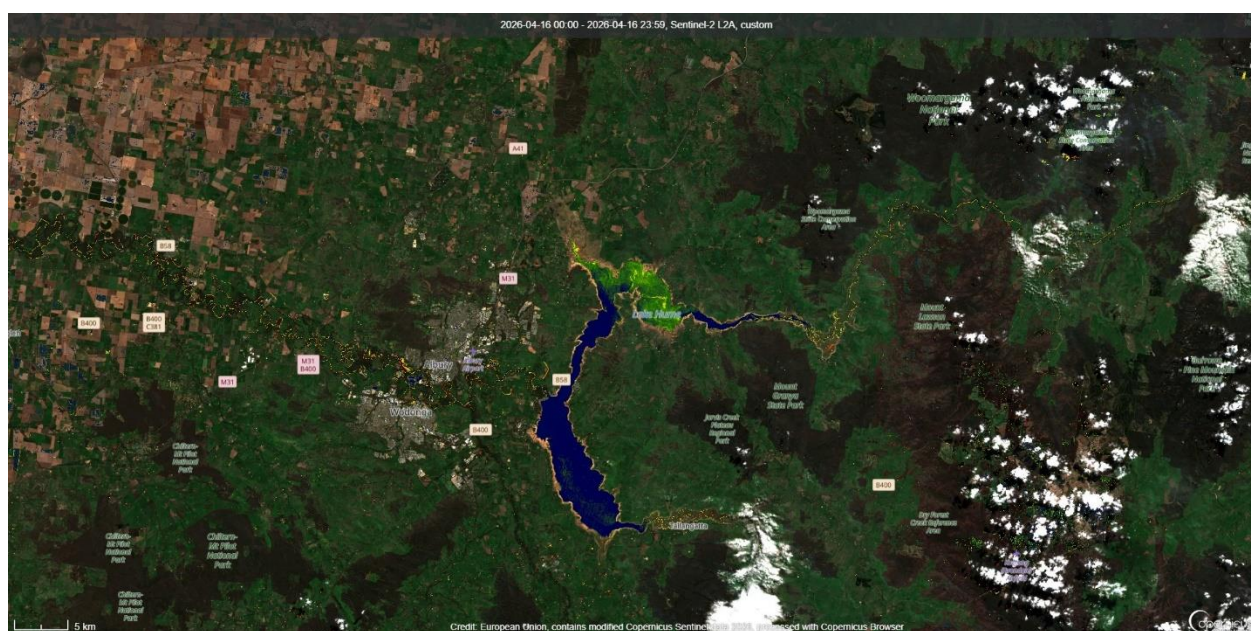


Figure 1: Hume Dam 16/04/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

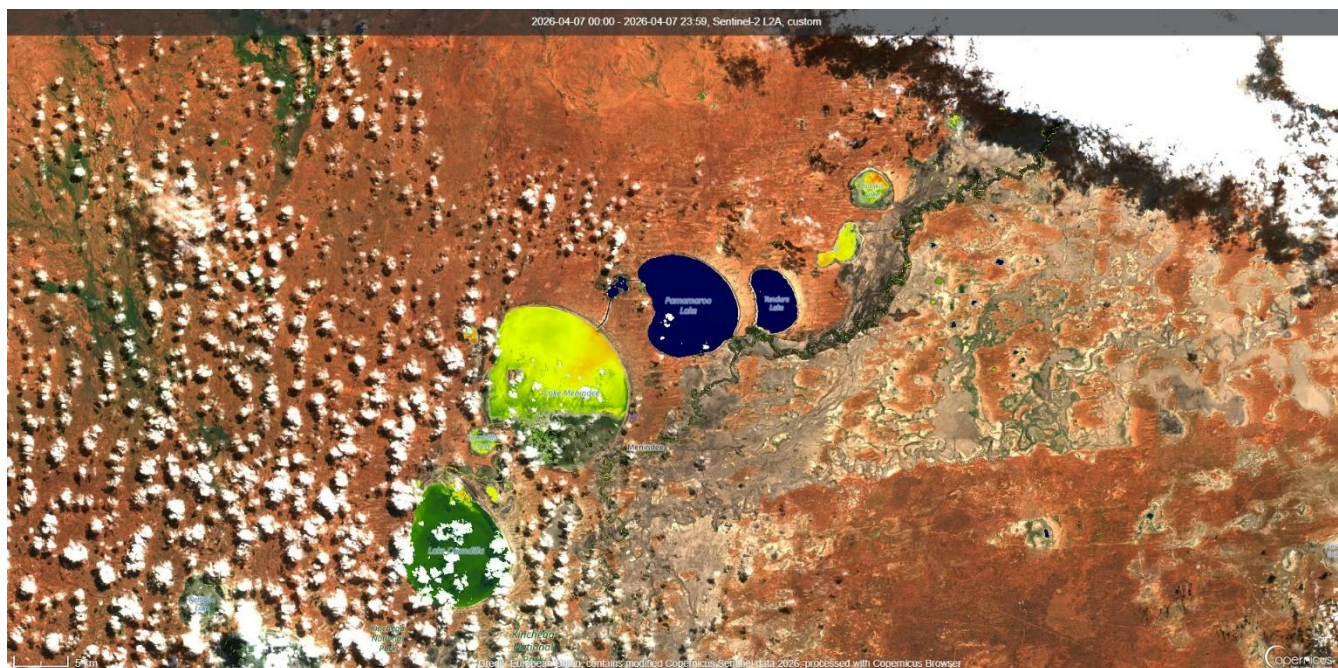


Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 7/04/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 2/04/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



Figure 4: Lake Victoria 15/04/2026 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><b>RED Alert</b>  <math>\geq 50\,000</math> cells/mL toxic <i>M. aeruginosa</i>  OR  biovolume equivalent of <math>\geq 4</math> mm<sup>3</sup>/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 <math>\geq 10</math> mm<sup>3</sup>/L  OR  Cyanobacterial scums are consistently present</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of Blue Green Algae detected</li> <li>• Indicates "bloom" conditions</li> <li>• Toxicity should be presumed</li> <li>• Water will appear green or brownish and may have a strong musty taste and odour</li> <li>• Surface scums could occur</li> <li>• <b>Extreme care should be exercised, and contact with the water should be avoided</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Media Release</li> <li>• Water supply authorities to increase filtering with activated carbon as appropriate</li> <li>• Local authority and health authorities to warn the public that the water body is unsuitable for primary contact recreation</li> </ul>
<p><b>AMBER Alert</b>  <math>\geq 5\,000</math> to <math>&lt; 50\,000</math> cells/mL <i>M. aeruginosa</i>  OR  biovolume equivalent of <math>\geq 0.4</math> to <math>&lt; 4</math> mm<sup>3</sup>/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria where known toxin producers are dominant in the total biovolume  OR  <math>\geq 0.4</math> to <math>&lt; 10</math>mm<sup>3</sup>/L combined total for all blue-green algae where known toxin producers are not dominant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicates blue-green algae are multiplying</li> <li>• Water may have a green tinge and musty taste and odour</li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water supply authorities to consider filtering with activated carbon</li> <li>• Investigations into the causes of the elevated levels and increased sampling to enable the risks to recreational users to be more accurately assessed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GREEN Alert</b>  <math>&gt; 500</math> to <math>&lt; 5\,000</math> cells/mL <i>M. aeruginosa</i>  OR  biovolume equivalent of <math>&gt; 0.04</math> to <math>&lt; 0.4</math> mm<sup>3</sup>/L for the combined total of all cyanobacteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of potentially toxic species detected – suggesting base crop of blue green algae may be on the increase</li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue/increase routine sampling to measure cyanobacterial levels</li> </ul>

### 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<sup>3</sup>/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](http://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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