Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

22 May 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 at Sunset Strip
- Lake Cawndilla Outlet
- Lake Menindee Outlet Regulator
- Darling River upstream of Weir 32
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Pooncarie
- Darling River at Ellerslie
- Darling River at Burtundy

Amber Alerts

- Lake Hume at Ebden
- 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
- Lake Benanee Rec Area
- Murray River at Fort Courage
- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Wetherell Sites 1, 2, 3 & 4
- Lake Tandure Site 8
- Lake Pamamaroo Inlet
- Lake Pamamaroo Outlet
- Lake Copi Hollow
- Darling River Menindee BHWB Pump
- Darling River at Tapio
- Silver City Highway

Climate Outlooks

For June to August, rainfall is likely to be below average across the Murray and Sunraysia regions. Maximum temperatures are very likely to exceed the average (> 80% chance). Minimum temperatures are very likely to be above average across the Murray region, and likely to exceed the average across Sunraysia. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM))

Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth remains high in the Lower Darling River and Menindee Lakes system, especially where flow conditions are low or waters are shallow. For the Murray River region, the risk of blue-green algal growth is lower, with cooler ambient temperatures and shorter daylight hours creating less favourable conditions for growth.

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)	27/04/2026	15,350	0.091	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebden	11/05/2026	11,572	0.297	10,415	0.296	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	11/05/2026	63,632	1.940	62,339	1.938	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	11/05/2026	10,138	0.230	7,076	0.226	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	11/05/2026	7,121	0.227	7,121	0.227	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	4/05/2026	15,743	0.532	9,041	0.467	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	4/05/2026	19,095	0.486	6,610	0.266	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrawonga Weir (outlet) GMW	5/05/2026	6,503	0.230	1056	0.078	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis*	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	4/05/2026	19,502	0.103	2,500	0.068	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrawonga	4/05/2026	8,213	0.248	2,838	0.197	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	4/05/2026	8,488	0.134	4,259	0.111	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	21/04/2026	35,388	0.714	966	0.069	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	4/05/2026	18,902	0.086	2,327	0.056	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	4/05/2026	7,976	0.133	1,633	0.039	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	20/04/2026	42,590	0.747	498	0.046	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	4/05/2026	20,603	0.054	850	0.020	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	4/05/2026	24,154	0.309	556.000	0.048	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis*	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	5/05/2026	12,126	0.025	476	0.011	No Alert	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	5/05/2026	10,046	0.254	136	0.003	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	4/05/2026	64,740	0.300	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	5/05/2026	43,650	0.098	1,701	0.046	GREEN	GREEN	*Oscillatoriaceae/Microcoleaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1064	Lake Benanee Rec Area	28/04/2026	157,704	0.224	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1028	Murray R. Euston (Robinvale)	28/04/2026	81,675	0.204	850	0.094	GREEN	AMBER	*Dolichospermum coiled species*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1065	Murray R. Mount Dispersion	28/04/2026	55,560	0.083	204	0.004	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	4/05/2026	79,917	0.187	2,994	0.092	GREEN	GREEN	*Radiocystis sp.*	Potentially toxic
	Merbein (LMW)	27/04/2026	54,186	0.388	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	4/05/2026	62,773	0.071	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	4/05/2026	93,618	0.088	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	4/05/2026	391,022	0.517	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
	Lock 9 (LMW)	27/04/2026	53,006	0.342	186	0.013	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis*	
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	4/05/2026	134,785	0.184	272	0.034	GREEN	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	4/05/2026	680	0.003	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	4/05/2026	2,926	0.033	1,293	0.031	No Alert	No Alert	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	4/05/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	4/05/2026	8,423	0.078	952	0.029	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	4/05/2026	19,923	0.048	204	0.004	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	5/05/2026	24,891	0.069	136	0.003	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	5/05/2026	20,848	0.062	1,565	0.037	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	5/05/2026	69,589	0.096	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	5/05/2026	17,080	0.017	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	5/05/2026	41,378	0.054	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM & LOWER DARLING RIVER										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	6/05/2026	149,579	0.194	306	0.039	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	4/05/2026	348,190	0.751	255	0.032	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	21/04/2026	1,103,625	4.850	6,798	0.483	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	12/05/2026	828,024	6.102	102	0.013	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	12/05/2026	452,823	2.654	102	0.013	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1091	Lake Tandure Site 8	21/04/2026	394,132	0.672	306	0.036	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum coiled species*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	12/05/2026	622,381	4.168	612	0.078	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1129	42510013 Centre Pamamaroo (Site 13)	23/03/2026	148,415	0.208	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	12/05/2026	766,689	4.206	1,346	0.098	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	21/04/2026	273,158	0.466	306	0.036	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum coiled species*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1337	Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip	8/05/2026	42,791,671	76.579	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19						RED	RED	*Site currently inacessible for sampling.*	
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	8/05/2026	44,352,090	74.961	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1128	Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet	8/05/2026	3,151,626	7.350	3,548	0.212	RED	RED	*Raphidiopsis raciborskii*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	21/04/2026	414,755	0.422	272	0.006	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	8/05/2026	8,087,647	10.353	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	11/05/2026	5,192,798	7.545	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	11/05/2026	10,447,665	14.092	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	11/05/2026	3,734,985	7.289	561	0.026	RED	RED	*Raphidiopsis raciborskii*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	11/05/2026	8,873,139	19.751	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	11/05/2026	5,400,140	7.433	510	0.019	AMBER	AMBER	*Raphidiopsis raciborskii*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
GREAT DARLING ANABRANCH										
N1350	Silver City Hwy	23/03/2026	412,542	1.372	1,896	0.244	AMBER	RED	*Anabaenopsis 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 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

Hume Dam (Figure 1): The satellite image from the 21st of May indicates mostly very low phytoplankton activity across the lake, with some increased activity remaining near Bowna.

Cloud cover has continued to block recent images of the Menindee Lake System and Wentworth.

Menindee Lake System (Figure 2) - The satellite image from the 7th of May, showed mostly low to moderate levels of phytoplankton activity across Lake Menindee, Cawndilla Creek, Lake Cawndilla, Weir 32, Pamamaroo Inlet and Lake Wetherell's sites 1 & 2. Lake Wetherell's sites 3 and 4 indicated moderate to high levels of activity, with both sites indicating an increase in activity compared to recent weeks. Mostly very low levels were indicated at Lakes Tandure, Pamamaroo and Copi Hollow.

Murray River at Wentworth (Figure 3) - The satellite image from the 7th of May indicated very low levels of phytoplankton activity in the Murray, while the Darling River showed mostly low levels of activity. The Great Darling Anabranch displayed mostly moderate levels of phytoplankton activity.

Lake Victoria (Figure 4) – On the 20th of May, mostly very low phytoplankton activity was observed across the lake, with some low levels of activity indicated near the inflow from Frenchman's Creek and the northeast shore.

Figure 1: Hume Dam 21/05/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

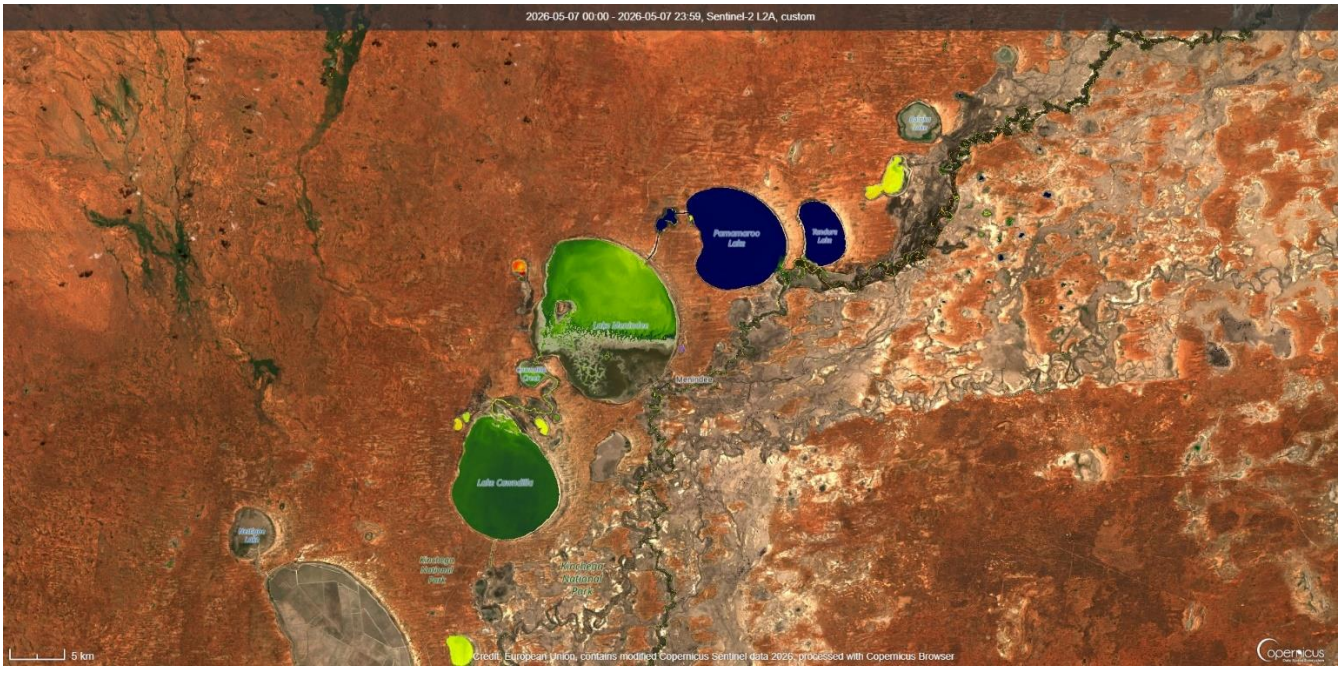

Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 07/05/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

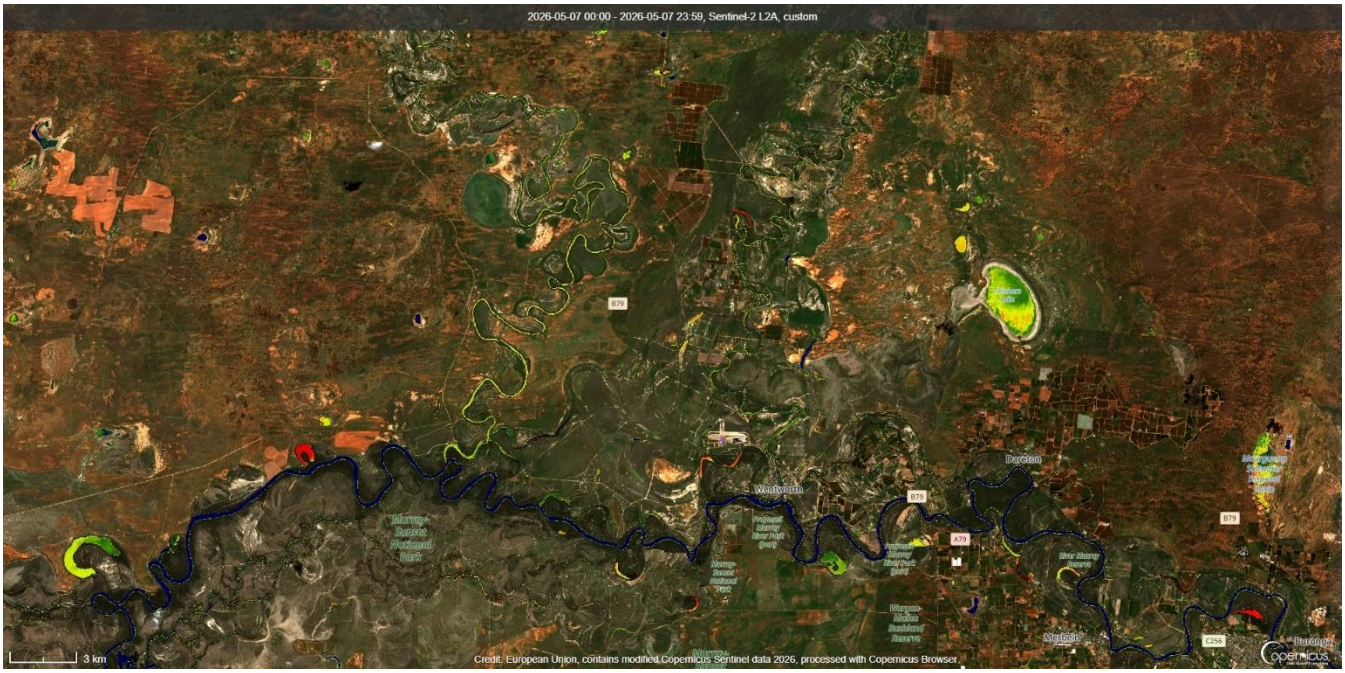

Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 7/05/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

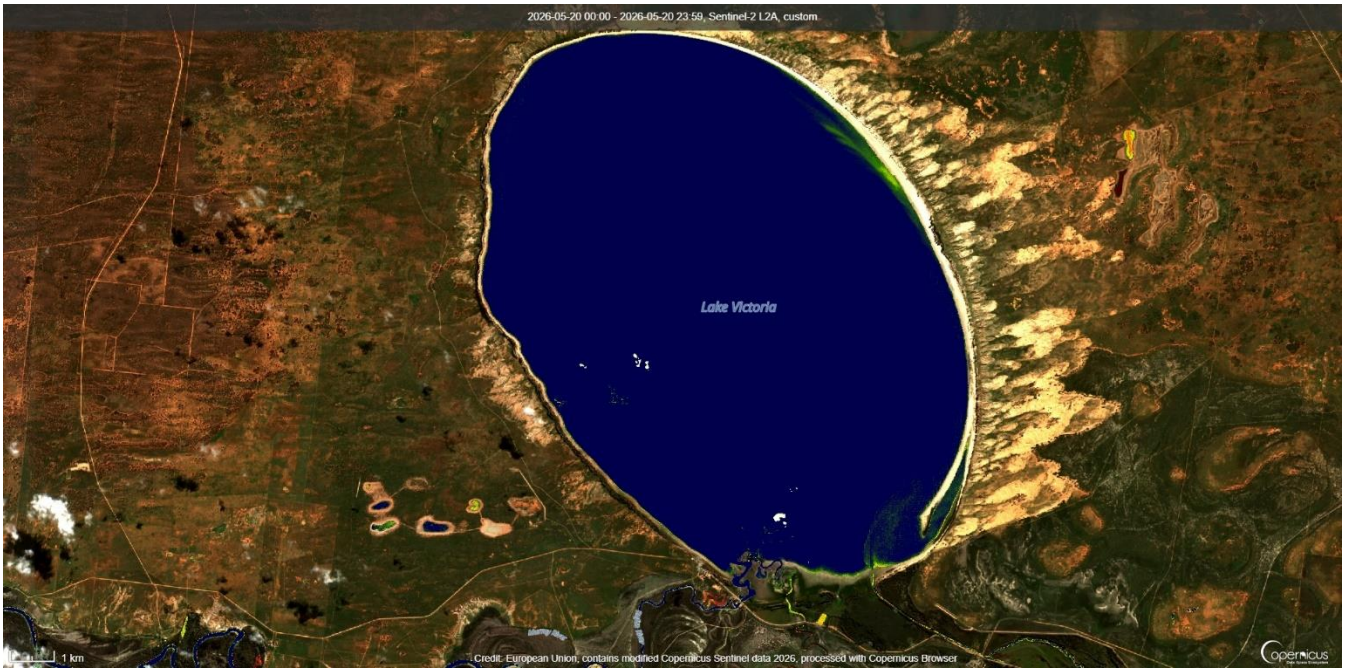

Figure 4: Lake Victoria 20/05/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

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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