

Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

1 October 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

- Darling River at Burtundy
- Lake Cawndilla Outlet
- Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip

Amber Alerts

- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Wetherell Sites 2 & 4
- Lake Pamamaroo Inlet
- Lake Copi Hollow
- Lake Menindee Outlet Regulator
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Pooncarie
- Darling River at Tapio
- Darling River at Ellerslie

Climate Outlooks

For October to December, there is no clear signal for rainfall across most of the regions, meaning there is a roughly equal chance of above or below average rainfall. Both maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely (greater than 80% chance) to exceed the average. (Source: [Bureau of Meteorology \(BoM\)](#))

Algal Outlook

The risk of blue-green algal growth remains low across the eastern Murray River region, with increasing risk in the western regions. Where flow conditions are low and waters are shallow, such as the Lower Darling River north of Wentworth and Lake Menindee, the risk is higher. With a warmer than average spring forecasted, conditions will continue to become more favourable for algal 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 (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										
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebdon	7/09/2026	5,480	0.149	5,343	0.149	GREEN	No Alert	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	7/09/2026	404	0.007	267	0.007	No Alert	No Alert	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	7/09/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	7/09/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	2/09/2026	890	0.001	68	0.001	No Alert	No Alert	<i>Microcystis sp.</i>	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	2/09/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
	Yarrowonga Weir (outlet) GMW	7/09/2026	3,840	0.045	1590	0.032	GREEN	No Alert	<i>Limnithrix/Geitlerinema/Anagnostis dinema</i>	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	2/09/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrowonga	2/09/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	2/09/2026	5,104	0.117	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	1/09/2026	950	0.010	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	2/09/2026	548	0.003	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	31/08/2026	137	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	31/08/2026	5,316	0.031	14	0.000	No Alert	No Alert	<i>Limnithrix/Geitlerinema/Anagnostis dinema</i>	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	31/08/2026	1,849	0.002	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	7/09/2026	1,800	0.015	100.000	0.006	No Alert	No Alert	<i>Aphanizomenonaceae family - coiled (<6µm)</i>	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	1/09/2026	19,357	0.029	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	1/09/2026	1,918	0.004	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	28/09/2026	181,350	1.000	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	1/09/2026	2,192	0.002	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1028	Murray R. Euston (Robinvale)	17/08/2026	8,863	0.028	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	1/09/2026	33,097	0.050	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	1/09/2026	19,103	0.027	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	31/08/2026	23,495	0.033	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	31/08/2026	170,928	0.195	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	31/08/2026	259,514	0.310	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	31/08/2026	3,444	0.005	0	0.000	No Alert	AMBER		

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	2/09/2026	4,178	0.004	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	31/08/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	31/08/2026	411	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	31/08/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	31/08/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	1/09/2026	959	0.001	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	1/09/2026	61,775	0.097	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	1/09/2026	10,275	0.010	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM & LOWER DARLING RIVER										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	1/09/2026	4,090,997	4.098	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	24/08/2026	67,008	0.099	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	24/08/2026	7,398	0.012	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	24/08/2026	193,177	0.276	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	24/08/2026	22,562	0.030	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	24/08/2026	0	0.000	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	24/08/2026	46,988	0.066	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	24/08/2026	10,973	0.015	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19	30/09/2025	0	0.000	0	0.000	No Alert	RED		
N1339	Lake Menindee outlet regulator	25/08/2026	2,576,069	4.292	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1128	Lake Cawndilla Site 34 Outlet	21/09/2026	2,102,266	3.752	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	25/08/2026	14,850	0.014	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
N1337	MENINDEE LAKES AT SUNSET STRIP	21/09/2026	13,522,271	21.523	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	25/08/2026	190,142	0.245	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	1/09/2026	1,164,978	1.562	822	0.022	AMBER	AMBER	Oscillatoriaceae/Microcoleaceae sp.	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	1/09/2026	2,923,038	3.409	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	21/09/2026	6,441,330	7.114	0	0.000	RED	RED		
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	21/09/2026	3,936,381	4.698	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	31/08/2026	925,249	0.933	0	0.000	AMBER	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 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

Hume Dam (Figure 1) - The last satellite image from the 28th of September indicated mostly very low phytoplankton activity across the lake.

Menindee Lake System (Figure 2) - The image from the 29th of September indicates mostly low levels of algal activity across Lake Menindee, Cawndilla Creek, the edge of Lake Cawndilla and Lake Wetherell sites 1, 2 & 3. Mostly very low levels were indicated at Lakes Tandure, Pamamaroo, Cawndilla, Copi Hollow, Weir 32 and Wetherell site 4. Increased algal activity is indicated in the stretch of river between Lake Wetherell sites 3 and 2. Sample results are pending for these sites.

Murray River at Wentworth (Figure 3) - The satellite image from the 29th of September indicated low levels of phytoplankton activity in both the Murray and Darling Rivers.

Lake Victoria (Figure 4) - On the 29th of September, mostly very low phytoplankton activity was observed across the lake.



Figure 1: Hume Dam 28/09/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

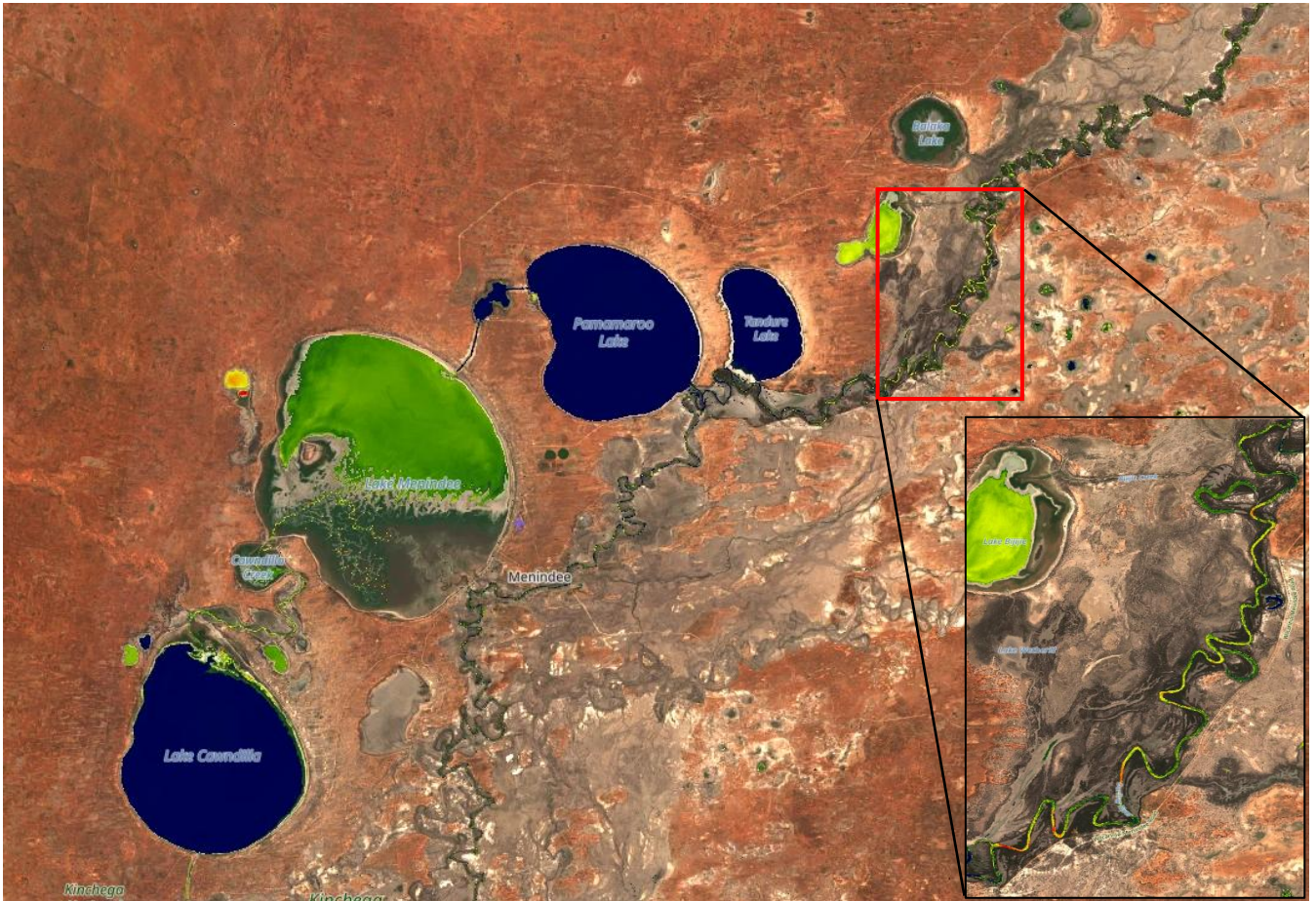


Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 29/09/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 29/09/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.



Figure 4: Lake Victoria 29/09/2026 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 <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	• 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 <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	• 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 <i>M. aeruginosa</i> OR biovolume equivalent of > 0.04 to < 0.4 mm³/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
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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.watarnsw.com.au/algae or at WaterInsights (links below):

Murray regulated river – <https://waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au/11904-new-south-wales-murray-regulated-river/updates>

Lower-Darling regulated river – <https://waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/updates>

Contacts

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