Murray and Sunraysia – Algae Alert Status

5 March 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 Menindee Outlet Regulator
- Silver City Highway

Amber Alerts

- Lake Hume at Heywoods Bay near Bethanga
- Lake Hume Dam Resort
- Lake Hume Dam Wall
- Murray River at Union Bridge in Albury
- Mulwala Canal Offtake
- Murray River below Yarrawonga
- Murray River at Cobram
- Murray River at Tocumwal
- Murray River at Picnic Point
- Murray River at Moama
- Murray River at Barham
- Murray River at Tooleybuc
- Murray River at Euston
- Murray River at Mount Dispersion
- Murray River at Curlwaa
- Murray River at Fort Courage
- Murray River Lock 8
- Gulpa Creek at Mathoura
- Edward River at Deniliquin
- Edward River at Old Morago
- Darling River at Wilcannia
- Lake Wetherell Sites 1, 2 & 3
- Lake Pamamaroo Outlet
- Lake Copi Hollow
- Darling River at upstream Weir 32
- Darling River at Tolarno
- Darling River at Burtundy
- Darling River at Ellerslie
- Darling River at Tapio

General Comments

Road closures across south-western NSW after recent heavy rainfall have delayed sampling for some sites in the Lower Darling region.

The risk of bushfire contamination in the upper Murray River and Mitta Mitta River arms of Lake Hume continues after recent rainfall in the area is likely to have mobilised ash, debris and topsoil following the Walwa – Mount Lawson bushfires in early 2026.

Climate Outlooks

For March to May, rainfall is likely to be below average across the Murray, Sunraysia and Lower Darling regions. Maximum temperatures are very likely to be above average (> 80% chance) with minimum temperatures likely to exceed the average in the eastern Murray River region. The remainder of the regions are likely to exceed the average temperature and have a lower chance of exceeding the average minimum temperatures. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM))

Algal Outlook

The risk for blue-green algal growth continues to be high with increased algal activity likely where flow conditions are low or waters are shallow. Nutrient rich rainfall runoff entering waterways across the regions can increase the risk of algal activity. For Lake Hume, increased post-fire nutrient loading entering the upper arms of the catchment after recent rainfall is also likely to increase the risk of algal activity.

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)	9/02/2026	<33100	<0.17597	0	0.000	GREEN	AMBER		
	Manus Lake (SVC) Lake pontoon	27/01/2026	1,563	0.003	0	0.000	No Alert	GREEN		
DLH003	Lake Hume, Ebden	2/02/2026	14,136	0.303	119	0.003	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH001	Lake Hume, Heywoods Bay nr Bethanga	2/02/2026	31,037	0.425	221	0.026	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH002	Lake Hume, Hume Dam Resort	2/02/2026	11,977	0.098	599	0.016	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
DLH004	Lake Hume, Dam Wall	2/02/2026	18,842	0.746	490	0.013	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1000	Murray R. Union Bridge Albury	4/02/2026	40,550	0.604	898	0.021	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1001	Murray R. Corowa	4/02/2026	16,041	0.184	408	0.009	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Yarrawonga Weir (outlet) GMW	17/02/2026	64,605	1.112	8517	0.700	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1008	Mulwala Canal Offtake	4/02/2026	52,678	2.478	204	0.022	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1007	Murray R. @ below Yarrawonga	4/02/2026	85,664	2.278	3,295	0.217	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1051	Murray R. Cobram (Barooga)	4/02/2026	93,985	2.671	1,323	0.057	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Cobram WTP, raw water (GVW)	24/02/2026	59,090	2.641	34244	2.307	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1013	Murray R. Tocumwal	4/02/2026	103,872	6.166	1,667	0.113	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1052	Murray R. Picnic Point	2/02/2026	89,642	6.020	1,534	0.052	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Barmah WTP raw water (GVW)	23/02/2026	193,188	2.665	16592	1.118	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1050	Murray R. Moama (Echuca)	2/02/2026	166,393	3.032	1,953	0.172	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Torrumbarry Weir GMW	2/03/2026	81,802	0.777	344.000	0.105	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum cf. crassum*	
N1003	Murray R. Barham (Koondrook)	3/02/2026	85,470	1.071	1,290	0.107	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1054	Murray R. Murray Downs (Swan Hill)	3/02/2026	77,062	0.349	347	0.008	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Murray River U/S Woorinen pumps GMW	9/02/2026	100,550	0.600	350	0.030	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae family – straight*	
N1055	Murray R. Tooleybuc (Piangil)	3/02/2026	85,182	4.359	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1064	Lake Benanee Rec Area	4/02/2026	42,053	0.061	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1028	Murray R. Euston (Robinvale)	3/02/2026	30,793	1.118	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
N1065	Murray R. Mount Dispersion	4/02/2026	174,587	1.052	1,905	0.046	AMBER	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1062	Murray R. Buronga	3/02/2026	47,714	0.130	153	0.018	GREEN	GREEN	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Merbein (LMW)	16/02/2026	71,372	0.561	800	0.059	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1027	414206 - Murray River at Merbein	3/02/2026	39,845	0.236	510	0.012	GREEN	GREEN	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1063	Murray R. Curlwaa	2/02/2026	68,533	0.429	1,102	0.026	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1066	Murray R. Fort Courage	2/02/2026	119,453	0.612	442	0.049	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
	Lock 9 (LMW)	16/02/2026	151,628	4.903	51036	3.768	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp*	
N1077	Murray R. Lock 8	2/02/2026	110,945	5.272	2,654	0.333	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1078	Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator	2/02/2026	7,608	0.211	1,020	0.123	GREEN	No Alert	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour

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	4/02/2026	58,378	0.119	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1015	Billabong Ck. Jerilderie	2/02/2026	2,389	0.001	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1006	Gulpa Ck. Mathoura	2/02/2026	111,404	4.007	1,422	0.072	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1002	Edward R Deniliquin	2/02/2026	82,768	3.512	748	0.046	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1053	Edward R. Old Morago	3/02/2026	151,616	1.993	544	0.044	AMBER	AMBER	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1005	Edward R. Moulamein	3/02/2026	102,578	0.204	408	0.009	GREEN	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1010	Wakool R. Wakool-Barham Road	3/02/2026	42,706	0.056	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1004	Wakool R. @ Stoney Crossing	3/02/2026	4,083	0.004	0	0.000	No Alert	No Alert		
N1009	Wakool R. Kyalite	3/02/2026	58,534	0.091	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
MENINDEE LAKE SYSTEM & LOWER DARLING RIVER										
N1042	Darling River at Wilcannia	3/02/2026	633,196	1.604	9,252	0.340	AMBER	AMBER	*Microcystis sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1087	Lake Wetherell Site 1	21/01/2026	298,563	1.072	3,757	0.463	AMBER	GREEN	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1088	Lake Wetherell Site 2	21/01/2026	145,220	1.657	8,353	0.990	AMBER	No Alert	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1089	Lake Wetherell Site 3	21/01/2026	385,480	1.462	5,894	0.712	AMBER	GREEN	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1090	Lake Wetherell Site 4	21/01/2026	25,881	0.133	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1091	Lake Tandure Site 8	21/01/2026	163,325	0.274	408	0.051	GREEN	No Alert	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1092	Lake Pamamaroo Inlet (Site 9)	21/01/2026	277,520	0.350	0	0.000	GREEN	GREEN		
N1129	42510013 Centre Pamamaroo (Site 13)	22/01/2026	98,408	0.143	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1093	Lake Pamamaroo Outlet (Site 10)	21/01/2026	418,076	0.528	0	0.000	AMBER	No Alert		
N1094	Menindee Lakes, Copi Hollow	22/01/2026	311,161	0.451	0	0.000	AMBER	GREEN		
N1130	Lake Menindee Site 19						RED	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	9/02/2026	1,244,535	12.842	44,620	5.483	RED	RED	*Aphanizomenonaceae sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1337	Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip	9/02/2026	2,025,047	11.508	5,115	0.595	RED		*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1095	Darling R. Menindee bhwb pump	22/01/2026	19,869	0.052	0	0.000	GREEN	No Alert		
N1086	Darling R u/s Weir 32	9/02/2026	520,928	4.025	4,628	0.595	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1043	Darling R. Tolarno	3/02/2026	393,192	3.360	3,497	0.461	AMBER	AMBER	*Anabaenopsis sp.*	Potentially toxic
N1040	Darling R. Pooncarie	3/02/2026	45,125	0.215	1,152	0.128	GREEN	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1041	Darling R. Burtundy	3/02/2026	171,266	0.675	1,633	0.182	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1074	Darling R. Ellerslie	2/02/2026	515,482	1.341	1,772	0.197	AMBER	AMBER	*Dolichospermum sp.*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour
N1075	Darling R. Tapio	2/02/2026	122,739	0.460	0	0.000	AMBER	AMBER		
GREAT DARLING ANABRANCH										
N1350	Silver City Hwy	3/02/2026	3,318,669	91.839	111,023	8.102	RED	RED	*Raphidiopsis raciborskii*	Potentially toxic, taste & odour

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

Cloud cover has blocked the most recent images for all sites for a second week in a row. The last clear images are provided below.

Figure 1 indicates that Hume Dam had mostly very low-level phytoplankton activity on the 20th of February.

The satellite images from the 16th of February (Figure 2) shows mostly medium levels were indicated across Menindee Lake and high at Cawndilla Creek. Lake Cawndilla has shown further increases with low activity across more of the lake, and medium levels at the inflow of Cawndilla Creek. Mostly low levels were indicated at Weir 32 and mostly very low at Lakes Tandure, Pamamaroo, Copi Hollow and Wetherell (sites 3 and 4).

On the 21st of February, cloud cover has impacted the image however it can be observed the Murray River near Wentworth indicated mostly very low levels of phytoplankton activity and the Darling River indicated mostly low levels (Figure 3).

Lake Victoria showed mostly very low phytoplankton activity on the 21st of February (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Hume Dam 20/02/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

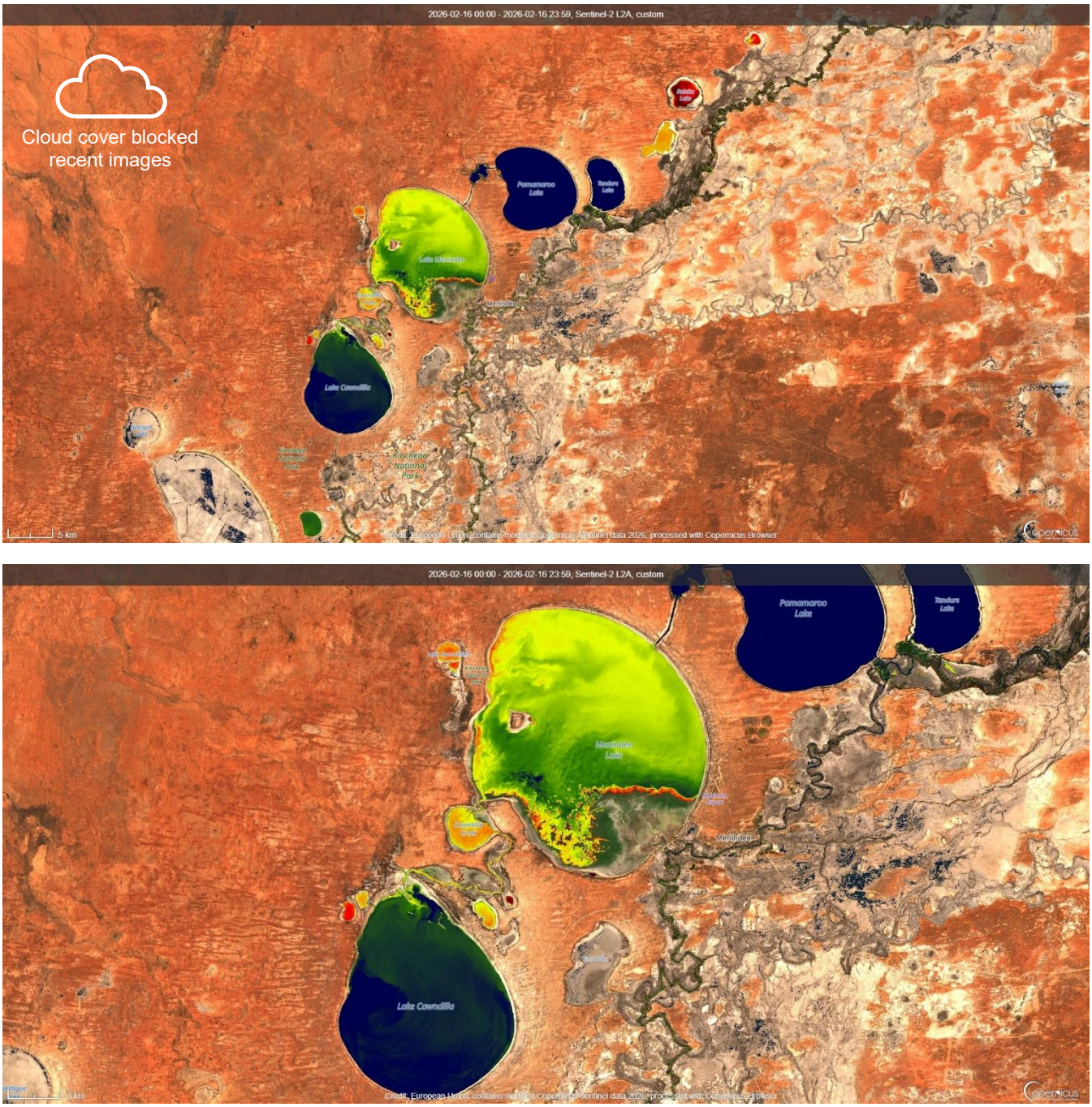

Figure 2: Menindee Lakes 16/02/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW-RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

Figure 3: Murray River near Wentworth, Lower Darling River and Great Darling Anabranch 21/02/2026 SentinelHub [CC BY-NC 4.0] NSW- RACC Custom Algae Script - TF, WaterNSW.

Figure 4: Lake Victoria 21/02/2026 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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