

Blue-green algae – Murray River and Tributaries

Blue-green algae occur naturally. Blooms can be triggered by nutrient levels, low inflows, lower storage volumes and warmer weather conditions. Blue-green algae are not always visible, and do not always colour the water blue or green.

Current Situation

High levels of blue-green algae have been detected in the Murray River between Lake Hume and Murrabit, the channels servicing the Murray Valley Irrigation area and the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area, Loddon River at Kerang Weir Pool and downstream to the Murray River.

Lake Hume, Lake Mulwala, Lake Moodemere, Reedy Lake, Lake Boga and Racecourse Lake including the 3/7 channel which is part of the Kerang Lakes are also affected areas.

High levels of blue green algae remain in Cairn Curran and Laaencoorie Reservoirs.

The algal bloom is expected to remain into April or until there is substantial rainfall and cooler conditions. Goulburn Murray Water and the Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee are continuing to monitor the situation closely, and will remove the warning when blue-green algae return to a safe level.

Further information: www.emergency.vic.gov.au

Health and Wellbeing Information

Blue-green algae is potentially toxic to humans. For your safety, please avoid direct contact with the affected water. Children are more likely than adults to swallow water when swimming and more susceptible to health effects. Do not use affected water for cooking, drinking, washing or showering. Boiling the water will **not** make it safe for these purposes. If you do come in contact with affected water, wash your skin immediately in clean, cool, fresh water. If you experience any symptoms such as skin rashes or itchiness; sore eyes, ears or nose; nausea or vomiting seek medical attention immediately at your local medical centre, or Nurse-On-Call on 1300 60 60 24. Department of Health and Human Services has issued a fact sheet for blue-green algae which can be found at www.health.vic.gov.au

Pets and Animals

Blue-green algae can be dangerous to animals. Dogs can be poisoned by blue-green algae. Don't let your dog swim or drink the water in affected areas. If your dog does come into contact with the water, it is important to wash the dog thoroughly with fresh cold water, as they can ingest toxins by licking their coat. Care should be taken that animals are not fed or allowed to eat the entrails of fish.

Agriculture

Primary producers are advised to seek an alternative water source for stock and to spray or irrigate crops. If this is not possible, monitor animals closely and seek veterinary advice if necessary.

Agriculture Victoria advises primary producers there are currently no reports of stock deaths directly related to the blue green algae bloom.

Further information: www.agriculture.vic.gov.au

Water Supply

Town water supplies provided by urban water authorities remain unaffected and safe for drinking and domestic use. People on non-mains water should contact their relevant water provider for advice and support. An alternative water source should be used where possible, for spraying and irrigating crops.

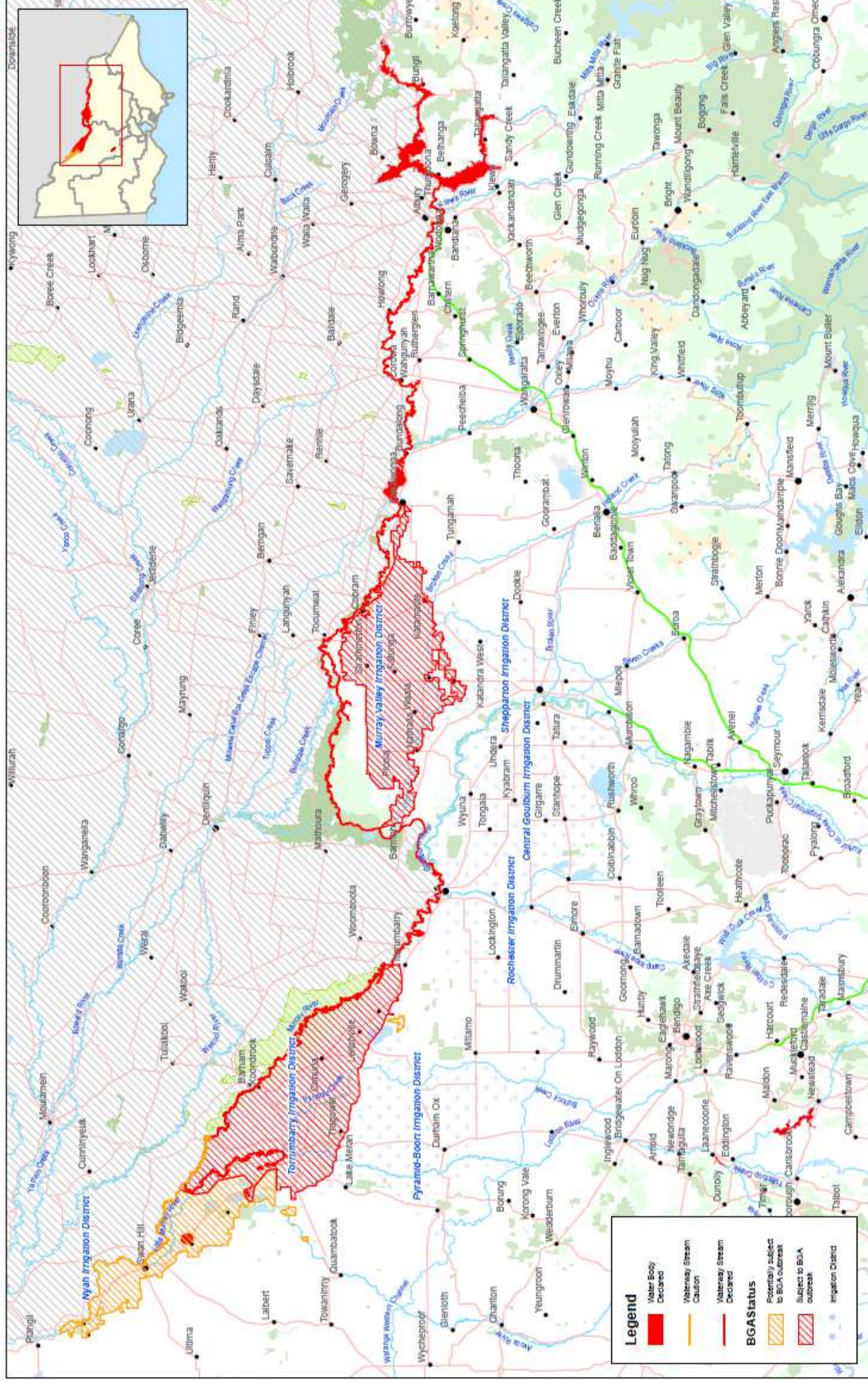
Further information: www.g-mwater.com.au, www.lmw.vic.gov.au, www.newwater.com.au and www.qvwater.vic.gov.au

Boating, Fishing, Hunting

Boating and fishing is still allowed in these areas, however care needs to be taken. Do not eat any mussels, yabbies or crayfish from algae-affected areas. Fish caught should be washed in clean fresh water, gilled, gutted and any internal organs disposed of and not eaten, or fed to pets. Duck season runs from Saturday 19 March to Monday 13 June; the advice for fish also applies to ducks.

Further information: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au and www.gma.vic.gov.au, www.visitthemurray.com.au

Murray River Blue Green Algal Alert | Last update 22 March 2016 | A3L



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