



South Australia

River Murray Water Resources Report



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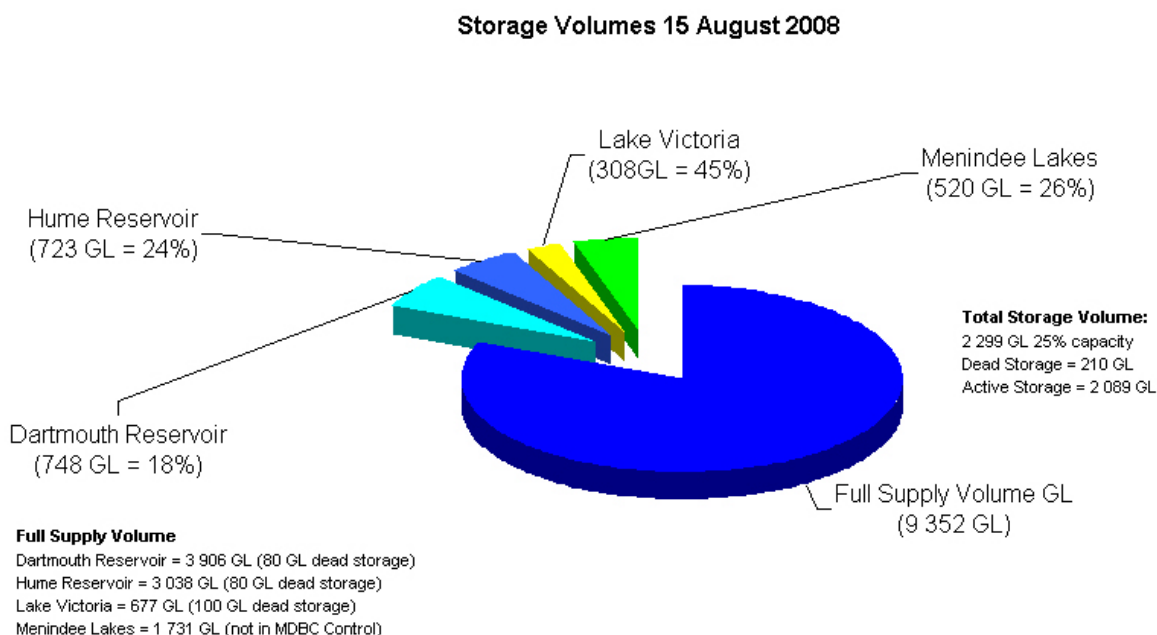
Observations at a glance

- The Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, announced today that from 1 September 2008, irrigators will be able to access 6% of their allocations and 100% of carry-over water.
- These increases come as a result of small improvements in River Murray inflows during July, together with NSW and Victoria repaying some water to South Australia that was due last year.
- About 300 GL of inflows were received during July, and about 116 GL have been received so far in August.
- July to October is a critical period for the River Murray as about 65% of the annual inflows occur during this period.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 2 299 GL (25% capacity), compared to 1 760 GL (19% capacity) at the same time last year. The long-term average storage for this time of year is 6 800 GL (73% capacity). Storage volumes are shown in **Figure 1**. The current storage volume includes water released by Snowy Hydro Water for 2008-09 and water set-aside for 2008-09 for critical human needs and private carry-over.

Figure 1: Storage volumes



River Murray inflows

About 300 GL flowed into the River Murray system during July 2008 compared to 450 GL in July 2007. Most of this water was received in tributaries in NSW and Victoria, and is not part of the water resource available for sharing between the States.

The River Murray system remains in severe drought. The long-term average inflow for July is 1 190 GL and the previous minimum for July was 135 GL in July 2006.

So far in August 2008 about 116 GL of inflows have been recorded.

South Australian allocation announcement

On 15 August 2008, the Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, announced that from 1 September 2008 irrigators will be able to access 6% of their allocations (up from 2%) and 100% of carry-over water (up from 50%).

These increases followed a small improvement in the water available for sharing between the States. During July 2008, the shared water resource improved by 35 GL, of which South Australia received a one-third share (12 GL).

In addition, South Australia received 31 GL from NSW and Victoria as repayment of the debt relating to an unpaid allowance from the Lindsay River that was due last year. This water was provided from tributary inflows in NSW and Victoria. This water is not part of the shared resource and under normal circumstances, South Australia would not have access to it.

The small increases in irrigation allocations were made following consideration of all factors in accordance with the River Murray Drought Water Allocation Framework. Increasing irrigation allocations is a priority early in the water year to help producers plan their irrigation year and to provide water to certain crops, such as citrus, almonds and avocados, that require water during the winter months.

For further information see the media release at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

Drought imbalance

The slight improvement in the amount of River Murray water available to South Australia also allowed the State to reduce its drought imbalance to NSW and Victoria to 52 GL. Paying off the imbalance as quickly as possible will allow allocations to irrigation and other consumptive uses to increase earlier in the season.

NSW allocation announcements

On **1 August 2008**, high security users in the NSW Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys received their first water allocation for the 2008-09 water year. The NSW Department of Water and Energy announced a 25% allocation for high security users in the Murray Valley and a 30% allocation for the Murrumbidgee Valley. For further information, please visit:

www.dnr.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mm20080801_3922.html

The NSW Government also relaxed water trading rules to allow water from the Lower-Darling River to be temporarily traded into the Murray and Murrumbidgee River systems for the 2008-09 water year. Prior to this change, water could not be traded out of the Lower Darling when management of the Menindee Lakes was in NSW control. The new arrangement applies only to temporary trades, with no permanent trades permitted. Additionally, licence holders will be permitted to trade water into the Lower Darling River, provided trade into the valley does not exceed trade out.

On **15 August 2008**, the NSW Department of Water and Energy announced an increase in Murrumbidgee Valley high security allocations from 30% to 40% while the allocation for Murray Valley high security users remained unchanged at 25%.

For further information, please visit:

http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mm20080815_3923.html

Victorian allocation announcement

On **15 August 2008**, Goulburn-Murray Water announced that irrigation allocations from all regulated systems in Victoria would remain on 0% of high-reliability water shares. However, domestic and stock water, and the delivery of some carry-over water, will be available in both the Murray and Goulburn systems throughout the year.

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.g-mwater.com.au/news/allocation-announcements/current.asp>

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology predicts the chance of exceeding median rainfall for the southern section of the Murray-Darling Basin is between 40%-50% for August through to October. There is a 70% chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures over the same period.

Further information on the weather outlook is available from www.bom.gov.au

Salinity and water levels

Salinity remains fairly low between Lock 6 and Lock 1; however, downstream of Lock 1 salinities remain high due to low water levels.

The water level in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently -0.34m AHD and has improved slightly as a result of increased flows over Lock 1, localised rainfall and inflows from some of the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges tributaries. The water level at the same time last year was 0.21m AHD. Salinity in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently 3 938 EC. This compares to about 1 820 EC at the same time last year. Salinities are much higher upstream of the Goolwa Barrage around to Point Sturt.

Table 1 shows the current water levels and salinity at selected locations.

Table 1: Water and salinity levels

	Actual Water Levels at 15/08/08		Full Supply Level Level	Variation from Pool Level	Current EC Level
	U/S m AHD	D/S m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	
Lock 6	19.21	16.29	19.25	-0.04	306
Lock 5	16.34	13.29	16.30	0.04	363
Lock 4	13.25	10.10	13.20	0.05	456
Lock 3	9.86	6.30	9.80	0.06	508
Lock 2	6.19	3.37	6.10	0.09	474
Lock 1	3.24	-0.15	3.20	0.04	495
Lake Alexandrina (Milang)	-0.34				3938
Lake Albert (Meningie)	N/A				
Goolwa					21393
Lake Alexandrina and Albert water and salinity Levels based on 5 day average					
Water levels below Lock 1 are affected by wind and will vary throughout the day					
EC Readings below Lock 1 are daily averages and will vary throughout the day					

Further information on River Murray conditions and rainfall forecasts can be obtained from the following websites:

Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au
 SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au
 Murray-Darling Basin Commission www.mdbc.gov.au
 SA Water Daily Reports www.riverland.net.au/~heinz/mdbcrep.htm
 Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au
 Queensland Department of Primary Industry www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au

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