Government of South Australia
Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation

River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 43: 7 August 2009

Observations at a glance

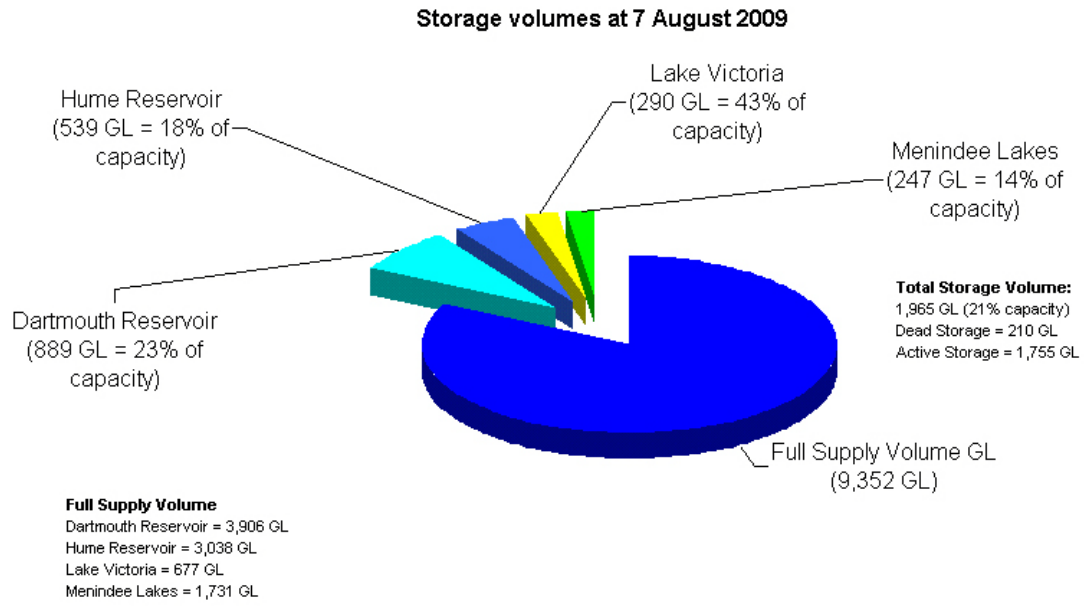
- Irrigators are currently able to access 5% of their allocation and 100% of their approved carry-over water volume.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 1,965 GL (21% capacity), compared to about 2,299 GL (25% capacity) at the same time last year.
- A total of 330 GL of inflow was recorded for the month of July.
- Below Lock 1 water levels remain low and salinity levels remain high due to reduced flows into South Australia.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 1,965 GL (21% capacity), compared to about 2,299 GL (25% capacity) at the same time last year. The long-term average for this time of year is about 6,260 GL (67% capacity).

Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages



Rainfall and River Murray inflows

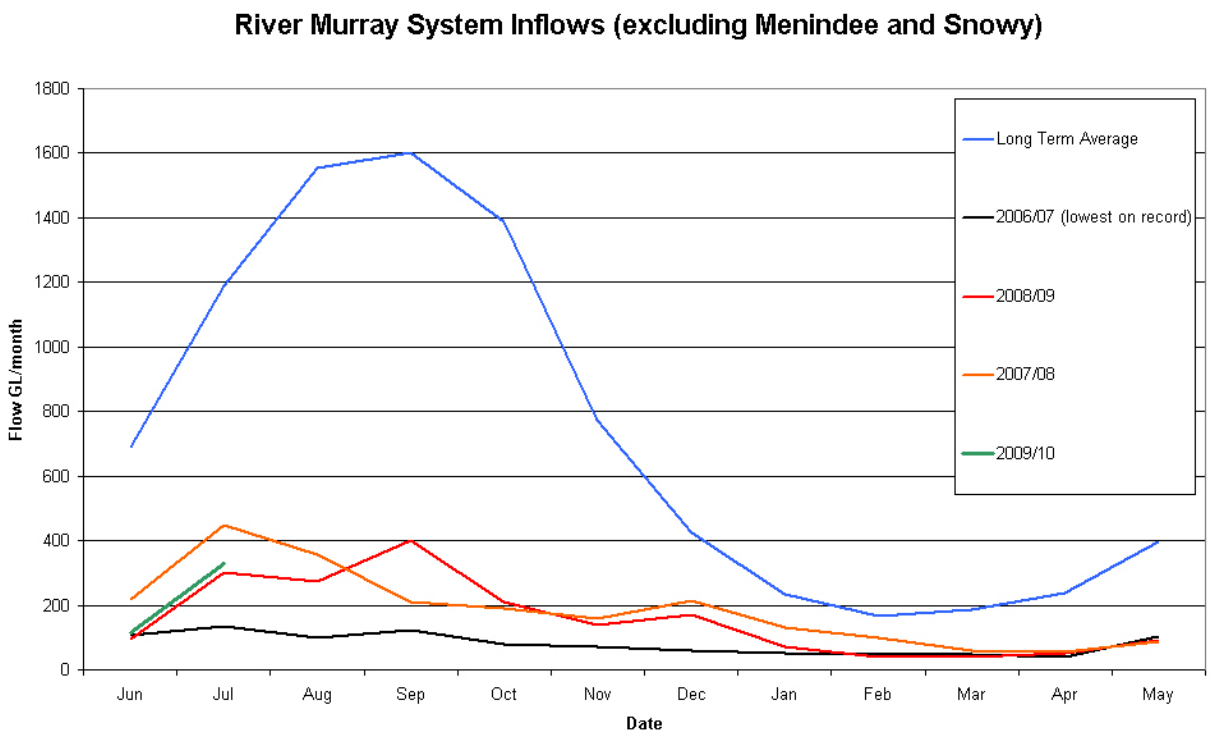
River Murray system inflows have remained low despite recent near average rainfall across the upper Murray catchment. As a result of good rainfall in the first week of July, the River Murray system inflows for July improved to 330 GL. However, this is still less than a third of the long-term July average of 1,170 GL.

The combined inflow from June and July this year is 440 GL, compared to 395 GL for the same period in 2008. This figure is also above the historic minimum of 230 GL. The long-term average inflow for June and July is 1,850 GL, which is equivalent to South Australia's normal minimum annual entitlement flow.

Inflows so far in 2009-10 are tracking as the 11th driest in 118 years of record. In order to receive long-term average inflows, there would need to be a sustained period of above average rainfall to significantly wet up catchments, recharge groundwater systems and to improve streamflows in the upper Murray.

Figure 2 shows the monthly River Murray inflows.

Figure 2: River Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee and Snowy)



River operations

Flows to South Australia are currently about 1,800 ML/day, less than half of the normal entitlement flow at this time of year of 4,000 ML/day. This flow provides about 1,000 ML/day over Lock 1.

Information about river operations upstream of the South Australian border is available from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website www.mdba.gov.au

Salinity and water levels

Salinity levels above Lock 1 remain fairly low. However, downstream of Lock 1 salinity levels remain high due to low water levels. Average salinity in Lake Alexandrina is currently 5,900 EC compared to about 3,900 EC last August. Average salinity in Lake Albert is currently 9,350 EC.

The average water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently about minus 0.79m AHD, and in Lake Albert the average water level is about minus 0.19m AHD.

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

Table 1: Water and salinity levels at selected locations

	Actual Water Levels at 7/08/09		Full Supply Level Level	Variation from Pool Level	Current EC Level
	U/S mAHD	D/S m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	
Lock 6	19.16	16.30	19.25	-0.09	229
Lock 5	16.36	13.30	16.30	0.06	325
Lock 4	13.27	9.99	13.20	0.07	436
Lock 3	9.87	6.30	9.80	0.03	437
Lock 2	6.21	3.32	6.10	0.11	448
Lock 1	3.30	-0.68	3.20	0.10	431
Lake Alexandrina (average)	-0.79				5,900
Lake Albert (average)	-0.19				9,350
Goolwa	-0.78				22,201
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					

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia are currently at 5%. The recent increase from 2% to 5% was made possible by a 25 GL advance to South Australia and other Murray-Darling Basin states. This advance of water was negotiated under the special water sharing arrangements for 2009-10, specifically to support irrigators in all jurisdictions early in the season. View the Minister's latest River Murray announcement at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

The latest information about allocations in New South Wales is available at www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currnr.html or http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au/water/avail_alloc.shtml

The latest information about allocations in Victoria is available at www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/media-releases-2008/

Carry-over

Irrigators can now access 100% of their approved carry-over volume. The carry-over policy and further information is available at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html#Carryoverwater

Murray-Darling Basin water resources update

A series of public meetings were held along the River Murray on 28-29 July. A Murray-Darling Basin water resources update presented at the public meetings is now available on the DWLBC website at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html#WaterResourcesUpdate

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's national outlook for total rainfall over the late winter to mid-spring period (August to October) shows a 40-45% chance of exceeding the median rainfall across most of the Murray-Darling Basin. There is a 70-80% chance of exceeding the median maximum temperature during the same period.

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/%7Eheinz/ex-flow-frame.htm**
Bureau of Meteorology **www.bom.gov.au**
Queensland Department of Primary Industry **www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au**