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

River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 50: 20 November 2009

Observations at a glance

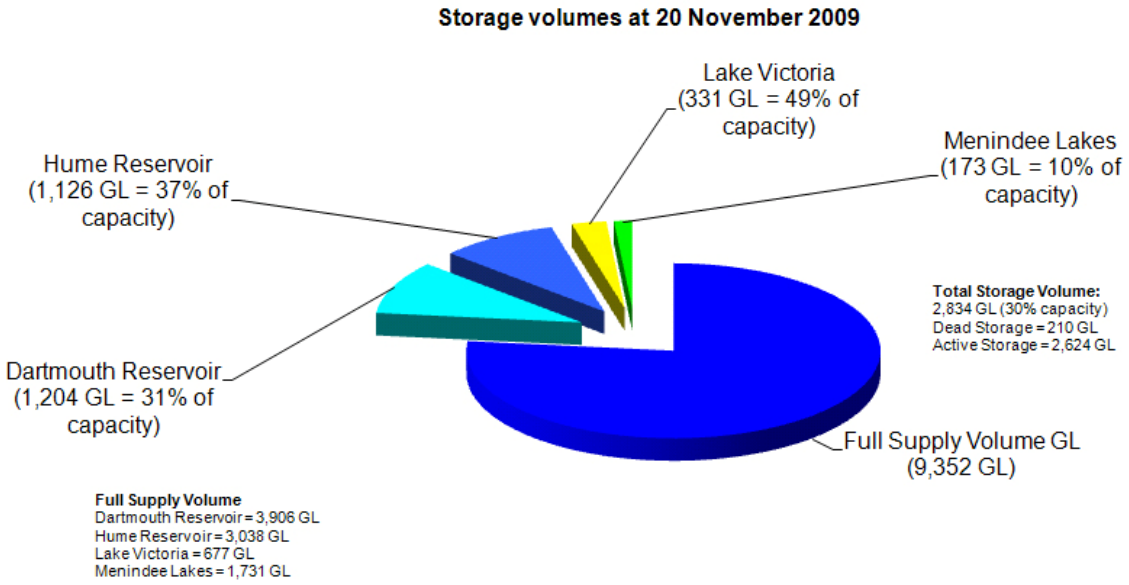
- Irrigators are currently able to access 48% of their allocation and 100% of their approved carry-over water volume.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 2,834 GL (30% capacity), compared to about 2,328 GL (25% capacity) at the same time last year.
- Warm weather and below average rainfall during late October and mid November 2009 have reduced River Murray system inflows.
- South Australian irrigators will be able to carry-over all of their allocations not used in 2009-10 into the 2010-11 water year.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 2,834 GL (30% capacity), compared to about 2,328 GL (25% capacity) at the same time last year.

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

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages



Rainfall and River Murray inflows

Warm weather and below average rainfall during late October and mid November 2009 have reduced River Murray system inflows. A minimum inflow of 200 GL is expected during November 2009, well below the 695 GL received last month.

The unseasonal warm weather is also likely to increase in river and storage losses.

The period June to October is important for River Murray inflows as this is when more than 70% of the annual inflow is recorded. While the inflow for this period is already better than last year, it is tracking well below the long-term average.

Table 1 shows River Murray system inflows for the period June to November over various years.

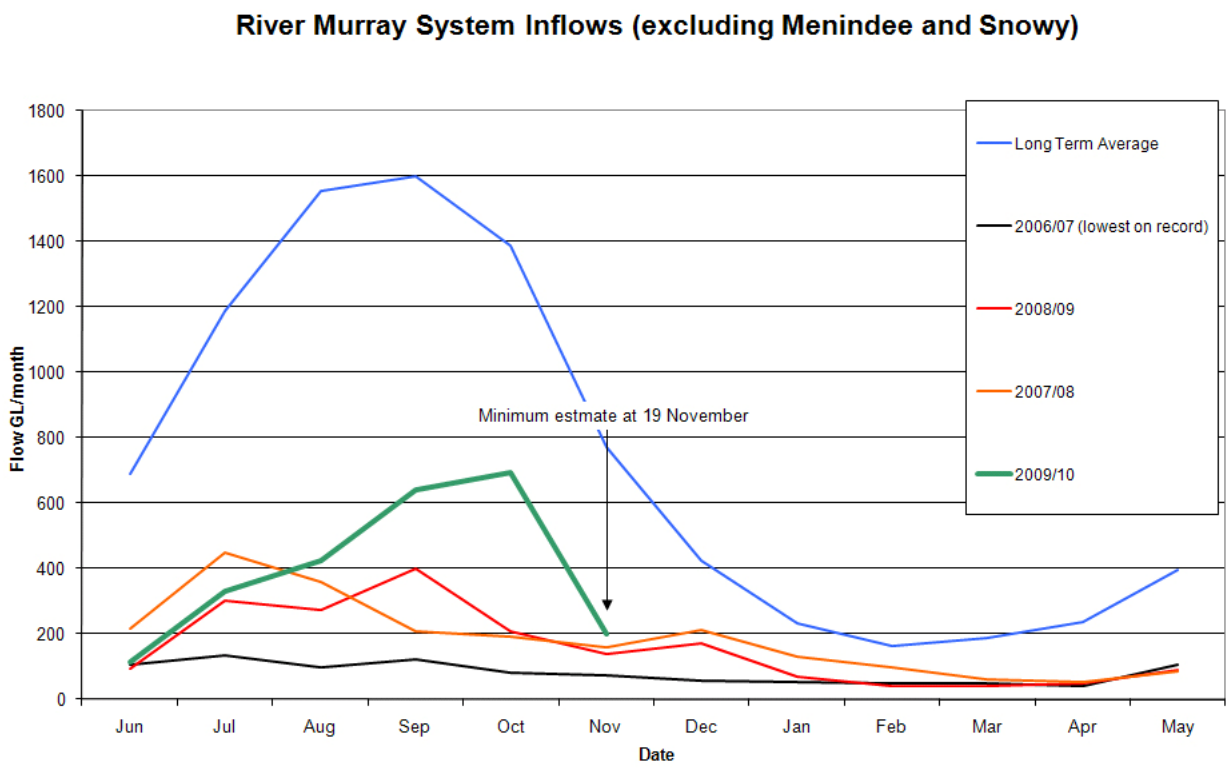
Table 1: River Murray system inflows for the period June to November

Period Jun-Nov	Inflow (GL)
2006-07	610
2007-08	1,580
2008-09	1,420
2009-10*	2,400
Long-term average	7,190
Last 10 years	3,560

*Assuming minimum of 200 GL in November 2009

Figure 2 shows the monthly River Murray inflows.

Figure 2: River Murray inflows



River operations

The flow to South Australia has been increased to 5,000 ML/day due to the unseasonal hot weather being experienced in South Australia. However, this is still below the normal November entitlement flow across the border of 6,000 ML/day.

All weir pools are slightly below their normal full supply level. Additional water maybe required to manage weir pools if high losses are experienced over the next few months.

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 5,750 EC. Average salinity in Lake Albert is currently 10,750 EC.

The average water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently about minus 0.8m AHD, and in Lake Albert the average water level is about minus 0.42m AHD.

Table 2 shows the current water levels and salinity at selected locations.

Table 2: Water and salinity levels

	Actual Water Levels at 20/11/09		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	19.20	16.20	19.25	-0.09	202
Lock 5	16.20	13.27	16.30	-0.10	234
Lock 4	13.13	10.26	13.20	-0.07	304
Lock 3	9.75	6.13	9.80	0.03	438
Lock 2	6.01	3.15	6.10	-0.09	611
Lock 1	3.10	-0.67	3.20	-0.10	688
Lake Alexandrina (average)	-0.80				5,750
Lake Albert (average)	-0.42				10,750
Goolwa	0.62				10,391
Water levels below Lock 1 are affected by wind and will vary throughout the day					
EC Readings below Lock 1 are averages and will vary throughout the day					

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology recently released its national rainfall and temperature outlook for the Murray-Darling Basin for the period November 2009-January 2010. This outlook shows there 40% chance of exceeding median rainfall, and 55-65% chance of exceeding median maximum daytime temperatures.

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia are currently at 48%. For further information view the Minister's latest River Murray announcement (16 November) at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

The current allocation levels in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, together with the volume of these allocations, is outlined in **Table 2**. It is important to note that the volumes for NSW and Victoria include tributary water, in addition to water provided to those states under the water sharing arrangements.

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 http://www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/2009_media_releases_

Table 2: Current allocation levels in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales (including the volume of these allocations)

Allocation type and %	Volume Allocation GL*
SA High Security 48%	273
NSW Murray High Security 97%	179
NSW Murray General Security 10%	167
NSW Murrumbidgee High Security 95%	342
NSW Murrumbidgee General Security 14%	264
Vic Murray High Reliability Water Shares 55%	605
Vic Murray Low Reliability Water Shares 0%	0
Vic Goulburn High Reliability Water Shares 41%	407
Vic Goulburn Low Reliability Water Shares 0%	0
Lower Darling High Security 100%	10
Darling General Security 25%	19

*Volumes for NSW and Victoria include tributary water, in addition to water provided to those states under the water sharing arrangements.

Carry-over option available again

South Australian irrigators will be able to carry-over all of their allocations not used in 2009-10 into the 2010-11 water year. This includes water previously carried forward from 2008-09 that remains unused at June 30, 2010.

Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said this advance notice on the availability of carryover water should allow licensed River Murray water users an opportunity to continue to plan to better manage the limited water anticipated to be available in 2010-11.

Water carried over into 2010-11 will be tradeable within South Australia and interstate. The operational arrangements for carryover, including further information about quarantining water purchased specifically for carryover, access to quarantined water in certain circumstances and how and when irrigators can apply will be announced soon.

As in previous years, an absolute guarantee cannot be given that all carryover will be delivered in 2010-11 because its provision depends on climatic conditions and the ability to deliver it from interstate storages to South Australia.

To view the Minister's full announcement visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

New Riverbank Collapse Hotline – 1800 751 970

A 24-hour hotline (1800 751 970) has been established for the community to access general information about River Murray riverbank collapse, and to report new cracking along the riverbank between Lock 1 and Wellington. Calls to this hotline are free.

This hotline replaces the MurrayWatch hotline as the number to report riverbank cracking. Major riverbank collapses should immediately be reported to **000**.

Riverbank stability downstream of Lock 1 has been impacted by long periods of low water levels, and the risk of collapse has the potential to threaten lives and property. During the coming dry summer months, low water levels will continue to be an issue and the risk of serious riverbank collapse will escalate.

Further information, including the signs of potential collapse, is also available online at http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/#Riverbankcollapse

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**