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

River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 56: 3 May 2010

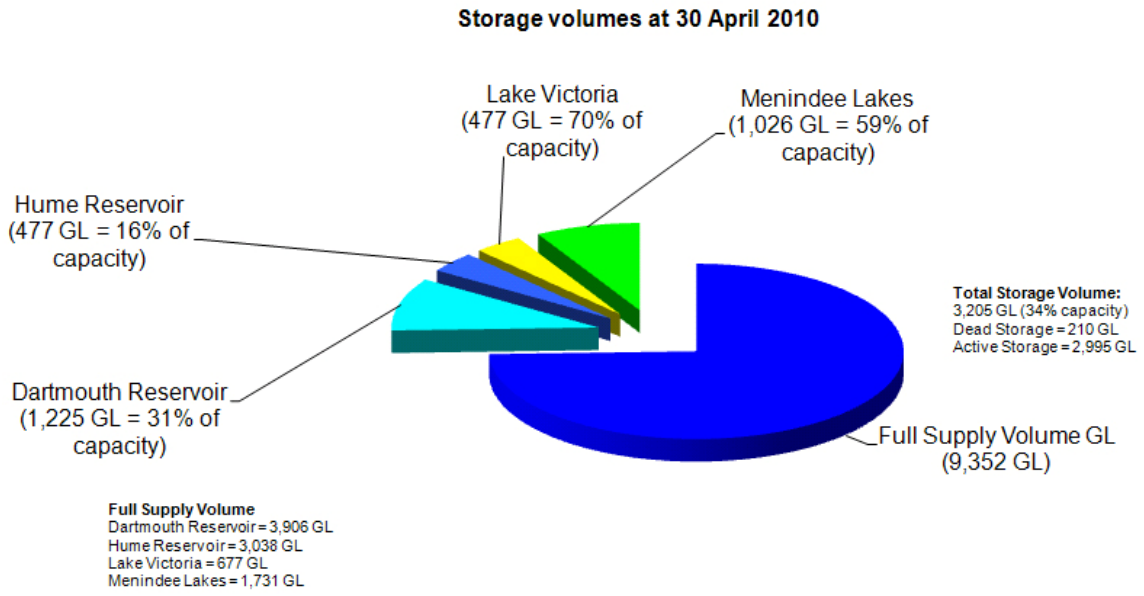
Observations at a glance

- Irrigators are currently able to access 62% of their water entitlement.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 3,205 GL (34% capacity), compared to 1,285 GL (14% capacity) at the same time last year.
- The inflow for April 2010 is expected to be about 140 GL, which would be one of the highest April inflows in the past 10 years.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 3,205 GL (34% capacity), compared to 1,285 GL (14% 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

River Murray system inflows have continued to improve in response to recent rainfall. The inflow for April 2010 is expected to be about 140 GL, which would be one of the highest April inflows in the past 10 years. However, it would still be below the long-term April average of about 235 GL.

The total River Murray system inflow to the end of April 2010 will be about 3,070 GL. This is well below the long-term average of 8,440 GL, and the average over the past 10 years of 4,290 GL.

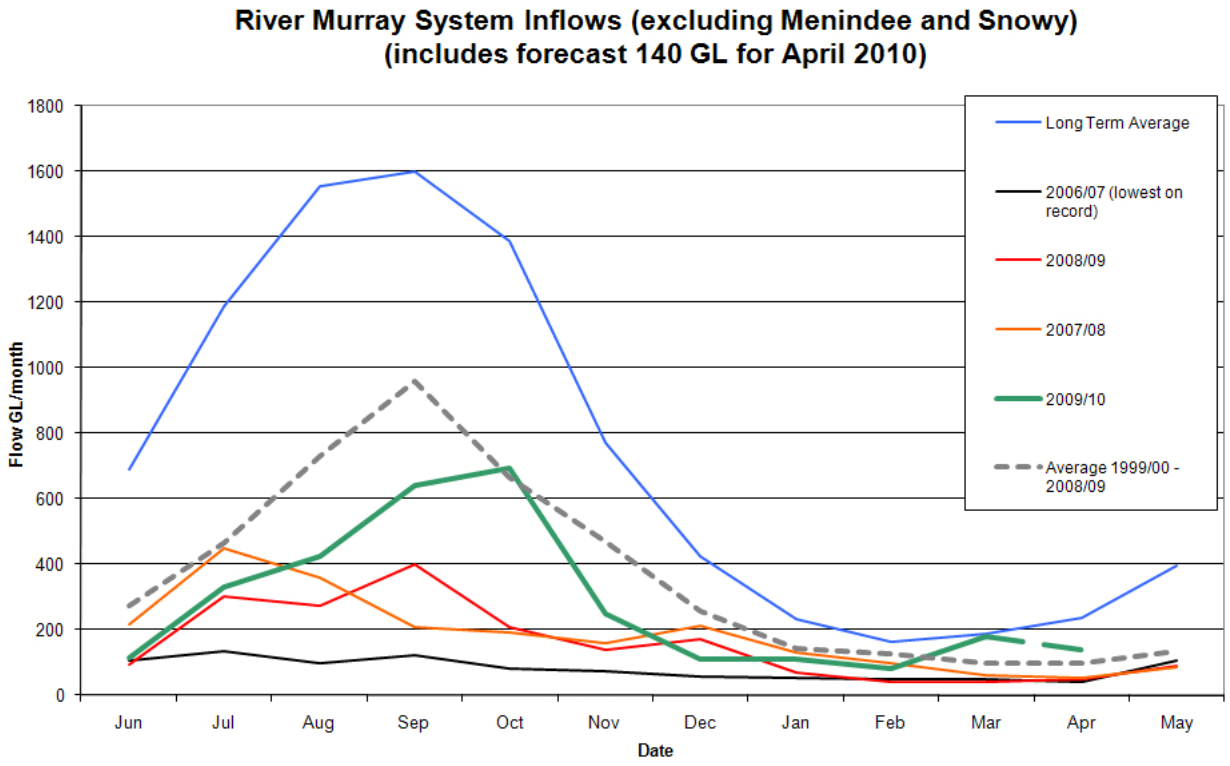
Table 1 and **Figure 2** show the River Murray System inflows.

Table 1: River Murray system inflows in various years

Period June to April	River Murray System Inflow (GL) (Rounded totals)
2006-07	860
2007-08	2,140
2008-09	1,790
2009-10*	3,070
Long-term average	8,440
Last 10 years	4,290

*Assumes 140 GL for April 2010 (final volume to be confirmed)

Figure 2: River Murray system inflows



Barwon-Darling flood update

Floodwaters in the Barwon-Darling River system from February 2010 are still travelling towards Menindee Lakes, and by mid to late May 2010 more reliable inflow estimates will be available. While record floods were recorded in some sections of Queensland it is now becoming clear that the February 2010 flood event was not as large as originally thought.

A considerable amount of floodwater has replenished numerous arid floodplains, wetlands and channels. A large proportion of the water on the floodplain will not drain back into rivers or creeks, but will instead evaporate or seep into soils, providing much needed replenishment of groundwater systems. **Figure 3** is a photograph taken near Yantabangee Lake (Paroo catchment) which shows water sitting on the floodplain. This country is typically flat.

Figure 3: Yantabangee Lake (courtesy P. Terrill, NSW Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water)

The NSW Office of Water has indicated the chance of localised flooding at Menindee and the Lower Darling River is now very low because of the smaller than expected volumes reaching Menindee, and the pre-releases from Menindee during February 2010. The volume of water currently held in Menindee Lakes is 1,026 GL (59% capacity). The Menindee Lakes system is now under the control of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. Control of this system will revert to NSW if its volume drops below 480 GL.

Storage volumes across the southern part of the Basin remain well below long-term average. The volume of water currently in storage is 2,179 GL (28% capacity). The long-term average storage volume for the end of April is 4,455 GL (58% capacity).

River operations

The flow to South Australia will continue to remain high during May 2010 to facilitate the delivery of approximately 5 500 ML/day, which includes environmental water currently being delivered to the Lower Lakes.

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 between Lock 6 and Murray Bridge remain low. However below Wellington salinity levels in both Lakes Alexandrina and Albert remain high. The average salinity in Lake Alexandrina is currently 3,725 EC and in Lake Albert is currently 16,375 EC.

The average water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently about minus 0.55m AHD, and in Lake Albert the average water level is about minus 0.57m AHD.

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

Table 2: Water and salinity levels at 30 April 2010

	Actual Water Levels at 30/04/10		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	19.27	16.39	19.25	-0.09	182
Lock 5	16.36	13.42	16.30	0.06	212
Lock 4	13.22	10.58	13.20	0.02	232
Lock 3	9.81	6.48	9.80	0.03	259
Lock 2	6.18	3.51	6.10	0.08	272
Lock 1	3.29	-0.21	3.20	0.09	291
Lake Alexandrina (average)	-0.55				3,725
Lake Albert (average)	-0.57				16,375
Goolwa	-0.07				18,900
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					

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia are currently at 62% of water entitlement and will remain at this level until 30 June 2010.

The 2010-11 carry-over application process closed on 31 March 2010. Late applications will not be accepted.

The latest information about allocations in New South Wales is available at http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/

The latest information about allocations in Victoria is available at http://www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/2009_media_releases_

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology recently released their national rainfall and temperature outlook for the Murray-Darling Basin for the period May to July 2010. The seasonal climate outlook shows a 45-75% chance of exceeding median rainfall, and a 40-60% chance of exceeding median maximum daytime temperatures.