

RIVER MURRAY WEEKLY FLOW REPORT

Flow to South Australia

Report #33/2012

Issued 10:00 am 24 August 2012

This supersedes the previous flow report issued by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) on 17 August 2012. The next flow report will be provided on Friday 31 August 2012.

FLOW OUTLOOK

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 43 000 ML/day and is expected to increase slightly to around 45 000 ML/day in the coming days. This flow rate of around 45 000 ML/day may last for several weeks due to higher flows received from upstream catchments including the Lower Darling, Murrumbidgee, Upper Murray and Goulburn Rivers. The flow to South Australia is being actively managed to minimise adverse impacts on the environmental regulator construction works at Chowilla. Releases from Lake Victoria have been temporarily increased to enable mitigation of flow to South Australia if necessary.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast widespread rainfall across the Upper Murray catchments of NSW and Victoria. This is likely to increase inflows from a number of rivers and tributaries. Minor flood warnings have been issued for the River Murray at Corowa and several locations along the Goulburn River. Hume Dam is currently at 97 percent capacity. The majority of inflows to Hume Dam are currently being passed downstream to maintain airspace, which is required to manage higher inflows from the Upper Murray. The NSW Office of Water has advised that releases from Menindee Lakes will continue at 7000 ML/day for the next week, before reducing towards minimum flow rates by the end of September.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority has advised that, with rising river flows and further rainfall forecast over the coming week, the temporary removal of Mildura Weir is expected to commence on 25 August 2012. Complete removal of the weir is in preparation for the higher flows expected over the next few weeks. The weir will be reinstated when the higher flows have passed.

South Australia is receiving unregulated flow, which is expected to continue into at least October 2012. Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) of 3000 ML/day will continue to be received into at least late November 2012 and possibly beyond; however, delivery of environmental water from Menindee Lakes may shorten this period if delivery commences in the next two months. This is because there is a storage volume cut-off trigger for ADF that might be met sooner if environmental water is delivered from the Menindee system. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority must discuss this issue with South Australia before any change is implemented.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 38 000 ML/day and is likely to increase to around 40 000 ML/day over the coming week, depending on upstream operations.

It is important to note that flow forecasts in this advice are based on the information available at the time of preparation. They may change as new gauging information becomes available, or due to further rainfall events or changing operations upstream. Flow forecasts are dependent on predictions made by the Bureau of Meteorology, Murray-Darling Basin Authority and water management agencies in upstream jurisdictions. Forecasts will be revised as new information becomes available.



BARRAGE OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS IN THE LOWER LAKES

The water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.71 m AHD and the level in Lake Albert is approximately 0.80 m AHD.

It is likely that a storm event will combine with high tides today. This could cause seawater to overtop the barrages and produce a short-term salinity spike through the Goolwa Channel. SA Water has closed all the gates at the Goolwa Barrage to manage this event. Salinity increases are likely to be short-lived due to the large volume of fresh River Murray water flowing into Lake Alexandrina. In addition, the barrages will be operated to maximise releases to flush salt after the storm event.

Barrage operations over the next few weeks will aim to reduce the water level in both lakes towards a target of approximately 0.55 m AHD, depending on tides and any further local rainfall. It is proposed to hold this lower water level for a short period before refilling the lakes to a target of 0.80-0.85 m AHD. DEWNR and SA Water will monitor any potential localised impacts on water users. The cycle of lowering and raising water levels is part of a long-term operation aimed at flushing Lake Albert to reduce salinity levels. This exercise has been enabled due to the ongoing period of unregulated flow, which is providing sufficient water to refill the lakes after lowering.

As water levels are lowered, people are advised to check infrastructure or property, such as irrigation offtakes and boat moorings. Parts of the Lower Lakes that are navigable at higher water levels may not be accessible by boat in the coming weeks.

Water levels and barrage operations are monitored closely by various agencies of the South Australian Government, Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Construction of the Chowilla Creek Environmental Regulator will be ongoing until spring 2013. The Chowilla Creek remains closed at the construction site.



RIVER MURRAY WATER LEVELS

SA Water and DEWNR have developed a River Murray Water Level chart (below) to provide water levels at a number of locations from Lock 10 (near Wentworth) to Murray Bridge.

River Murray Water Levels as at 22 August 2012

Location	River Km	Normal Pool Level	Current Level (m AHD)	1974 Flood Level (m AHD)	1993 Flood Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.85	33.81	33.32
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.32	30.03	29.44
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	25.09	27.6	27.19
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	23.56	25.70	25.24
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.15	21.03	20.50
Renmark	567.4	-	16.29	18.54	18.04
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.15	18.07	17.50
Lyrup	537.8	-	13.88	16.85	16.26
Berri	525.9	-	13.64	15.81	15.74
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.21	15.65	15.08
Loxton	489.9	-	-	15.05	14.12
Cobdogla	446.9	-	10.22	13.44	12.38
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.76	13.16	12.02
Overland Corner	425.9	-	8.14	12.73	11.58
Waikerie	383.6	-	6.97	11.26	10.24
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.21	10.28	9.30
Cadell	332.6	-	-	9.17	8.08
Morgan	321.7	-	4.44	8.85	7.65
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.24	6.81	5.38
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	1.60	6.06	4.51
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.82	3.15	1.90
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.71	2.06	1.26

Note that the above water levels may be affected by local wind conditions.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The South Australian Government has launched a campaign to fight for the health of the Murray River. The Fight for the Murray campaign aims to secure more water for the river under the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan. If you have an interest in the River Murray and a better Basin Plan, you are encouraged to join the fight for a healthy river at www.fightforthemurray.com.au

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has published a series of inundation maps for the River Murray. They are available at: www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au

Up-to-date River Murray flow and water level information can be accessed at the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, SA Water and Murray-Darling Basin Authority websites:

www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm

www.mdba.gov.au/water/live-river-data

Details of river height and rainfall information in the River Murray within Victoria and New South Wales are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood>

Information on the discharge of acid drainage water into the Lower River Murray can be accessed online at www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au

Information provided by Commonwealth Environmental Water can be accessed at <http://www.environment.gov.au/ewater/southern/murray/lower-murray.html>

Information on The Living Murray can be accessed at <http://www.mdba.gov.au/programs/tlm/>

Regularly updated daily water level information can be found at the following websites:

SA Water

www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

<http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/RMWD/Pages/default.aspx>

Information is also available from the SA Water Hotline on **08 8595 2299**

UPDATES- This advice remains current until the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources notifies otherwise.

