RIVER MURRAY FLOW ADVICE-UPDATE

Elevated water levels in the River Murray below Lock 1

Issued: 3.15pm Friday 22 October 2010

This supersedes the previous flow advice issued by the Department for Water (DFW) at 11am, 29 September 2010. **This is NOT a Flood Warning.**

SEPTEMBER –OCTOBER INCREASE IN FLOWS

High flows from recent flooding in Victoria and New South Wales are continuing to move down the River Murray into South Australia. Flows at the South Australia-Victoria Border ('SA-Vic Border') have risen since 31 August 2010 to a current peak of 32,000 ML (megalitres) per day and are projected to reduce to about 20,000 ML/day in early November 2010 before increasing again.

This peak flow rate is within the normal historical flow range for the River Murray in South Australia and has remained within the channel. No populated areas were flooded or at risk of flooding from these flows.

Risks associated with this event relate to the margins of the River becoming wet again after a significant dry period, particularly below Lock 1.

People below Lock 1 should take any necessary actions to modify irrigation infrastructure, pontoons or moorings to allow for temporary river level rises due to wind.

FLOWS FROM RECENT UPSTREAM RAINFALL IN THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN

On 15-16 October 2010, heavy rainfall occurred in the Murray Darling Basin upstream of South Australia. This will create another elevated flow period during November 2010.

The timing and magnitude of flows to South Australia are affected by a number of operational issues upstream of South Australia. The warmer weather will result in increased irrigation and evaporation, which will reduce river flows.

At this time it is difficult to accurately predict the peak flows. The November peak is currently anticipated to be about 35,000 ML/day, similar to the peak during October 2010. This situation will become clearer in coming weeks.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS FLOW EVENTS
For comparison, the 1974 flood peak was 180,000 ML/day, well above current and projected levels.

The most recent event in South Australia similar to current inflows was observed during September to November 2000 when peak flows were between 35,000 ML/day and 40,000 ML/day.

FLOOD RISK ABOVE LOCK 1
Pool levels between the SA-Vic Border and Lock 1 have not changed significantly in response to these flows, and no flooding affecting people or property has occurred. The projected risk of harmful inundation under current flow projections is very low.

FLOOD RISK DOWNSTREAM OF LOCK 1
Below Lock 1, the Lower Lakes have reached their normal full supply level of 0.75m AHD and water is currently being released from the barrages to manage water levels at the current height.

River Murray levels between Lock 1 and the Lower Lakes have risen in response to the flows, and are not predicted to rise further. Localised increases in level may occur as a result of wind effects.

In response to the projected November flow increase, localised level increases are expected to occur to similar levels as before, as shown in the table below.

Reach	Maximum projected level above normal pool (0.75m AHD)	Maximum projected level AHD
Wellington to Murray Bridge	0.1m above pool	0.85m AHD
Murray Bridge to Mannum	0.1m – 0.2m above pool	0.85 - 0.95m AHD
Mannum to Purnong	0.2m – 0.25m above pool	0.95 – 1.0m AHD
Purnong to Swan Reach	0.25m – 0.7m above pool	1.0m – 1.45m AHD
Swan Reach to Lock 1	0.7m – 1.5m above pool	1.45m – 2.25m AHD

There may be water over low-lying access roads during October and November. It is not expected to rise further than current levels on the basis of current and projected river flows.

People planning to visit low-lying floodplain areas below Lock 1 in the near future are advised to monitor water levels and road access conditions, and take reasonable precautions.

People are advised to monitor the latest weather and flow forecasts and obey any signage along the River Murray or instructions from the emergency services.

For flood-related assistance, call the State Emergency Service on 132 500.
For life-threatening emergencies, call 000.

LEVEE BANKS

Areas along the River Murray between Lock 1 and Lower Lakes that are protected by levee banks are advised that due to prolonged drought conditions and low river levels:

- Levee banks may have deteriorated and could be at risk of failure.
- Floodplain areas including levee banks may have subsided due to soil drying and consolidation.

There have been isolated cases of levee bank leakage due to rising River Murray levels. The Department for Water is monitoring the situation and working closely with the SES in regard to public safety.

The return of the normal pool levels in the River, and the projected increased flows in November, may continue to impact levee banks downstream of Lock 1. People in the vicinity of levee banks are advised to regularly monitor levee bank condition.

If significant structural cracking or leakage of levee banks is evident, people are advised to avoid the area, relocate to higher ground and call the Riverbank Collapse Hotline (**1800 751 970**) to report any observations.

RIVERBANK COLLAPSE

The predicted additional flows will raise water levels downstream of Lock 1, including areas known to be at risk of riverbank collapse. There is an increased risk of riverbank collapse occurring at some locations where soils show signs of cracking.

People living, working or playing along the River Murray below Lock 1 are advised to continue to look out for the signs of potential riverbank collapse. These include cracking in the river bank, leaning trees or bubbles in the River.

Further information is available at the riverbank collapse section of www.sa.gov.au.

To report the signs of riverbank collapse or to obtain further information call the free 24 hour riverbank collapse hotline **(1800 751 970)**. For life-threatening emergencies, call 000.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Up to date River Murray flow information can be accessed at the following websites:
http://data.rivermurray.sa.gov.au
http://www.mdba.gov.au/water/live-river-data

Details of river height and rainfall information in the Victorian River Murray are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website:
http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood

UPDATES

This Advice remains current until the Department for Water notifies otherwise.