



South Australia

River Murray Water Resources Report



Issue 6: 14 September 2007

Observations at a glance

- River Murray irrigation allocations will be raised to 16 percent from 1 October 2007.
- Dry weather has continued throughout the Murray-Darling Basin. The outlook for above average rainfall over the next three months remains low, and this is the period when the highest inflows into the River Murray usually occur.
- River Murray system inflows during August were 360 GL, which is less than one quarter of the long-term average. Inflows have now been below average for the past 23 months.
- Without substantial inflows during the next three months, water availability will remain constrained as the November to May period does not typically produce substantial inflows.
- While storage volumes continue to rise slowly they are still well below the long-term average for this time of year.
- For the past two months, the level of the Lower Lakes has been steady at 0.2 to 0.25 m AHD, however without further rain the level will gradually fall as the warmer weather increases evaporation losses.
- It is expected that salinity levels will continue to increase should low flow conditions persist. Salinity levels in SA will also be sensitive to how the River Murray is operated, and salinity levels in the river at the border.

Summary of Murray-Darling Basin storages

Inflows to Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs and into the River Murray remain low. The total volume of water currently in storage is about 2 079 GL (22% capacity). This compares to a storage volume of about 3 740 GL for this time in September 2006. This very low storage volume means that water availability during 2007-08 will be constrained. The current total water resource position (taking into account both storage and inflows) is much worse than at the same time last year (See figure 1).

There is a high chance (about 75%) that storage levels at the end of 2007-08 will again be extremely low. As River Murray storages take a long time to recover from drought, there is a possibility that low flows will continue throughout 2008-09.

Figure 1: Inflows plus starting storage

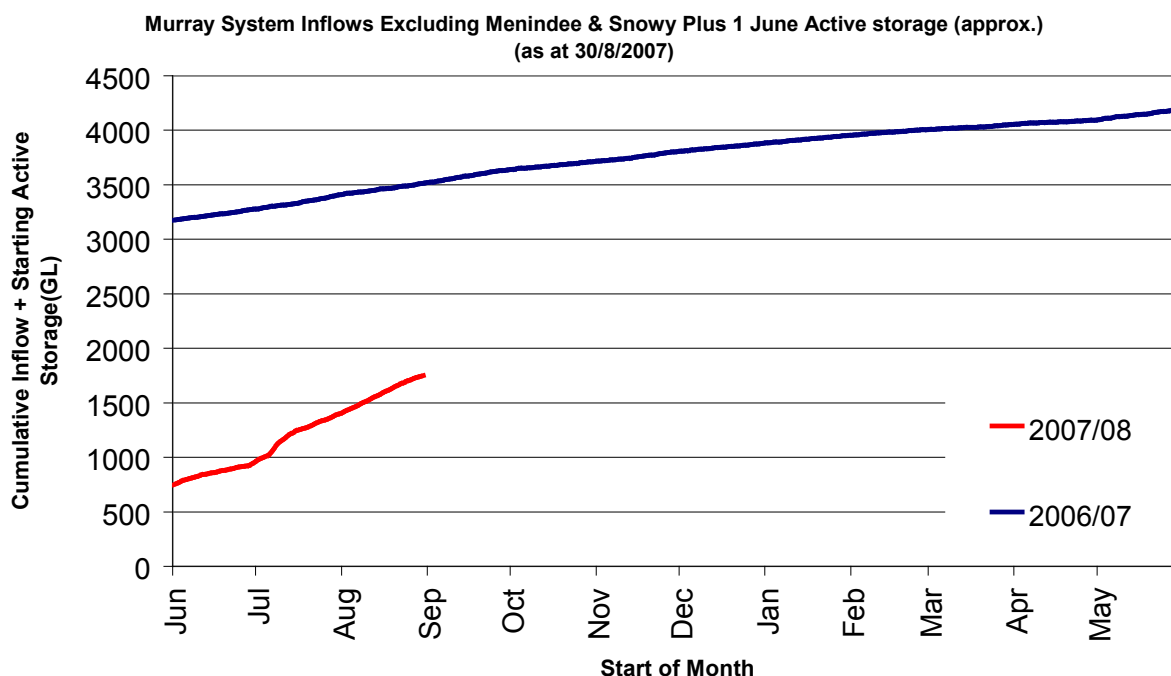
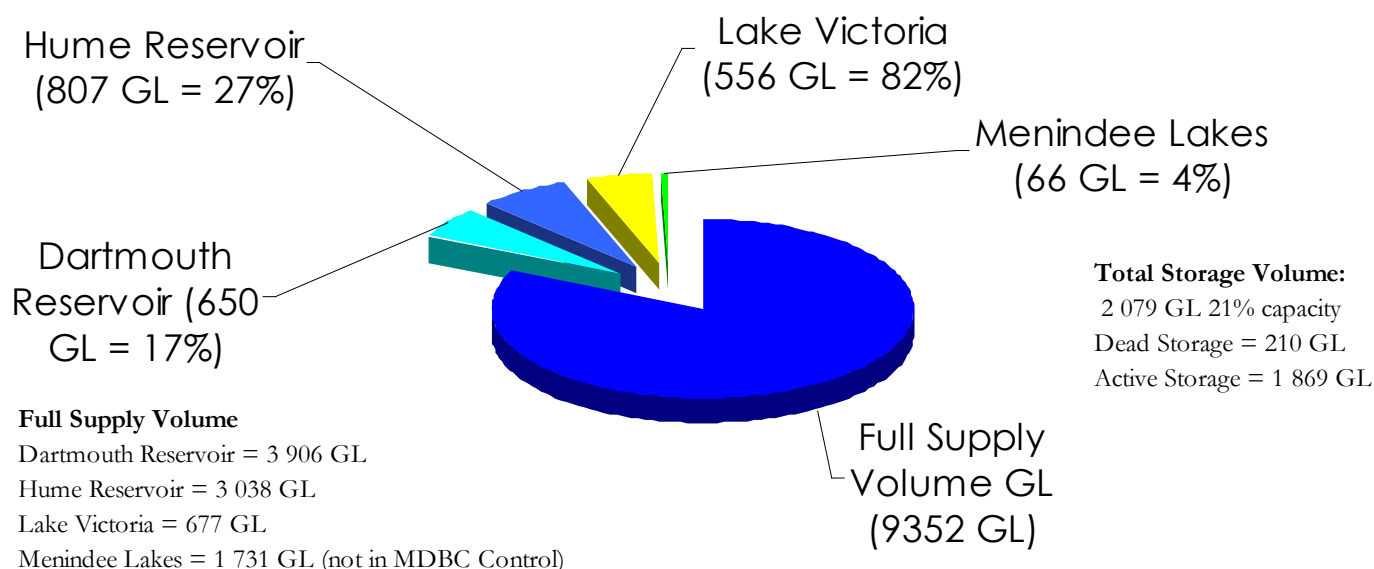


Figure 2: Storage Levels

Storage Volumes 11 September 2007



River Murray inflows

River Murray inflows have remained at extremely low levels because of low rainfall. Inflows for August were only 360 GL, well below the long-term average for August of 1 570 GL. Inflows so far this year have been very similar to those in 2002-03, when the total inflow into the River Murray was only 2 190 GL. A repeat of these low inflows will have implications for water resource availability because of low storage levels in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs.

Inflows over the next three months are critical for the River Murray system and also for irrigation and river maintenance within South Australia. The situation remains very serious and contingency plans to save water are still in place.

The current warm and dry conditions have resulted in increased demand across the system. In the short-term it is planned to meet this demand with tributary inflows and by further lowering weir pools upstream of South Australia, rather than releasing water from upstream storages.

Water licensing update

Carry-over

All eligible licence holders have now been advised of how much carry-over water they can use or transfer during 2007-08. All (100%) of the carry-over water assigned to a licence holder can be taken and used during 2007-08. All or part of a carry-over volume of water can be transferred in accordance with the adopted carry-over transfer rules. The carry-over transfer rules and the transfer application form are available on the DWLBC website (www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au) or by contacting the department's Berri office on 8595 2253.

Trading and conversion arrangements

Revised arrangements for the use of water

transferred around, into or from South Australia, and for the conversion of water (holding) allocation or a water (taking) allocation have been implemented under the Notice of Restriction that came into effect on 2 August 2007. These new arrangements provide additional flexibility to licence holders when transferring or converting water allocations.

Arrangements allowing licence holders to transfer or convert water allocations to 'top up' water (taking) allocations without a technical assessment (provided designated allocation levels are not exceeded) have been continued in 2007-08. A document explaining the revised transfer and conversion arrangements and a document detailing a number of transfer scenarios has been provided to licence holders.

South Australian River Murray water allocations

On Tuesday 11 September, Premier Mike Rann announced that South Australian annual irrigation allocations will be lifted from 13 percent to 16 percent for 2007-08 from 1 October. The final analysis of the end of August data has resulted in a slight improvement in the available water for allocation. The small increase will help irrigators plan how to best manage their limited water allocation through the current drought. Further increases beyond 16 percent will depend on the volume of inflows to the Murray-Darling Basin during September. Click on the following link to view the full media release: <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html>

Bureau of Meteorology outlook (September-November 2007)

The chance of exceeding the median rainfall for the September to November period across north-eastern Victoria (where significant inflows would normally enter the River Murray) is between 40-45%.

The chance of above-normal maximum temperatures is between 55% and 65% for much of the southern Murray-Darling Basin. This is worrying because if temperatures are high, evaporation rates and crop water requirements will increase.

Table 1: Water and salinity levels (at 13 September 2007)

	Actual Water Levels		Full Supply Level	Variation from Pool Level	EC Level
	U/S m AHD	D/S m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	
Lock 6	19.26	16.23	19.25	0.01	285
Lock 5	16.29	13.20	16.30	-0.01	350
Lock 4	13.20	9.88	13.20	0.00	491
Lock 3	9.79	6.22	9.80	-0.01	622
Lock 2	6.17	3.23	6.10	0.07	702
Lock 1	3.26	0.05	3.20	0.06	630
Lake Alexandrina	0.22				2358
Lake Albert (Meningie)	0.28				2459
Goolwa					14183
Lake Alexandrina and Albert water and salinity Levels based on 5 day average					
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					

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.rivermurray.sa.gov.au/AWMN/awsview.php
Murray-Darling Basin Commission www.mdbc.gov.au
SA Water Daily Reports www.riverland.net.au/%7Eheinze/ex-flow-frame.htm
Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au
Queensland Department of Primary Industry www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au

DISCLAIMER

The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, its employees and servants do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of use of the information contained herein as to its correctness, accuracy, currency or otherwise. The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, its employees and servants expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice contained herein.