



South Australia

# River Murray Water Resources Report



Issue 18: 6 June 2008

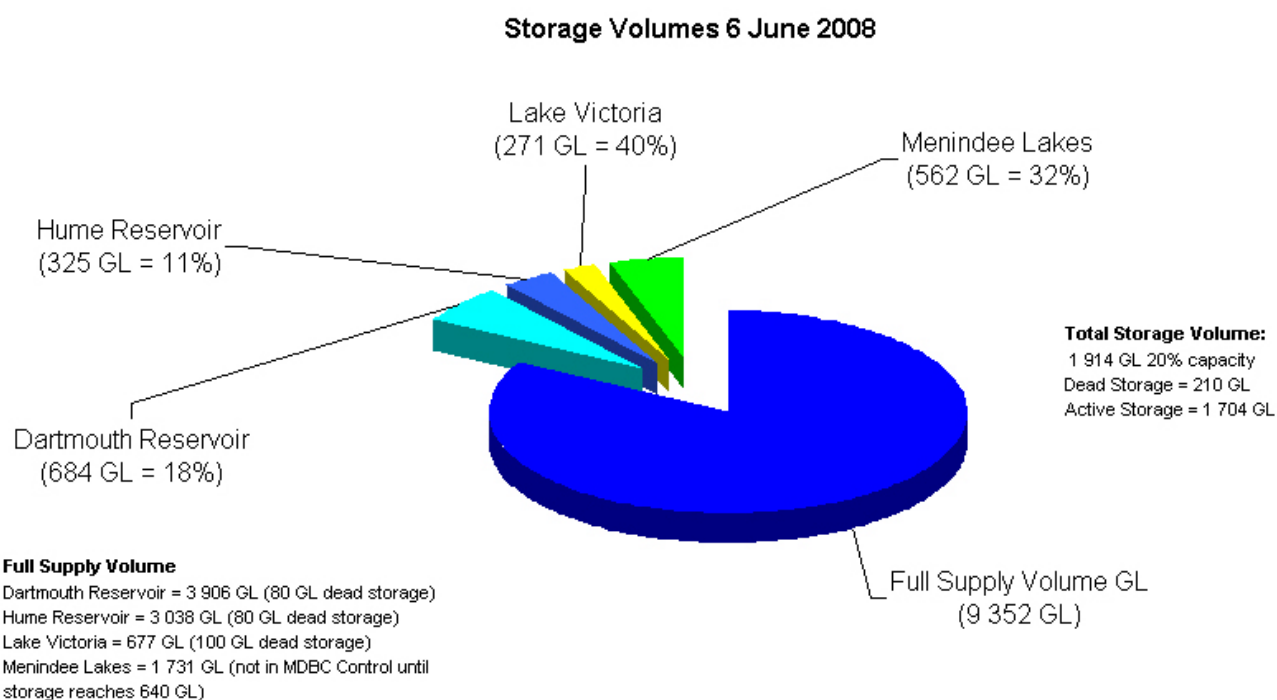
## Observations at a glance

- River Murray storage volumes remain low, with a total storage of 1 914 GL (20% of capacity).
- Inflows into the River Murray remain at critically low levels. During May 2008, only about 80 GL flowed into the River Murray system.
- Salinity and water levels remain relatively stable upstream of Lock 1. However, low flows into South Australia mean that below Lock 1 water levels remain low and salinity levels remain high.
- Initial restrictions for 2008-09 will be announced by the Minister for the River Murray, the Hon Karlene Maywald MP, on 16 June.

## Murray-Darling Basin storages

River Murray system inflows remain at low levels, including inflows into Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs. **Figure 1** shows that the volume of water currently in storage is about 1 914 GL (20% capacity), compared to 1 087 GL (12% of capacity) at the same time last year. The long-term average storage volume (including Menindee Lakes) for the end of May is about 5 270 GL (56% of capacity).

Figure 1: Storage volumes at 6 June 2008



While the current storage figure of 1 914 GL is better than at the same time last year, the current storage volume includes:

- Water held in Menindee Lakes (551 GL all of which is owned by NSW);
- Water reserved for delivery and use in 2008-09 (ie for critical human needs and irrigation carry-over for 2008-09); and
- Some water released from the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme for 2008-09.

After taking this water for 2008-09 into account, the current total water resource position is worse than that for the same time last year.

## River Murray inflows

Inflows into the River Murray remain at critically low levels. During May 2008, only about 80 GL flowed into the River Murray system. This is significantly lower than the long-term May average of 390 GL and only marginally higher than the minimum inflow of 75 GL that occurred in 1902.

From 1 June 2007 to 31 May 2008, which is the Murray-Darling Basin Commission water year, the River Murray system inflow was only 2 230 GL. The long-term average inflow for this period is about 8 840 GL.

## Salinity and water levels

**Table 1** shows the current water levels and salinity at selected locations. Salinity at Lock 2 (upstream of Morgan) is currently 407 EC, compared to an average of about 430 EC at the same time last year. Salinity below Lock 1 remains high as a result of reduced flows to South Australia. Salinity at Murray Bridge averaged about 695 EC last week, compared to 510 EC for the same period last year. In Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) salinity averaged 4 023 EC.

Due to the limited water available to South Australia there is not enough water to maintain levels below Lock 1. Currently, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is -0.45m AHD compared to about 0.12m AHD in early May last year. Lake Albert is about -0.5m AHD. Cooler weather will result in reduced evaporation in the Lower Lakes, which will lead to water levels stabilising over the next two months.

**Table 1: Water and salinity levels at 6 June 2008**

|  | Actual Water Levels at 6/06/08 |           | Full Supply Level Level | Variation from Pool Level | Current EC Level |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|  | U/S m AHD                      | D/S m AHD | U/S of Weir m AHD       | U/S of Weir m AHD         |                  |
| <b>Lock 6</b>  | 19.26                          | 16.40     | 19.25                   | 0.01                      | 235              |
| <b>Lock 5</b>  | 16.45                          | 13.37     | 16.30                   | 0.15                      | 248              |
| <b>Lock 4</b>  | 13.34                          | 10.04     | 13.20                   | 0.14                      | 323              |
| <b>Lock 3</b>  | 9.90                           | 6.27      | 9.80                    | 0.10                      | 376              |
| <b>Lock 2</b>  | 6.19                           | 3.31      | 6.10                    | 0.09                      | 407              |
| <b>Lock 1</b>  | 3.26                           | -0.43     | 3.20                    | 0.06                      | 406              |
| <b>Lake Alexandrina (Milang)</b>   | -0.40                          |           |                         |                           | 4050             |
| <b>Lake Albert (Meningie)</b>  | n/a                            |           |                         |                           | not available    |
| <b>Goolwa</b>  |                                |           |                         |                           | 20877            |
| Water levels and salinity below Lock 1 are affected by wind and will vary throughout the day and are daily records |                                |           |                         |                           |                  |
| EC Readings below Lock 1 are daily averages and will vary throughout the day                                       |                                |           |                         |                           |                  |

## River Murray water allocations

While the inflows during 2007-08 were better than the inflows received in 2006-07, water allocations remained severely constricted as the River Murray system struggles to cope with two extreme drought years in succession. Restrictions are currently set at 32% of allocations, and they will remain in place until 30 June 2008.

Initial restrictions from 1 July 2008 will be announced by the Minister for the River Murray, the Hon Karlene Maywald MP, on 16 June.

### 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](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au)  
SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board [www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au)  
Murray-Darling Basin Commission [www.mdbc.gov.au](http://www.mdbc.gov.au)  
SA Water Daily Reports [www.riverland.net.au/%7Eheinze/ex-flow-frame.htm](http://www.riverland.net.au/%7Eheinze/ex-flow-frame.htm)  
Bureau of Meteorology [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)  
Queensland Department of Primary Industry [www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au](http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au)

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