



South Australia

River Murray Water Resources Report



ISSUE 27: 21 November 2008

Observations at a glance

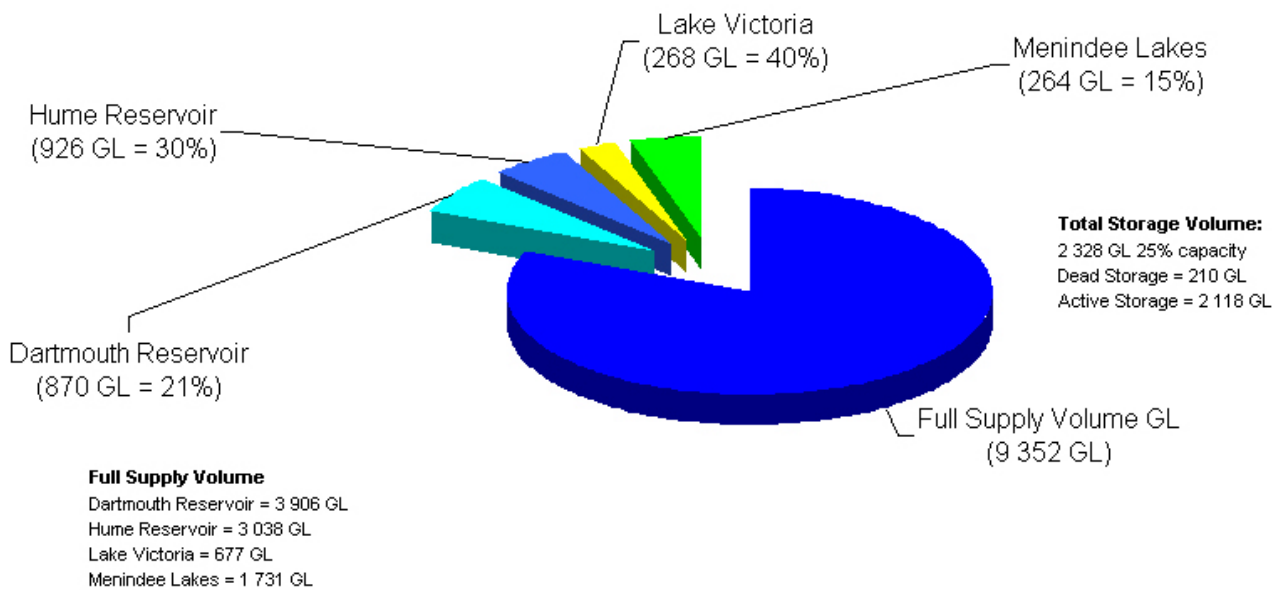
- River Murray irrigation allocations will remain unchanged at 15% from 1 December 2008.
- A \$10 million management strategy to avoid acidification of the Lower Lakes was approved at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in Canberra on 14 November 2008.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 2 328 GL (25% capacity), compared to about 1 994 GL (21% capacity) at the same time last year.
- Below Lock 1 water levels remain low and salinity levels remain high due to reduced flows into South Australia.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 2 328 GL (25% capacity), compared to about 1 994 GL (21% capacity) at the same time last year. Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages

Storage volumes at 21 November 2008



River Murray inflows

Table 1 outlines the inflows from June-November in the past three years compared to the long-term average. July to October is the critical period for River Murray system inflows because about 65% of the total annual inflow is received during these months. Inflows from November to March yield only 20% of annual inflows based on the last 117 years of inflow data.

Table 1: River Murray system inflows

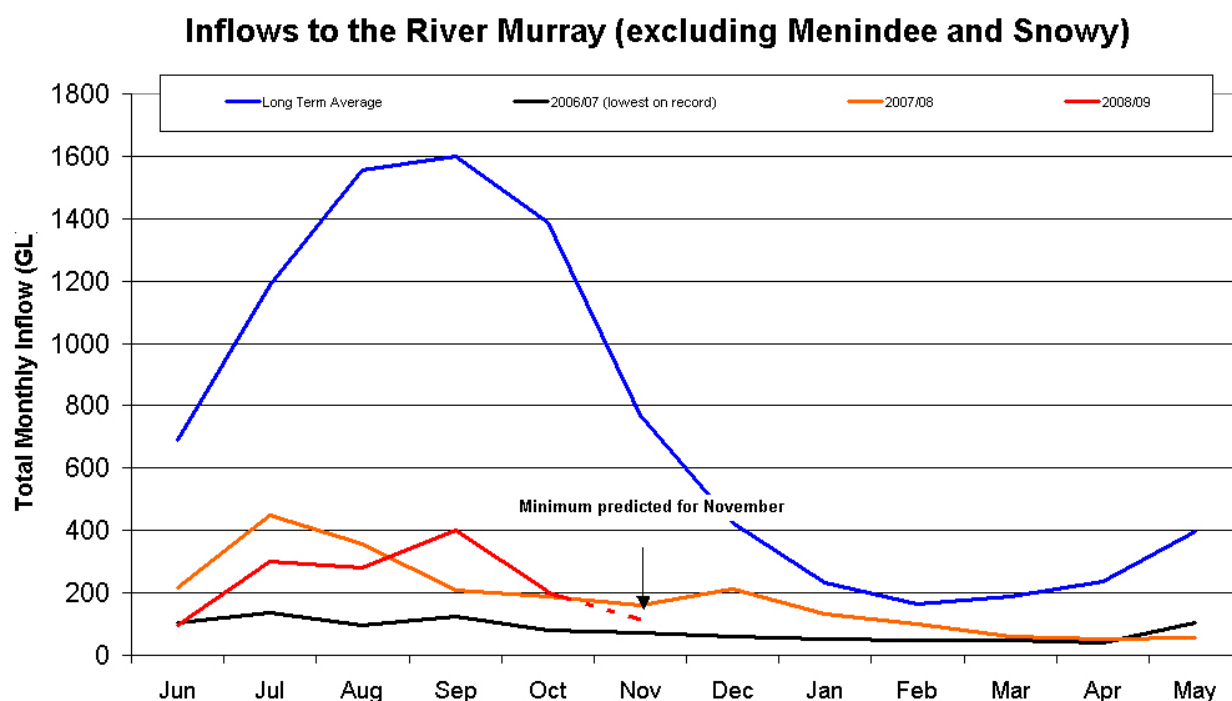
	2008-09 (GL)	2007-08 (GL)	2006-07 (GL)	Long-Term Av (GL)
June	95	217	106	690
July	300	450	135	1 190
August	280	358	98	1 550
September	400	210	120	1 600
October	200	190	80	1 390
TOTAL	1 280	1 425	539	6 430

NB: 2008-09 inflows are only 20% of the long-term average.

The monthly inflows for the River Murray system have remained below average for the last 37 consecutive months. The 2008-09 water year is currently tracking as the seventh driest in 117 years of records.

Figure 2 shows River Murray inflows in selected years against the long-term average.

Figure 2: River Murray system inflows



Salinity and water levels

Flows to South Australia have been reduced slightly to 4 000 ML/day. Some weir pools above Lock 1 are slightly below their normal full supply levels; however, the levels are being closely monitored and flows may be increased slightly if they decline further. Salinity levels above Lock 1 remains fairly low.

Downstream of Lock 1, water levels remain low and salinity levels in the Lower Lakes remain. The water level in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently -0.47m AHD, compared to about 0.11m AHD at the same time last year. The water level in Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently -0.34m AHD, compared to about 0.06m AHD at the same time last year.

Salinity in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently 4 718 EC compared to about 2 810 EC at the same time last year. Salinity in Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently 6 088 EC compared to about 2 620 EC at the same time last year.

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

Table 2: Water and salinity levels

	Actual Water Levels at 21/11/08		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	
Lock 6	19.18	16.33	19.25	-0.07	228
Lock 5	16.32	13.28	16.30	0.02	251
Lock 4	13.19	10.19	13.20	-0.01	323
Lock 3	9.78	6.23	9.80	-0.02	363
Lock 2	6.10	3.39	6.10	0.00	455
Lock 1	3.25	-0.25	3.20	0.05	601
Lake Alexandrina (Milang)	-0.47				4 718
Lake Albert (Meningie)	-0.34				6 088
Goolwa	-0.39				18 205
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					

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

South Australia

River Murray irrigation allocations remain at 15% as drought conditions continue across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald said about 200 GL flowed into the River Murray system during October 2008, well below the long-term October average of 1 390 GL.

"While there was a very small improvement in the amount of water available to South Australia, this water must be put aside for critical human needs in 2009-10," Minister Maywald said.

For further information see the Minister's full 17 November announcement at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/assets/files/081117_Allocations.pdf

New South Wales and Victoria

The latest allocation levels in New South Wales can be found here: www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currnr.html

The latest allocation levels in Victoria can be found here: www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/media-releases-2008/

Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council Meeting in Canberra

A \$10 million management strategy to avoid acidification of the Lower Lakes was approved at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in Canberra on 14 November 2008. Key components of the strategy, compiled by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, include:

- \$8.1 million for continued pumping from Lake Alexandrina to Lake Albert until June 2009 to maintain water levels in Lake Albert and reduce the acid sulfate soil risk.
- \$1.9 million for monitoring of water quality, acid sulfate soils, alkalinity and other ecological conditions in the Lower Lakes.

Other key points from the meeting included:

- The Ministerial Council noted development of the Goolwa Channel Water Level Management Project. The proposal involves constructing a temporary embankment across the Goolwa channel near Clayton and using freshwater from the Finnis River, Currency Creek and Lake Alexandrina to maintain water levels in the new weir pool created between the structure and the Goolwa barrage. The proposal has been referred to the Ministerial Council's Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Steering Committee to consider its feasibility as a matter of urgency.
- The Ministerial Council continued to support long-term investment in river infrastructure with \$33.3 million approved for more fish passageways along the River Murray, including upgrades to navigable passes for improved occupational health and safety conditions. The Ministerial Council will fund new navigable passes and fishways at Locks 2, 4, 5 and 6 in South Australia.
- The Ministerial Council also approved the Commission's 2008-09 Annual Environmental Watering Plan in which Chowilla Floodplain – one of six icon sites in the Murray-Darling Basin – will receive a small allocation through the Living Murray program. About 0.89 GL of water will be applied to existing environmental watering sites at Chowilla to continue the minimal watering program conducted through the drought.

For further information see the Minister's full media release at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/assets/files/081114_post_Min_Co.pdf

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology has released its rainfall and temperature outlook for November 2008 to January 2009. It shows there is a 45-50% chance of exceeding median rainfall over the Murray-Darling Basin.

The latest temperature forecast for November 2008 to January 2009 shows there is a 60-65% chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures.

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.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au

Murray-Darling Basin Commission www.mdbc.gov.au

SA Water Daily Reports www.riverland.net.au/~heinz/mdbcrep.htm

Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

Queensland Department of Primary Industry www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au

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