



River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 39: 5 June 2009

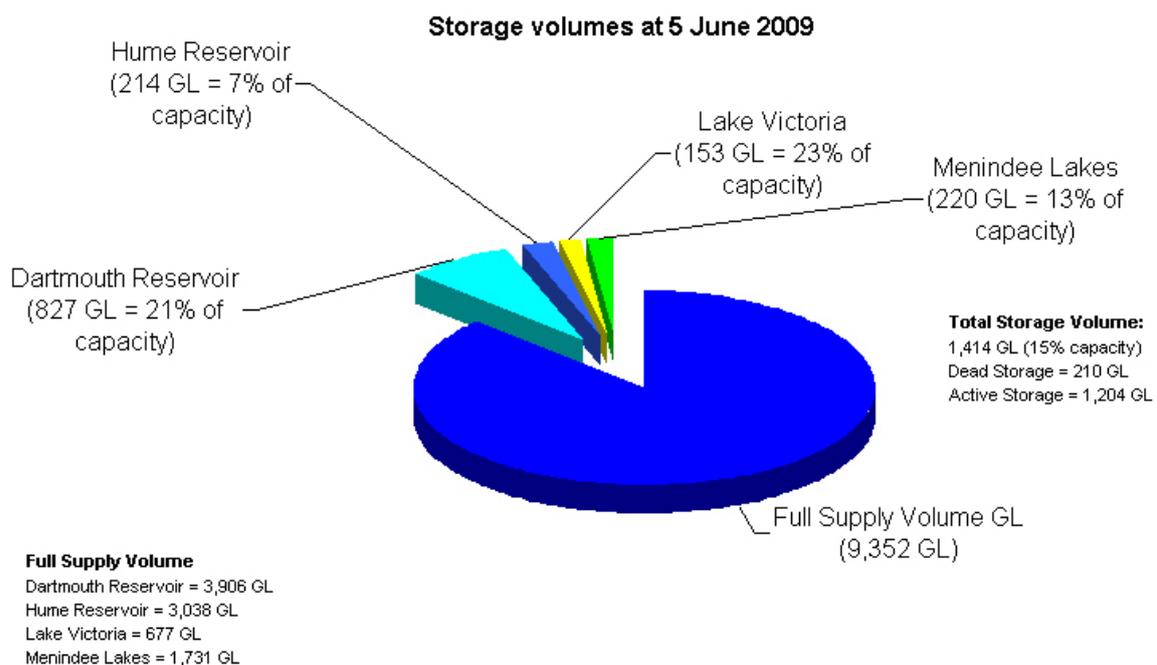
Observations at a glance

- Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, has announced irrigators are likely to begin the new water year on 1 July 2009 with an opening allocation of at least 2% and access to at least 50% of eligible carryover. Allocations in South Australia will remain at 18% for the remainder of 2008-09.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 1,414 GL (15% capacity), compared to the long-term average for this time of year of about 5,270 GL (56% capacity).
- Just 90 GL of inflows were recorded in May 2009, well below the long-term May average of 390 GL.
- 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 1,414 GL (15% capacity), compared to about 1,914 GL (20% capacity) at the same time last year. The long-term average for this time of year is about 5,270 GL (56% capacity). Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages



Of the 1,414 GL currently in storage there is about 210 GL of “dead storage” that cannot be accessed without pumping. The majority of water held in the River Murray storages is already allocated for both critical human needs and carry-over for in 2009-10.

Storage volumes in other systems include:

- Murrumbidgee River (Burrinjuck and Blowering Reservoirs): 898 GL (33% capacity);
- Goulburn River (Lake Eildon): 408 GL (12% capacity).

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority indicates the whole of basin storage capacity is 22,611 GL but only a volume of 3,938 GL (17% capacity) is currently in storage.

Rainfall and River Murray inflows

River Murray system inflows improved during May 2009, with 90 GL of inflow recorded. This amount was similar to the inflow received during May last year, but well below the long-term average of 390 GL. The lowest May inflow on record is about 75 GL in 1902.

River Murray system inflows during 2008-09 were the third driest in 118 years of records. The 2007-08 water year was the seventh driest, and the lowest on record was 2006-07.

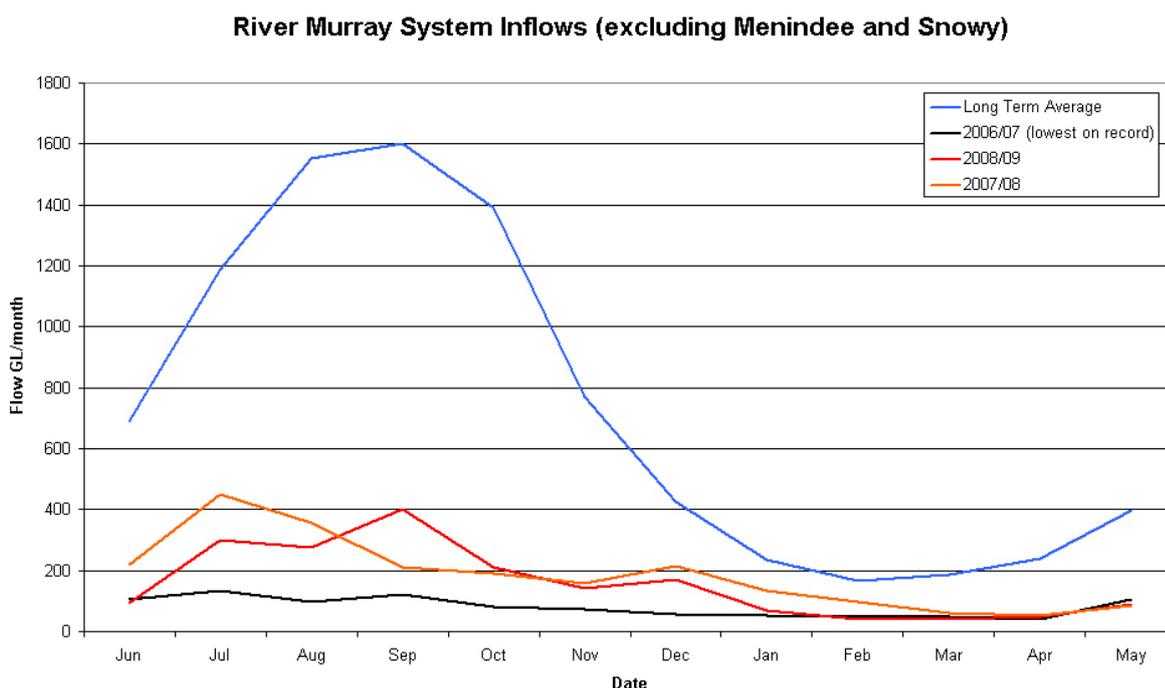
Table 1 outlines the year to date inflows compared to previous years, long-term average and past 10 years.

Table 1: Inflow Comparisons

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	Long-Term Average	Past 10 Years
Inflows June-May (GL)	1880	2 200	970	8 840	4 890

Figure 2 shows the monthly River Murray inflows.

Figure 2: River Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee and Snowy)



Darling/Northern Basin

Rainfall ranging between 25-150mm was recorded across northern catchments over the past fortnight. The streamflow response has been small, but enough to create inflows into the Barwon River. While the response has been small, the recent rainfall has wet these catchments and any further rainfall events should provide additional inflows.

In many of these unregulated rivers there are high transmission losses and extractions are permitted, therefore much of this water is consumed as it moves along the Barwon-Darling River system. It is anticipated a small volume may reach Menindee Lakes.

River operations

The flow to South Australia has been reduced to 1,700 ML/day in order to meet current water requirements and to conserve water for carry-over into 2009-10 given the poor outlook for River Murray system inflows. This flow allows 1,100 ML/day to flow over Lock 1.

Salinity and water levels

Salinity levels above Lock 1 remain fairly low. However, downstream of Lock 1 salinity levels remain high due to low water levels. Salinity in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently 5,881 EC compared to about 4,050 EC at the same time last year. Salinity in Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently 10,190 EC.

Lower Lakes water levels have increased due to recent rainfall in the area. In Lake Alexandrina the water level is currently about minus 1m AHD, and in Lake Albert it is about minus 0.30m AHD.

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

Table 2: Water and salinity levels

	Actual Water Levels at 5/06/09		Full Supply Level Level	Variation from Pool Level	Current EC Level
	U/S mAHD	D/S m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	
Lock 6	19.14	16.17	19.25	-0.11	255
Lock 5	16.23	13.20	16.30	-0.07	235
Lock 4	13.16	10.03	13.20	-0.04	337
Lock 3	9.79	6.18	9.80	0.03	315
Lock 2	6.09	3.26	6.10	-0.01	390
Lock 1	3.20	-0.69	3.20	0.00	468
Lake Alexandrina (Milang)	-1.00				5,881
Lake Albert (Meningie)	-0.30				10,190
Goolwa	-0.88				26,787
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

Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, has announced that irrigators are likely to begin the new water year on 1 July 2009 with an opening allocation of at least 2% and access to at least 50% of eligible carryover. Allocations in South Australia will remain at 18% for the remainder of 2008-09. View the Minister's latest River Murray announcement at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

The latest information about allocations in New South Wales is available at www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currnr.html or http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au/water/avail_alloc.shtml

The latest information about allocations in Victoria is available at www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/media-releases-2008/

Temporary interstate River Murray water trade deadlines

Applications for water trades to or from New South Wales have closed. Applications had to be lodged with NSW State Water by 31 May 2009.

Trades to or from Victoria must be lodged with the relevant Victorian water authority by 16 June 2009.

Water trade within South Australia

Applications for permanent and temporary trades **within** South Australia to have effect in 2008-09 should also be lodged by **16 June 2009**. This will ensure sufficient time to process the trade by 30 June 2009. Although applications will be accepted after 16 June 2009 it may not be possible to process these applications by 30 June 2009 for use in 2008-09, or carry-over into 2009-10. Trades finalised after 30 June 2009 cannot be retrospective. Licence holders are therefore encouraged to submit trade applications for 2008-09 as early as possible.

Carry-over applications closed

Applications to carry-over irrigation allocations not used in 2008-09 into the 2009-10 water year have now closed. Late applications will not be accepted. The carry-over policy and further information is available at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html#Carryoverwater

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's outlook for June to August 2009 shows there is a 40-50% chance of exceeding median rainfall over the Murray-Darling Basin. It also shows there is a 60% 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/%7Eheinz/ex-flow-frame.htm

Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

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

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