



River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 51: 8 December 2009

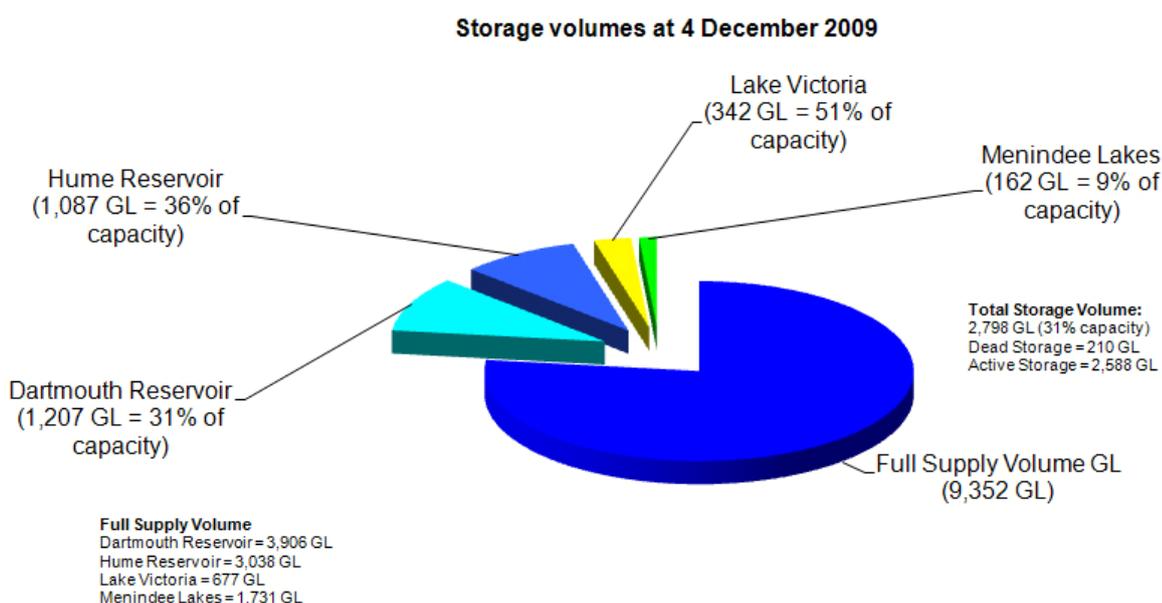
Observations at a glance

- River Murray System inflows during November 2009 were about 250 GL, well below the long-term November average inflow of 765 GL.
- November inflows were affected by the hot dry conditions experienced early in the month.
- This hot and dry weather started drying out key areas across the Upper Murray catchment. Despite some areas receiving more rainfall in late November, the inflow response was very low.
- The probability of receiving any significant improvement in River Murray water resource availability remains low.
- Irrigators are currently able to access 48% of their entitlement and 100% of their approved carry-over water volume.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 2,798 GL (30% capacity), compared to 2,276 GL (24% capacity) at the same time last year.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 2,798 GL (30% capacity), compared to 2,276 GL (24% capacity) at the same time last year. Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages



Rainfall and River Murray inflows

River Murray system inflow during November 2009 was about 250 GL, well below the long-term average November inflow of 765 GL. Hot and dry conditions in late October and early November began to dry out key areas across the Upper Murray catchment. Despite good rainfall in late November, inflows have continued at low levels. If the catchment had remained wet there would have been a more positive inflow response to the rainfall.

No significant improvement in water resource availability is expected for the remainder of 2009-10 as catchments have started to dry out. This is normal for this time of the year.

Table 1 shows River Murray system inflows for the period June to November over various years.

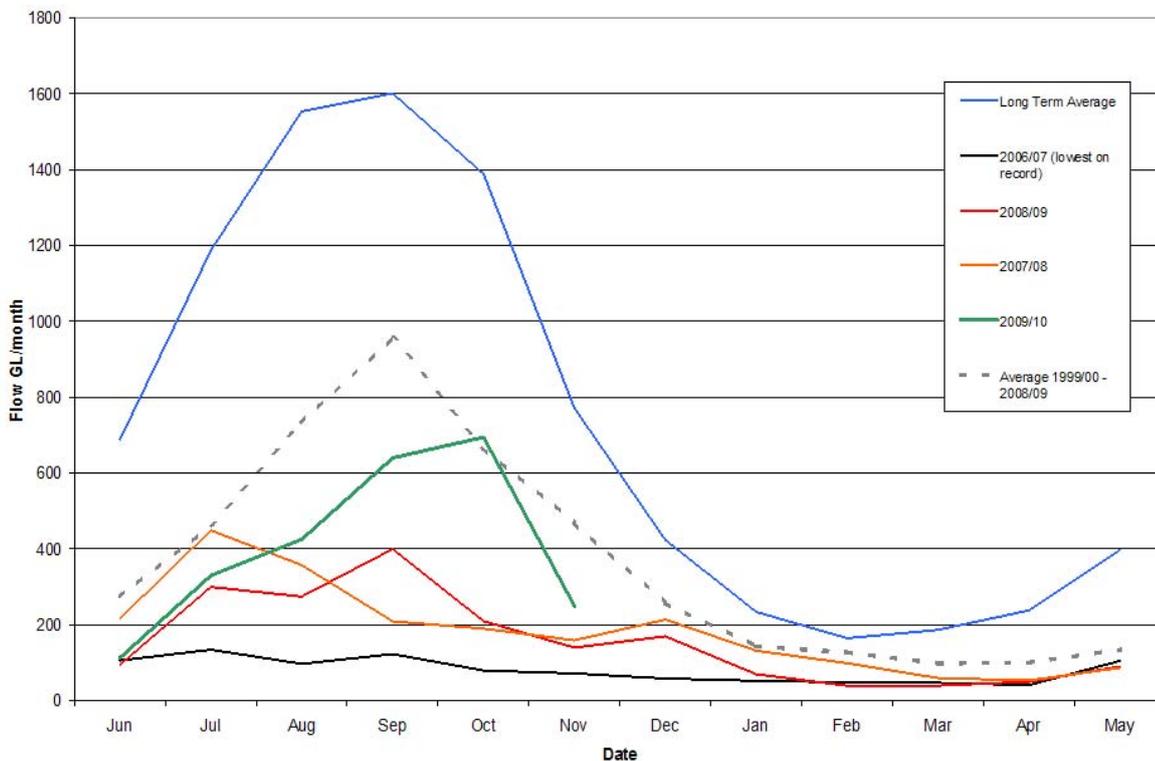
Table 1: River Murray system inflows for the period June to November

Period Jun-Nov	Inflow (GL)
2006-07	610
2007-08	1,580
2008-09	1,420
2009-10	2,450
Long-term average	7,190
Past 10 years	3,560

Figure 2 shows the monthly River Murray inflows.

Figure 2: River Murray inflows

River Murray System Inflows (excluding Menindee and Snowy)



River operations

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is transferring water from Dartmouth Reservoir to Hume Reservoir to maintain sufficient water in Hume Reservoir to meet downstream diversion requirements.

The flow to South Australia is currently averaging 4,700 ML/day and will be increased to 5,000 ML/day during December. During periods of warm weather and higher use there will be times where some weir pools may fall slightly below their normal full supply level, similar to what occurred last summer. The flow over Lock 1 is currently 2,000 ML/day and this flow will be maintained throughout December.

Information about river operations upstream of the South Australian border is available from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website www.mdba.gov.au

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. Average salinity in Lake Alexandrina is currently 5,400 EC. Average salinity in Lake Albert is currently 11,000 EC.

The average water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently about minus 0.82m AHD, and in Lake Albert the average water level is about minus 0.47m AHD.

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

Table 2: Water and salinity levels

	Actual Water Levels at 4/12/09		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	16.29	19.25	-0.09	164
Lock 5	16.29	13.35	16.30	-0.01	195
Lock 4	13.22	10.36	13.20	0.02	285
Lock 3	9.87	6.29	9.80	0.03	348
Lock 2	6.17	3.39	6.10	0.07	502
Lock 1	3.29	-0.48	3.20	0.09	664
Lake Alexandrina (average)	-0.82				5,400
Lake Albert (average)	-0.47				11,000
Goolwa	0.58				10,356
Water levels below Lock 1 are affected by wind and will vary throughout the day					
EC Readings below Lock 1 are averages and will vary throughout the day					

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia are currently at 48%. For further information view the Minister's latest River Murray announcement (1 December) at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

The current allocation levels in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, together with the volume of these allocations, is outlined in **Table 3**. It is important to note that the volumes for NSW and Victoria include tributary water, in addition to water provided to those states under the water sharing arrangements.

The latest information about allocations in New South Wales is available at <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/>

The latest information about allocations in Victoria is available at http://www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/2009_media_releases

Table 3: Current allocation levels in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales (including the volume of these allocations)

Allocation type and %	Volume Allocation GL*
SA High Security 48%	273
NSW Murray High Security 97%	179
NSW Murray General Security 10%	167
NSW Murrumbidgee High Security 95%	342
NSW Murrumbidgee General Security 15%	283
Vic Murray High Reliability Water Shares 57%	627
Vic Murray Low Reliability Water Shares 0%	0
Vic Goulburn High Reliability Water Shares 46%	457
Vic Goulburn Low Reliability Water Shares 0%	0
Lower Darling High Security 100%	10
Darling General Security 25%	19

*Volumes for NSW and Victoria include tributary water, in addition to water provided to those states under the water sharing arrangements.

Carry-over option available again

South Australian irrigators will be able to carry-over all of their allocations not used in 2009-10 into the 2010-11 water year. This includes water previously carried forward from 2008-09 that remains unused at June 30, 2010.

Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said this advance notice on the availability of carryover water should give licensed River Murray water users the opportunity to continue to plan to better manage the limited water anticipated to be available in 2010-11.

To view the Minister's full announcement visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

New Riverbank Collapse Hotline – 1800 751 970

A 24-hour hotline (1800 751 970) has been established for the community to access general information about River Murray riverbank collapse, and to report new cracking along the riverbank between Lock 1 and Wellington. Calls to this hotline are free.

This hotline replaces the MurrayWatch hotline as the number to report riverbank cracking. Major riverbank collapses should immediately be reported to **000**.

Riverbank stability downstream of Lock 1 has been impacted by long periods of low water levels, and the risk of collapse has the potential to threaten lives and property. During the coming dry summer months, low water levels will continue to be an issue and the risk of serious riverbank collapse will escalate.

Further information, including the signs of potential collapse, is also available online at <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/#Riverbankcollapse>

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology recently released its national rainfall and temperature outlook for the Murray-Darling Basin for the period December 2009-February 2010. This outlook shows there 45-55% chance of exceeding median rainfall, and 50-60% chance of exceeding median maximum daytime temperatures.

Next River Murray Water Resources Report

The next edition of the River Murray Water Resources Report (Issue 52) will be produced and released during mid-January 2010.

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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