
RIVER MURRAY UPDATE

Issue 1
1 July 2010

DEPARTMENT FOR
WATER



Rainfall and inflow summary

River Murray System inflows during June 2010 are expected to be about 280 GL. While this is below the long-term average of 680 GL it is the highest inflow since June 2002 when 290 GL was received. The 280 GL is about the same as the average June inflow over the past 10 years (see inflow table below).

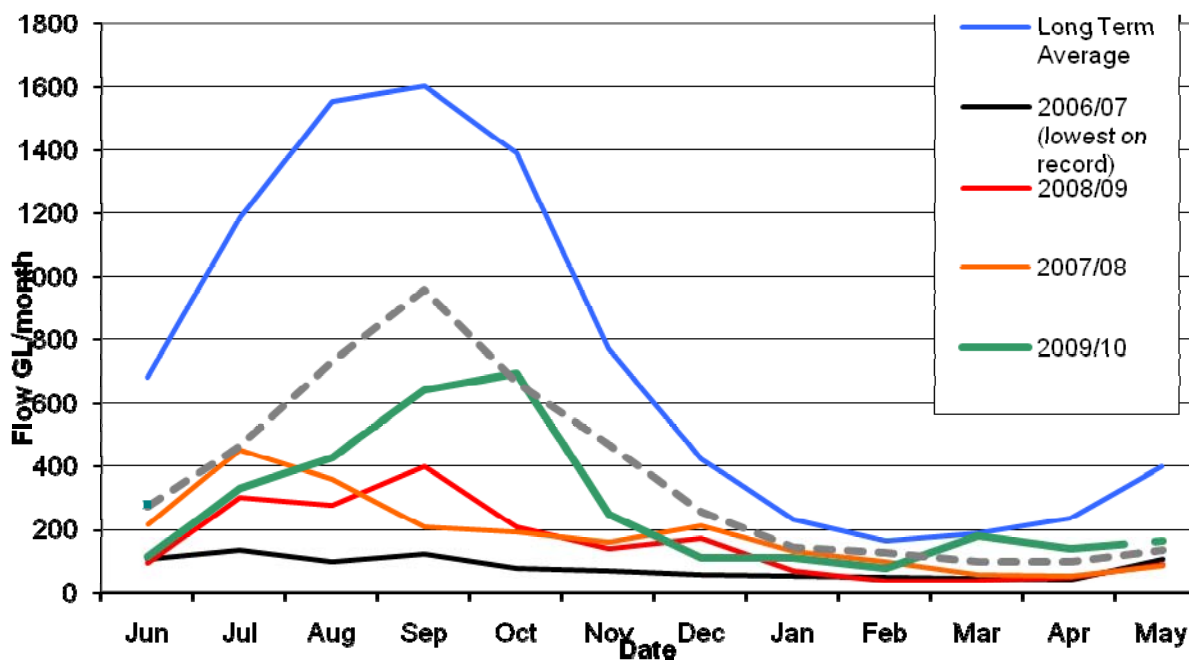
Inflows improved as a result of recent good rainfalls across the River Murray catchment following average to above average rainfall over autumn. This is the first time since autumn 2000 that average rainfall has been received. A sustained period of above average rainfall will be required to produce average runoff. Several years of average inflows may be required for storages to return to long-term average levels.

The following table shows Murray-Darling Basin storages at 29 June 2010.

Storage @ 29 June 2010	Volume (GL)	% of capacity	Change (GL) in volume since 1 June 2010	Approximate volume at this time last year	Change in volume from this time last year (GL)
Hume Dam	806	27	(+)186	400	(+)406
Dartmouth Dam	1,277	33	(+)36	858	(+)419
Menindee Lakes	1,520	88	(+)110	238	(+)1,282
Lake Victoria	359	53	(-)22	248	(+)111
Total volume	3,962			1,744	(+)2,218

Inflow graph

The following graph shows River Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee and Snowy inflows) over various periods.



The following table shows River Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee) during the month of June in various years.

MDBA Water Year	June River Murray inflow (GL - rounded totals)
2005-06	270
2006-07	105
2007-08	220
2008-09	95
2009-10	115
2010-11	280
Long-term average	680
Past 10 years	275

River operations in South Australia

Flows to South Australia will be at the normal monthly entitlement flow during June and July, which are 3,000 ML/day and 3,500 ML/day respectively. In addition, another 72 GL will be delivered during June and July to correct for an error in measuring the flow to South Australia.

The flow to South Australia is currently averaging 4,230 ML/day and the average flow over Lock 1 is 3,400 ML/day.

The Government of South Australia has committed a minimum of 520 GL towards Lakes Alexandrina and Albert for 2010-11, comprised of 350 GL of base flow past Wellington and 170 GL for the 2010-11 Lower Lakes Environmental Reserve. As improvements in water availability are received additional water will be made available, in accordance with the 2010-11 River Murray Water Allocation Decision Framework. The flow to South Australia and over Lock 1 will be adjusted as this additional water becomes available.

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 between Lock 6 and Murray Bridge remain low. For example Lock 5 is currently averaging 235 EC and at the same time last year the average was 360 EC. The salinity at Murray Bridge is currently averaging 295 EC compared to the average at the same time last year of 680 EC.

Salinity levels in Lake Alexandrina have improved over the last few months and are currently averaging 3,320 EC but salinities in Lake Albert remain at high levels, averaging over 13,500 EC.

The average water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently about minus 0.23m AHD, and in Lake Albert the average water level is about minus 0.41m AHD. Pumping from Lake Alexandrina to Lake Albert has temporarily ceased and it is anticipated that pumping will recommence in October 2010.

The following table shows the current water levels and salinity at selected locations.

	Actual Water Levels at 29/06/10		Full Supply Level U/S of Weir m AHD	Current EC level
	U/S m AHD	D/S m AHD		
Lock 6	19.26	16.39	19.25	158
Lock 5	16.32	13.32	16.30	236
Lock 4	13.22	10.30	13.20	272
Lock 3	9.85	6.21	9.80	295
Lock 2	6.12	3.31	6.10	299
Lock 1	3.21	-0.19	3.20	285
Lake Alexandrina (average)	-0.23			3,320
Lake Albert (average)	-0.41			13,500
Goolwa	0.05			21,860
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

South Australian River Murray irrigators can access 21% of water access entitlements and 100% of approved carry-over from today (1 July).

Minister for the River Murray, Paul Caica, said the opening allocation was based on South Australia receiving a minimum of 1,384 GL during 2010-11 under a “worst case” scenario.

“This 21% opening allocation is considerably higher than in the past three years, when allocations have opened at 4%, 2% and 2% respectively,” he said. “In addition to this opening allocation, South Australian irrigators will be able to access 100% of their approved carry-over from 1 July 2010.”

“Having access to this higher opening allocation, and all carry-over water, will enable irrigators to better plan their operations for the coming year.”

A copy of the Minister’s full announcement can be viewed at the Water for Good website (under the “Latest News” heading) at www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/

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

New water sharing framework – User’s Guide available

Any improvement in the amount of water available to South Australia during 2010-11 will be shared between all water uses from 1 July 2010 in accordance with the 2010-11 River Murray Drought Water Allocation Decision Framework.

This new Framework optimises the way that the limited amount of River Murray water available to South Australia is shared between different uses, including irrigation, critical human needs and the environment.

Under the Framework, improvements in allocations will be provided as early as possible in 2010-11 to provide surety for licensed water users.

A 'User's Guide' to the new framework has been produced by the Department for Water. To access a copy of this guide visit the Water for Good website at www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/ or contact the Department for Water on **(08) 8463 6871**.

Climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting a 45%-60% chance of exceeding median rainfall and a 55%-60% chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures.

Most leading climate models are indicating a La Nina event in 2010, which would result in higher rainfall but it is too early to predict where and how much rainfall may be received.

Information on the seasonal outlook can be accessed online at www.bom.gov.au

Water resource outlook

Water resource availability conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin have improved since January 2010 primarily as a result of the improvement in the Menindee Lakes storages.

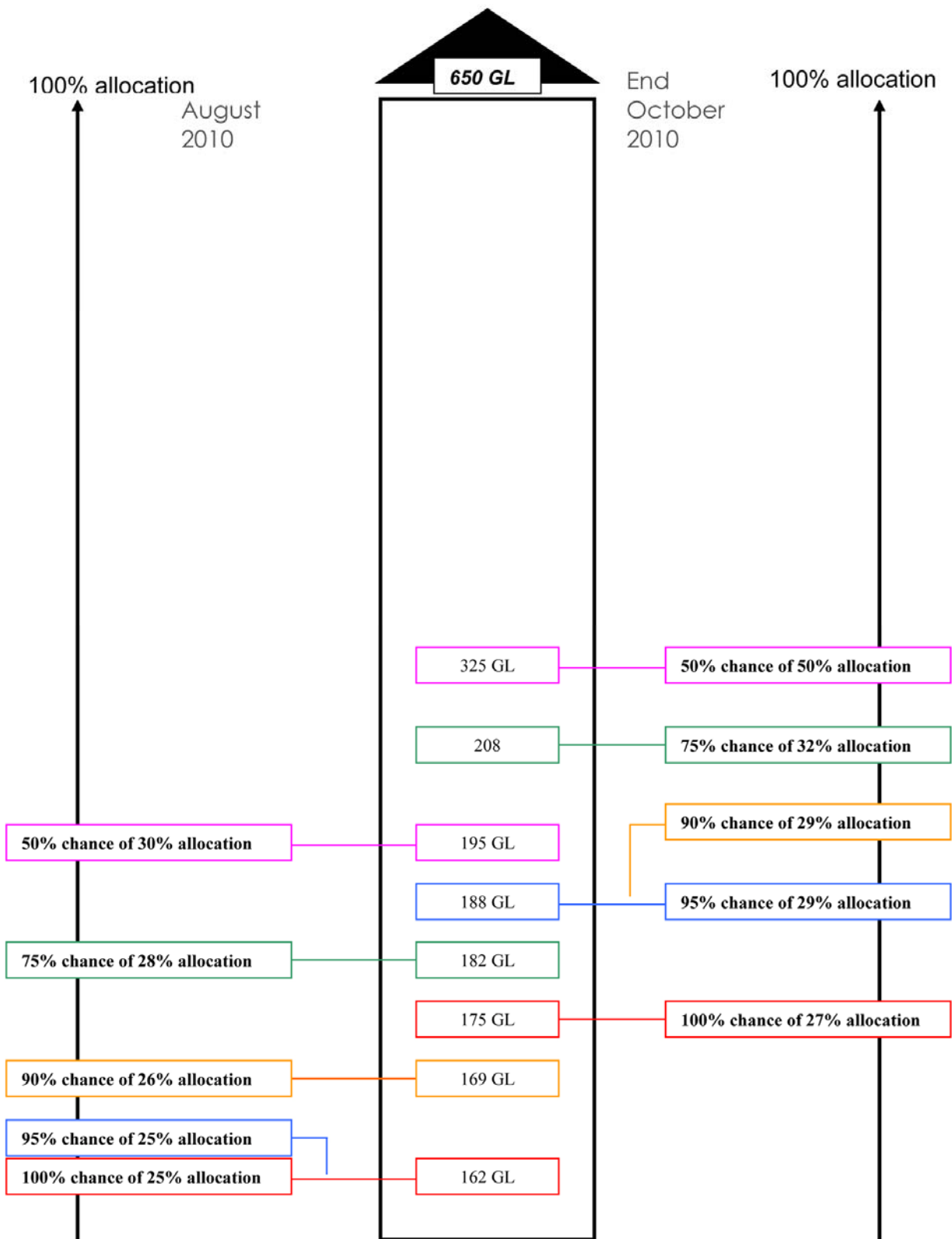
This improvement means South Australia will start the 2010-11 state water year (July to June) in a better position compared to the last three years and special water sharing arrangements will not be required due to sufficient water being available to all states.

Therefore, South Australia will receive 100% of improvements, unlike the past three years where water advanced to South Australia by New South Wales and Victoria to run the river had to be repaid and only 50% of improvements were available for allocation.

The diagram on the following page shows the probability of receiving different irrigation allocations in 2010-11, to the end of October 2010.

The allocation outlook is based on information provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. The 2010-11 River Murray Drought Water Allocation Decision Framework has been applied to the data to generate the outlook for general allocations. The data used in this assessment is based on South Australia's entitlement improvement distribution over the past 10 years.

In addition to allocating water for general allocations, the 2010-11 River Murray Drought Water Allocation Decision Framework allocates water for 2011-12 critical human water needs and additional water for the Lower Lakes during 2010-11, which is not included in the diagram.



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