

RIVER MURRAY FLOW REPORT

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Report #8/2016

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This supersedes the previous flow report issued by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) on 19 February 2016. The next flow report will be provided on Friday, 4 March 2016.

In this report, for ease of representation, large volumes of water are expressed in gigalitres (GL), while smaller volumes are expressed in megalitres (ML). One GL is equal to 1 000 ML.

FLOW OUTLOOK

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 9.7 GL/day and will remain at this rate during the coming week and to end February 2016. It comprises the normal February Entitlement Flow of 6.9 GL/day less deferred Entitlement Flow plus environmental water.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 6.8 GL/day and will increase slightly to around 7 GL/day during the coming week, depending on weather conditions and extractions.

It is important to note that flow forecasts in this advice are based on the information available at the time of preparation. They may change as new gauging information becomes available, or due to rainfall events or changed operations upstream. Flow forecasts are dependent on predictions made by the Bureau of Meteorology, Murray-Darling Basin Authority and water management agencies in upstream jurisdictions. The forecasts will be revised as new information becomes available.

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

During February 2016, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's *The Living Murray* are providing environmental water to South Australia. The environmental water will provide in-channel, Lower Lakes and Coorong environmental and water quality benefits.

The total volume of environmental water expected to be delivered in February is up to 97 GL. By end February the total volume of environmental water delivered to South Australia will be approximately 800 GL (including 102 GL of environmental water provided as part of South Australia's Entitlement Flow). This water has been delivered from a number of different sources and actions, including return flows from multi-site environmental watering events and direct trades to South Australia from upstream storages. The multi-site environmental watering events target a number of environmental watering actions before the water reaches the South Australian border, and has not been released solely for South Australia.

DEWNR is currently negotiating for additional environmental water deliveries for the remainder of the water year.

MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DEFERRED WATER

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority confirmed that on 1 February 2016, South Australia had 142.4 GL of deferred water in storage. Of this total, 82.4 GL is stored for critical human water needs and 60 GL for private carryover use in future dry years. Volumes stored are adjusted for net evaporation losses until delivered to South Australia.

DEWNR will continue to pursue opportunities to defer additional Entitlement Flow during 2015–16.

Opportunities to defer and store water are considered on the basis of how Entitlement Flow is managed, plus operational flow objectives for water quality and weather conditions.



MURRAY MOUTH

Dredging operations at the Murray Mouth commenced on 9 January 2015 to maintain connectivity (exchange of water) between the Coorong and the Southern Ocean.

Dredges are operating in the Tauwitchere and Goolwa Channels and are experiencing some problems with seaweed blockages. At 23 February 2016, approximately 1 066 000 cubic metres of sand had been removed. Routine monitoring confirms an improvement in the condition of both channels as a result of dredging.

Mariners are reminded that navigation through the Murray Mouth is only permitted during daylight hours and that Exclusion Zones established around the dredging operations remain in place to ensure public safety. For more information refer to the Notice to Mariners at:

http://webapps.transportsa.com.au/news/templates/dtei_template2010.aspx?articleid=2865&zoneid=15

There is also a partial park closure in place for the northern tip of the Coorong National Park. For more information refer to the following:

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Safety/Park_closures/141219-coorong-national-park

Signage has been installed at appropriate locations and flyers distributed advising of Exclusion Zones.

Any boats navigating through the Murray Mouth area should proceed with caution due to sandbars being present at shallow depth. Boats equipped with 'echo sounders' are strongly encouraged to regularly check depths and avoid travelling at low tide.

BARRAGE OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS IN THE LOWER LAKES

The water levels in Lakes Alexandrina and Albert are approximately 0.6 m AHD each, with relatively calm conditions being experienced.

During the week ending 23 February 2016, total barrage releases were approximately 5 GL. Operational changes have been made at the barrages to increase the discharge volume from Tauwitchere barrage to provide additional flows into the Coorong to improve salinity levels. This action is in line with the environmental watering schedule for the region, as agreed between the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and DEWNR.

SA Water will continue to operate the barrages to minimise any negative salinity impacts from reverse flow events. All fishways are open to provide a critical connection for fish passage between Lake Alexandrina and the Coorong.

Water levels and barrage operations are monitored closely by South Australian Government agencies, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

WEIR POOL OPERATIONS

The Lock 1 weir pool remains approximately 0.1 m below the normal pool level of 3.2 m AHD to enable engineering investigations to be undertaken at the weir.

NAVIGATION ISSUES

Sandbars in the vicinity of the Murray Mouth may cause navigation hazards. Mariners are advised to navigate with caution when operating in the area. Sandbars are also present along sections of the River Murray, downstream of Locks 7 and 8 and in South Australia. All watercraft users should be aware of the risk of submerged navigation hazards, and should regularly check river depth.

WATER QUALITY – ALGAL BLOOMS

The New South Wales Government (through Sunraysia Regional Algal Coordinating Committee) has issued a red alert warning for toxic blue-green algae in the Lower Darling at Ellerslie and also the River Murray from Cobram to Barmah. The water at this site is unsuitable for primary contact for recreational use, domestic users and livestock. Although this toxic blue-green algal bloom poses no immediate threat to South Australia at this stage, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the relevant South Australian Government agencies are regularly monitoring the situation.

It is not uncommon to experience algal blooms at this time of the year.

RIVER MURRAY WATER LEVELS

Below is a table of River Murray water levels at a number of locations from Lock 10 (near Wentworth) to Murray Bridge.

River Murray Water Levels on 23 February 2016

Location	River km	Normal Pool Level	Current Level (m AHD)	1974 Flood Level (m AHD)	1993 Flood Level (m AHD)	2011 High Water Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.90	33.81	33.32	32.28
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.37	30.03	29.44	28.80
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	23.8	27.60	27.19	26.79
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	21.38	25.70	25.24	24.92
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.27	21.03	20.50	20.11
Renmark	567.4	-	-	18.54	18.04	17.38
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.31	18.07	17.50	17.05
Lyrup	537.8	-	-	16.85	16.26	15.68
Berri	525.9	-	-	15.81	15.74	15.16
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.22	15.65	15.08	14.75
Loxton	489.9	-	10.16	15.05	14.12	13.42
Cobdogla	446.9	-	-	13.44	12.38	11.52
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.84	13.16	12.02	10.93
Overland Corner	425.9	-	6.30	12.73	11.58	10.27
Waikerie	383.6	-	-	11.26	10.24	9.06
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.14	10.28	9.30	8.25
Cadell	332.6	-	-	9.17	8.08	6.82
Morgan	321.7	-	3.19	8.85	7.65	6.20
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.1	6.81	5.38	4.42
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	0.63	6.06	4.51	3.09
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.62	3.15	1.90	1.46
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.58	2.06	1.26	1.21

Note that the above water levels may be affected by local wind conditions.

River Murray Flow Report and Water Resources Update

FURTHER INFORMATION

The WaterConnect website is South Australia's comprehensive water information portal and can be accessed at:

<http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au>

Up-to-date River Murray salinity, flow and water level information can be accessed at the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, SA Water and Murray-Darling Basin Authority websites:

<https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/Systems/RTWD/Pages/Default.aspx>

<http://www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/WaterProofingAdelaide/TheRiverMurray/RMOU/Dailyflow.htm>

<http://livedata.mdba.gov.au/>

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has published a series of inundation maps for the River Murray. They are available at:

<https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/Systems/RMIM/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Information on the management of acid drainage water in the Lower River Murray can be accessed at:

http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/environmental_info/water_quality/programs/acid_sulfate_soils/lower_river_murray_reclaimed_irrigation_area_lmria

Details of river height and rainfall information in the River Murray within Victoria and New South Wales are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood>

Information provided by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office can be accessed at:

www.environment.gov.au/ewater/southern/murray/lower-murray.html

Information on The Living Murray can be accessed at:

<http://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/environmental-water/delivering-environmental-water/living-murray-program>

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/Home>

Basin Salinity Management 2030 can be accessed at:

<http://www.mdba.gov.au/media-pubs/publications/basin-salinity-management-2030>

Information provided by the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure on boat licences, registering motor boats, owning and operating water craft, and boat and marine safety can be accessed at:

www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine

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