

# River Murray Flow Report and Water Resources Update



Report #35/2019

Issued 10:00 am 13 September 2019

**This supersedes the previous flow report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 6 September 2019. The next report will be provided on Friday 20 September 2019.**

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.

## RIVERLAND FIELD DAYS

If you are visiting the Riverland Field Days in Barmera (today and tomorrow) you may like to visit the Natural Resources South Australian Murray-Darling Basin tent (located at 309 Third Avenue), where staff will be on hand to talk about water allocations, wetland and floodplain management and general river operations. More information on the event can be found here [www.riverlandfielddays.com.au](http://www.riverlandfielddays.com.au)

## WATER ALLOCATIONS AND PRIVATE CARRYOVER

Water allocations for South Australian River Murray Class 3 water access entitlement holders are 74%.

The next water allocation announcement will be issued on Monday 16 September 2019. Water availability updates will be provided twice a month during 2019-20 while water allocations are less than 100%.

Further information is included in [SA's River Murray Water Allocation Statement](#) (PDF).

Private carryover will also be made available in 2019-20 for eligible Class 3 entitlement holders.

To make it easy to understand how private carryover works, please view the [carryover video](#).

## MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DEFERRED WATER

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority confirmed that on 1 September 2019 South Australia had 341.6 GL of deferred water held in storage. The table below identifies the storage in which it is held and the purpose.

At 1 September 2019				
Purpose	Lake Victoria (GL)	Hume (GL)	Dartmouth (GL)	Total (GL)
*CHWN	0.0	0.0	239.5	239.5
Private Carryover	0.0	0.0	102.1	102.1
<b>Total</b>	0.0	0.0	341.6	341.6

\*Critical Human Water Needs (CHWN)

Volumes stored are adjusted for net evaporation losses and spills until delivered to South Australia.

## WATER RESOURCES UPDATE

During August 2019, the total River Murray System inflow was approximately 532 GL, which is approximately 33% of the August long-term average of 1 592 GL. There was no inflow to Menindee Lakes (from the Darling System) during August 2019, compared to the August long-term average of 182 GL.

The flow to South Australia during August 2019 was approximately 173 GL, which is about 20% of the August long-term average of approximately 860 GL. The flow comprised of Entitlement Flow (includes environmental water on SA licence) and environmental water.

## RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK

The latest Bureau of Meteorology weather outlook for October to December 2019 indicates below average rainfall with warmer than average temperatures across most of the Murray-Darling Basin. The outlook is being influenced by a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which is likely to be the main influence on the Australian climate in the coming months. A positive IOD usually brings below average winter and spring rainfall, with above average temperatures to Southern Australia. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is currently neutral, which means the Australian climate is not being influenced by El Niño nor La Niña.

## STORAGE VOLUMES

### Murray-Darling Basin Storage Volumes

Storage	Full Supply Volume (GL)	11/9/2019 (GL)	11/9/2018 (GL)	Long-term average (end of September) (GL)
Dartmouth	3 856	2 271 (59%)	3 406 (88%)	
Hume	3 003	1 281 (43%)	1 590 (53%)	
Lake Victoria	677	573 (85%)	342 (51%)	
Menindee Lakes	*1 731	14 (1%)	170 (10%)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	9 267	<b>4 139 (45%)</b>	5 508 (59%)	7 458 (80%)

\*Menindee Lakes can be surcharged to 2 015 GL

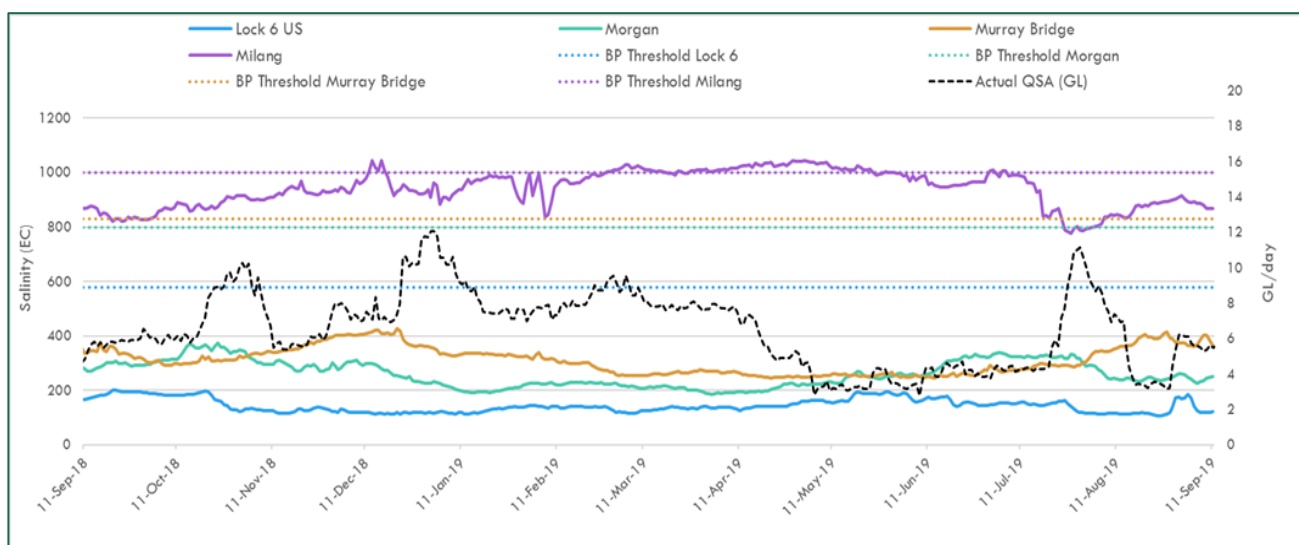
## WATER QUALITY - Salinity

A number of targets are identified under the Basin Plan, which all Basin States must have regard to in managing River Murray flows. The targets for real-time salinity are identified below. Salinity should not exceed these values for 95% of the time:

- 580 EC at Lock 6
- 800 EC at Morgan
- 830 EC at Murray Bridge
- 1 000 EC at Milang

The following graph shows the salinity at these locations and the flow to South Australia (QSA) from September 2018 to September 2019. The dashed-lines identify the Basin Plan (BP) thresholds for the corresponding colour coded location.

SA River Murray Daily Average Salinity



## FLOW OUTLOOK

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 5.5 GL/day and will increase to around 7.7 GL/day during the coming week. It comprises:

- reduced September Entitlement Flow of 3.5 GL/day;
- water for the environment; and
- interstate trade adjustments.

Due to the dry water resource conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin, South Australia is receiving reduced monthly Entitlement Flow. During September 2019, South Australia will receive a reduced Entitlement Flow of 105 GL, normal September Entitlement Flow is 135 GL. It is likely that reduced Entitlement Flow will continue during 2019-20 unless the water resource conditions improve enough to provide South Australia with its full Entitlement Flow. In addition to the reduced Entitlement Flow, South Australia will receive water for the environment.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 3.7 GL/day and will increase to around 4.5 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. Advice may change as new gauging information becomes available, or due to rainfall events or changed operations upstream.

## WATER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Water for the environment is currently being delivered from Hume Reservoir and the Goulburn River. These water deliveries have merged in the River Murray to generate a spring pulse, which will mimic the natural river flow pattern typical for this time of year. The aim of the pulse is to boost environmental productivity and promote conditions that favour native animals and plants. After being re-used multiple times along the River Murray and watering a number of wetlands upstream, the water will be used in South Australia to:

- maintain good connections from the Coorong to the upstream areas of the River Murray, and its tributaries, to enable fish movement and migration. Winter barrage releases have provided cues and connection to support the movement of several migratory fish species. Monitoring is underway to investigate the upstream migration and spawning of pouched and short-headed lamprey travelling from the Southern Ocean via the Coorong estuary to spawning grounds in upstream areas of the River Murray System. A total of 49 lamprey (includes both species) have been found moving through the fishways at the barrages and have been tagged so their passage along the River Murray system can be traced. This will assist to understand their movements and lifecycle. Some of the tagged Lamprey have moved up the river as far as Lock 5;
- provide for ongoing releases to the Coorong to support a productive, food-rich environment for fish and birds;
- improve salinity and water quality in the River Murray channel, Lower Lakes and Coorong;
- deliver a range of outcomes to wetlands in the Riverland via arrangements with Renmark Irrigation Trust and Nature Foundation South Australia; and
- provide water for the Lock 2 weir pool raising event. Water for the environment is supporting the temporary raising of the Lock 2 weir pool to help restore a more natural wetting cycle. This event has re-connected the main river channel with areas of the floodplain and wetlands along the Lock 2 reach of the river to provide a much needed watering. This will promote vegetation growth, provide habitat for wildlife and improve macroinvertebrate communities, which are an important food source for native fish.

## 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.

Dredging continues 24/7 in the Goolwa and Tauwichee channels. At 8 September 2019, a total of approximately 4 848 565 cubic metres of sand had been removed by dredging operations. Barrage releases combined with dredging have helped to maintain connectivity of the Murray Mouth.

There are a number of shallow zones in and adjacent to the Murray Mouth. Mariners should use caution when traversing the mouth area, follow all directions, reduce speed and avoid travelling at low tide. Mariners equipped with echo sounders should check depths regularly. Navigation through the Murray Mouth is only permitted during daylight hours. Exclusion Zones established around the dredging operations are in place to ensure public safety. Refer to Notice to Mariners No 42 of 2016 [Notice 42](#).

There is a partial park closure in place for the northern tip of the Coorong National Park. For more information visit [Coorong partial park closure notice](#)

## BARRAGE OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS IN THE LOWER LAKES

The water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.77 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.82 m AHD. The difference in water level is due to wind effects. The increased water level in the Lower Lakes is due to water for the environment being provided. This water is, and will be, managed through the Lower Lakes to the Coorong via barrage releases. Water for the environment will enable barrage releases to be undertaken for a longer period.

During the week ending 10 September 2019 total barrage releases were approximately 20 GL. All fishways remain open. During adverse weather conditions SA Water will operate the barrages to minimise the risk of seawater entering Lake Alexandrina, therefore minimising any negative salinity impacts from reverse flow events.

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

## WEIR POOL MANIPULATIONS

The Normal Pool Level (NPL) and Normal Operating Range (NOR) for the South Australian locks and weirs are identified in the table below.

Weir	Normal Pool Level (NPL) m AHD	Normal Operating Range (NOR) m AHD
Lock 6 - Murtho	19.25	19.17 - 19.50
Lock 5 - Renmark	16.30	16.13 - 16.43
Lock 4 - Bookpurnong	13.20	13.16 - 13.50
Lock 3 - Overland Corner	9.80	9.77 - 10.02
Lock 2 - Waikerie	6.10	5.90 - 6.40
Lock 1 - Blanchetown	3.20	3.10 - 3.40

### Weir and Lock 2

The Lock 2 weir pool raising event has reached the target maximum water level of 6.62 m AHD, which is 0.52 m above NPL. This water level is expected to be held for a period and then slowly returned to normal pool level by the end of November 2019.

## NAVIGATION ISSUES

Mariners are advised to navigate with caution upstream of Lock 2 due to the weir pool raising event. Mariners may also need to adjust moorings (see Notice to Mariners No 27 of 2019 (Temporary)).

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 Mariners should be aware of the risk of submerged navigation hazards, and should regularly check river depth.

## RIVERINE RECOVERY CONSTRUCTION WORKS

The Riverine Recovery Project is now in the process of wrapping up after 10 years. Works are still underway at Teal Flat, Putjeda Creek and Bollenhagen Road in Gurra Gurra.

A video has been developed that tells the story of the Riverine Recovery Project, why it was needed and the various impacts it has had throughout its duration. You can view the full video or a shorter version using the following links [9 minute video](#) and [4 minute video](#)

## SA RIVERLAND FLOODPLAINS INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM CONSTRUCTION WORKS

### Katarapko

Construction works on the Katarapko Floodplain are expected to be completed by mid-2020. As a result, some parts of the Murray River National Park will be temporarily closed for camping and other recreational activities. See the link for temporary park closure map [Caring for Katarapko](#)

For safety reasons, the following water access restrictions apply to river vessels and people (other than authorised personnel) until late March 2020:

1. Sawmill Creek, the entire length between Katarapko Creek and Eckert's Creek; and
2. Eckert's Creek, for 1.3 kilometres upstream of the confluence point with Katarapko Creek (ie *The Splash*).

The construction works will enable over 1120 hectares of floodplain to be inundated more regularly to improve ecological health and resilience. For more information, or to receive regular updates, about the Katarapko Floodplain Project please contact the Department for Environment and Water's Engagement Officer, Ms Ellee Eleftheriadis on 8595 2148 or email [ellee.elftheriadis2@sa.gov.au](mailto:ellee.elftheriadis2@sa.gov.au)

### Pike

Regulating structures and a blocking bank on the Pike Floodplain are expected to be completed by December 2019. During the construction period, vessels and persons other than those participating in the works are prohibited from entering the Pike River near the Rumpagunyah Creek and Tanyaca Creek junction, downstream of the Mundic Creek junction. The works will enable a portion of the floodplain to be inundated more regularly to improve ecological health and fish to move freely between the River Murray and the floodplain.

## RIVER MURRAY WATER LEVELS

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

### River Murray Water Levels

Location	River km	Normal Pool Level (m AHD)	Current Level 11/9/2019 (m AHD)	1974 Flood Level (m AHD)	1993 Flood Level (m AHD)	2016 High Water Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.92	33.81	33.32	32.72
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.43	30.03	29.44	28.85
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	24.84	27.60	27.19	26.85
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	22.42	25.70	25.24	24.97
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.27	21.03	20.50	20.19
Renmark	567.4	-	16.33	18.54	18.04	17.44
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.32	18.07	17.50	17.05
Lyrup	537.8	-	13.27	16.85	16.26	15.80
Berri	525.9	-	13.25	15.81	15.74	15.21
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.23	15.65	15.08	14.73
Loxton	489.9	-	10.03	15.05	14.12	13.54
Cobdogla	446.9	-	9.86	13.44	12.38	11.59
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.82	13.16	12.02	10.98
Overland Corner	425.9	-	6.69	12.73	11.58	10.41
Waikerie	383.6	-	6.71	11.26	10.24	9.20
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.61	10.28	9.30	8.32
Cadell	332.6	-	3.30	9.17	8.08	7.01
Morgan	321.7	-	-	8.85	7.65	6.38
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.21	6.81	5.38	4.46
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	0.73	6.06	4.51	3.11
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.75	3.15	1.90	1.33
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.70	2.06	1.26	1.04

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

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The WaterConnect website is South Australia's comprehensive water information portal. For real-time data (like salinity, water levels) go to the following page:

[WaterConnect Real-time water data](#)

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

- [Water allocation and carryover announcements](#)
- [River Murray real-time water data](#)
- [SA Water River Murray info - levels, flows etc.](#)
- [Murray-Darling Basin real-time water data](#)

The latest news, information and announcements about the River Murray and Basin Plan are available at [River Murray Update](#).

The Department for Environment and Water has published a series of inundation maps for the River Murray. They are available at [River Murray Inundation Maps](#)

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

[Victoria rainfall and river conditions](#)

[NSW rainfall and river conditions](#)

Information provided by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office can be accessed at [CEWH Environmental Watering](#)

Information on The Living Murray can be accessed at [MDBA TLM](#)

Chowilla Floodplain Icon Site management [Chowilla-floodplain](#)

Department for Environment and Water [Home page](#)

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

[Boating and marine](#)

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