

# SA River Murray Flow Report

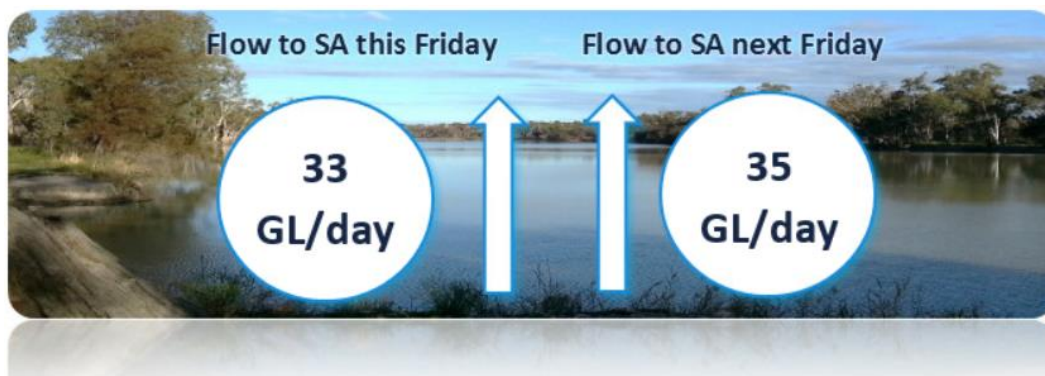


Report #27/2023

Issued 10:00 am 7 July 2023

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 30 June 2023. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 14 July 2023.

## Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 33 GL/day and is forecast to increase to around 35 GL/day over the coming week. Airspace releases from Hume and Dartmouth dams as well as rainfall over the upper Murray catchment and Victorian tributaries (such as the Ovens catchment) over recent weeks has led to this increase in flow at the South Australian border.

The current flow at the border comprises:

- full June Entitlement Flow (3 GL/day);
- water for the environment;
- interstate trade adjustments; and
- Unregulated flow.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 29 GL/day and will decrease to around 32 GL/day over the coming week.

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.

## Current water levels

Current water levels are updated daily and can be found at the following link: <https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/River-Murray/SitePages/Daily.aspx>

## Salinity

Increased salinity levels are common during flood recessions. The Department is closely monitoring elevated salinity levels throughout the River Murray in South Australia. In general, salinity levels across the River Murray in SA for the week were at approximately 300-600 EC. It is understood that some irrigators have recorded higher salinity readings at isolated locations. These higher readings are more likely to be observed at the bottom of the water column.

Irrigators are encouraged to monitor the [daily salinity levels](#) provided by SA Water as part of their business operations.

PIRSA has provided salinity management advice for irrigators on its website:

[https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/emergencies\\_and\\_recovery/storms\\_and\\_floods/river\\_murray\\_flood\\_2022](https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/emergencies_and_recovery/storms_and_floods/river_murray_flood_2022)

## Upstream flows

More information on upstream conditions and forecasts can be found in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's *Weekly Flow Report* here: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/regular-reports-murray-data-storages/weekly-reports>

## Murray Mouth

Dredging at the Murray Mouth continues to be suspended due to high flows scouring sand out of the mouth. Conditions are continuing to be monitored, Tide Ratios analysed, and fortnightly surveys performed in order to provide accurate information to assist in determining when dredging may recommence.

SA Water spent most of May and June commissioning a new larger and more efficient dredge "Sawfish" which will replace the two pre-existing dredges when it is required.

A wider and deeper Murray Mouth will have positive environmental benefits following the flood through enabling better exchange of water between the ocean and the Murray estuary and Coorong.

## Barrage operations and water levels in the Lower Lakes

The water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.7 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.7 m AHD.

Gate openings at the barrages can now be viewed on Water Data SA here:

<https://water.data.sa.gov.au/Data/Dashboard/75>

Total daily flow releases from the barrages can also be found on Water Data SA here:

<https://water.data.sa.gov.au/Data/Dashboard/1>

## River Murray River Vessel Waste Disposal Stations

**As at 6 July 2023 all River Vessel Waste Disposal Stations (excluding Lock 3) are online and operational.**

Additional minor repair works will be required across the stations over the next couple of months. This is expected to have a minimal impact on the operational status of the stations.

The Lock 3 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station has been out of commission since January 2020 due to a significant infrastructure failure. The nearest alternative waste facility is located at Waikerie. Normal boat waste (domestic or galley waste) can still be deposited at the Lock 3 facility at the present time.

You can report any River Vessel Waste Disposal Station issues on 1800 799 065.

If you have any questions, please contact the DEW Engagement Team on [DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au)

## Levee embankments

The immediate, short-term stabilisation works to disconnect the flooded agricultural areas from the river in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas (LMRIA) to enable dewatering are now complete. The current focus is to undertake additional reinforcement of the damaged sections of levees, where required, to supplement the immediate short-term works that were undertaken.

Inspection and monitoring of the levees has increased to identify potential issues early and where required, take remedial action.

Local Irrigation Trust members and contractors should take the necessary precautions when working on levees, particularly during periods of wet weather, as the integrity of levees cannot be guaranteed following the flood event.

While flood recovery works are taking place, levee banks along the River Murray are closed to the public for recreational activities. This includes for walking, fishing, and mooring of river vessels.

Questions related to dewatering and recovery of agricultural areas can be directed to the PIRSA Recovery Hotline on 1800 931 314.

More information on the stabilisation of levee banks in the LMRIA can be found on the DEW website at <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray-floods/lower-murray-levee-banks>.

If you have any questions, contact the DEW Engagement Team on [DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au)

## River Murray Flood Resilience Code Amendment

New planning rules to assist the rebuilding process and mitigate the impacts of future River Murray flood events are now in place and open for community feedback.

The community can find out more about the new planning rules at several information sessions presented by the Department for Trade and Investment's Planning and Land Use Services Staff. Sessions are scheduled for:

- Morgan, 12 July 2023, 4 pm – 6 pm
- Morgan, 13 July 2023, 9:30 am – 12 pm
- Mannum, 13 July 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm
- Mannum, 13 July 2023, 6 pm – 7:30 pm.

More details and how to provide feedback online is available at <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/river-murray-flood-resilience>

## Environmental news – Leaving the nest at 50

Bin chicken, tip turkey and picnic pirate are just some of the less flattering names given to the iconic Australian White Ibis. Unfortunately, White Ibis populations are diminishing in their natural habitat and its family members, the Glossy Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis, are also feeling the pressure. How can we help Ibis to survive and thrive?

Adding water for the environment to keep water levels high is key for Ibis' life cycle. Floodplains and full wetlands are the best chance Ibis get to build their nests above the water level, protecting their chicks from predators and foraging in nearby feeding grounds.

After their first 50 days on earth, Straw-necked Ibis fledglings are ready to leave the nest, and in 3 to 4 years, if the conditions are right, they are ready to breed to produce the next generation. The Chowilla floodplain in South Australia has recently seen Ibis making the most of the habitat in the floodplain's large lake systems following the flood.

Delivering water for the environment can also provide fresh flowing water, preventing disease, maintaining wetlands, and giving our birds a better chance of survival.

Check out the Ibis life cycle at a glance at <https://www.dccew.gov.au/about/news/digital-stories/fledgling-to-flock> to learn more.

Straw-necked Ibis artwork by © Nina Rupena. Scientific Advice: Kate Brandis [University of NSW](https://www.environment.sa.gov.au) and Jennifer Spencer [NSW DPE - Environment and Heritage](https://www.environment.sa.gov.au). Source: [Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder](https://www.environment.sa.gov.au).



Straw-necked Ibis artwork: © Nina Rupena.

## Water quality

### Algal blooms

It is reasonably common for algal blooms to be reported at this time of year in the Murray-Darling Basin and a number of red and amber alerts for blue-green algae have been issued by upstream authorities in recent weeks. They include:

- River Murray at Fort Courage (**Amber alert**)
- River Murray at Curlwaa (**Amber alert**)
- River Murray at Merbein (**Amber alert**)
- Great Darling Anabranch at Silver City Highway (**Amber alert**)

While no algal-blooms are currently present within South Australia, people are advised to avoid contact with any obviously green water or scums if they are encountered as they may cause skin irritations in some people.

South Australian authorities closely monitor the situation upstream and SA Water increases sampling whenever a water quality event is detected to allow for timely action. SA Water, SA Health and DEW monitor the occurrence of blue-green algal blooms in South Australia. SA Water uses the water quality data to continually adjust operations to minimise impacts to water treatment plants and other users located along the River Murray.

Water quality alerts in South Australia can be found on the SA Health website:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/water+quality/water+quality+alerts>

More information on current alerts upstream can be found on the WaterNSW website here:

<https://www.waternsw.com.au/water-services/water-quality/algae-alerts>

## Further information

2022-23 **River Murray Flood event**

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray-floods>

2022-23 River Murray Flood **recovery**

<https://www.recovery.sa.gov.au/active-recoveries/river-murray-flood>

[https://pir.sa.gov.au/emergencies\\_and\\_recovery/storms\\_and\\_floods/river\\_murray\\_flood\\_2022](https://pir.sa.gov.au/emergencies_and_recovery/storms_and_floods/river_murray_flood_2022)

**Water quality alerts** in SA

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/water+quality/water+quality+alerts>

NSW **fish deaths**

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills>

NSW **algal alerts**

<https://www.waternsw.com.au/water-services/water-quality/algae-alerts>

**Real-time water data** at sites in SA

<https://water.data.sa.gov.au/>

**Current daily water levels**

<https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/River-Murray/SitePages/Daily.aspx>

**Daily flow and level information** at key SA Water sites on the River Murray

<https://www.sawater.com.au/water-and-the-environment/south-australias-water-sources/river-sources/river-reports-daily-flow>

Daily **salinity** information in SA

<https://www.sawater.com.au/water-and-the-environment/south-australias-water-sources/river-sources/river-reports-daily-salinity>

**Real time information** throughout the **River Murray system**

<https://riverdata.mdba.gov.au/system-view>

**Whole River Murray System** updates

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/regular-reports-murray-data-storages/weekly-reports>

<b>Marine safety</b> in SA	<a href="https://marinesafety.sa.gov.au/">https://marinesafety.sa.gov.au/</a>
<b>Victorian</b> rainfall and river conditions	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood/index.shtml">http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood/index.shtml</a>
<b>NSW</b> rainfall and river conditions	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/flood/">http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/flood/</a>
<b>Climate outlooks</b>	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/">http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/</a>
<b>Climate drivers</b>	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/">http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/</a>

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