

# SA River Murray Flow Report



Report #3/2024

Issued 12:00 pm 19 January 2024

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 12 January 2024. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 26 January 2024.

## Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 13.5 GL/day and will increase to around 15 GL/day over the coming week **depending on river operations**.

The current flow at the border comprises the full January Entitlement Flow (7 GL/day) plus unregulated flow, water for the environment and interstate trade adjustments.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 6 GL/day and will increase to around 8.5 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.

## 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>

## Upstream flows

Recent flooding of the Loddon, Campaspe and Goulburn Rivers has now subsided, with river levels in these tributaries falling back below minor flood levels. The flow peaks from these tributaries are now joining the River Murray.

The Bureau of Meteorology has now issued a minor flood warning for the River Murray in some locations upstream of the South Australian border. The flooding in those locations is lower than that experienced in October 2022. The Bureau of Meteorology is responsible for flood prediction, warnings and advice for the River Murray in all states which can be accessed at <http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/warnings/>

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority has announced unregulated flow to the SA border due to the increase in flows. It is expected that the flood peaks that were seen in the Victorian tributaries will reduce as floodwaters move through the system prior to reaching the South Australian border. The Department for Environment and Water will continue to monitor the situation, including any potential impacts arising from future rainfall events that may occur in the catchment.

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 operations at the Murray Mouth continue after resuming on 27 November 2023 after a break of just over a year due to high flows scouring sand out of the mouth. Dredging is undertaken to maintain connectivity (exchange of water) between the Coorong and the Southern Ocean.

Barrage releases, combined with dredging, help to maintain flow connectivity of the River Murray Channel to the Murray Mouth and assists in exporting salt from the river system.

Exclusion Zones established around the dredging operations are in place to ensure public safety. Refer to [Notice to Mariners No 61 of 2023](#).

## Barrage operations and water levels in the Lower Lakes

The water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.68 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.66 m AHD.

The Lower Lakes are being managed to target a daily average lake level between 0.7 m AHD to 0.8 m AHD during January 2024.

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.

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

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.

Murray Bridge RVWDS porta loo disposal unit is currently out of service. Repairs have been scheduled for 19th January 2024. Updates will be provided as further information becomes available. The rest of the site is functioning correctly.

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)

## Public access to Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area Levees

All government-owned levee banks along the Lower Murray from Mannum to Wellington continue to remain closed to public access until full condition assessments of the levees are undertaken and levees are deemed safe for public access. Recreational activities along the levee banks, such as walking, cycling and fishing are not allowed.

The government-owned levee banks are Cowirra, Neeta, Wall Flat, Pompoota, Mypolonga, Mobilong, Burdett, Long Flat, Monteith and Jervis.

Privately-owned levees along the Lower Murray are managed and maintained by private landowners and access to their levee banks is at the landholders discretion. However, access to private levee banks where the department is undertaking reinforcement of levee stabilisation works is not permitted.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa van der Linde, Communications and Engagement Officer on 0437 313 087 or [Lisa.vanderlinde@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.vanderlinde@sa.gov.au)



## Environmental news – A prickly beauty

A new plant was recently spotted on the Pike floodplain. The Long Eryngium (*Eryngium paludosum*) is an erect herb which can grow up to 50 cm high. It grows blue-purple flowers between October and January. The prickly seed of the Long Eryngium is dispersed by attaching to animal fur and feathers.

It was recently spotted growing on the edge of a shallow depression that has been a popular spot for ducks.

This native species is related to three other native Eryngiums (Blue, White and Little Devils) and one weedy Eryngium, as well as the European Sea Holly that is used in floristry. Have you spotted any recently? Let us know.



Pictures: Long Eryngium recently spotted on the Pike Floodplain. Photo credit: Michelle Denny, DEW.

## Water quality

### Algal blooms

A number of current alerts for blue-green algae have been issued by upstream authorities. They include:

- Murray River at Buronga (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Curlwaa (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Fort Courage (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Lock 8 (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Pomona Boat Ramp (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River upstream Pomona (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Tapio (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Ellerslie (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Burtundy (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Tolarno (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Pooncarie (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Menindee Weir 32 (**Amber alert**)
- Great Darling Anabranch at Silver City Highway (**Red 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>

### Salinity

Salinity levels throughout the River Murray in South Australia are within their typical range. Nonetheless, it is possible that some irrigators may record 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)

## Further information

### River Murray high flows

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

### 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>

### Flows in the River Murray System including water for the environment

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/news-and-events/newsroom?news%5B0%5D=media-type%3ARiver%20Murray%20flows>

### Marine safety in SA

<https://marinesafety.sa.gov.au/>

### Victorian rainfall and river conditions

<http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood/index.shtml>

### NSW rainfall and river conditions

<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/flood/>

### SA rainfall and river conditions

<http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/flood/index.shtml?ref=hdr>

### Climate outlooks

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/>

### Climate drivers

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>

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