

SA River Murray Flow Report

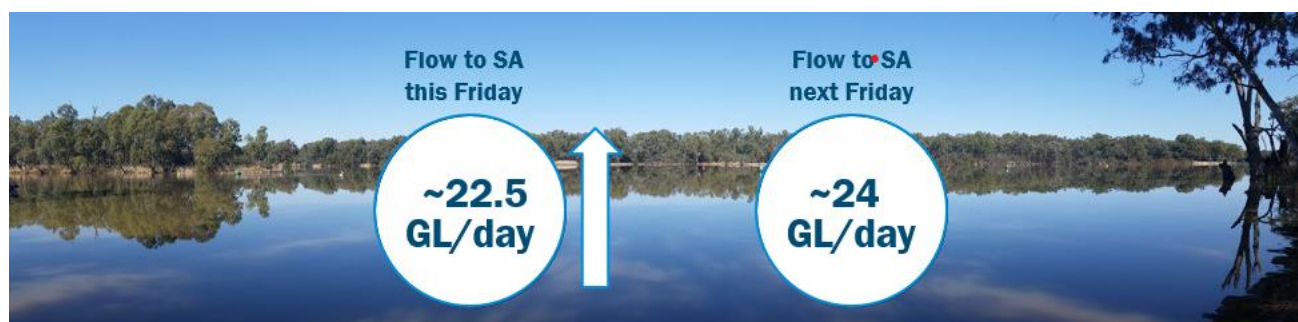


Report #4/2024

Issued 12:00 pm 26 January 2024

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 19 January 2024. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 2 February 2024.

Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 22.5 GL/day and will increase to around 24 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 16 GL/day and will increase to around 19.5 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

Floodwaters from the severe weather event on 7 January 2024, which caused flooding of the Loddon, Campaspe and Goulburn Rivers, have reached the South Australian border and are contributing to the increased flow and small river level rises currently being observed along the River Murray.

This floodwater combined with inflows from other tributaries is expected to produce a fairly flat peak at the South Australian border in the range of 20-30 GL/day over the last week in January, and around two weeks later at Lock 1. Based on current upstream river observations, flow and river levels in SA are not expected to be high enough to trigger a high flow advice or to exceed minor flood levels.

The Bureau of Meteorology is responsible for issuing flood warnings and advice for the River Murray in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia (excluding the Lower Lakes). Please refer to the Bureau of Meteorology website for up-to-date information on flood conditions and current warnings. Warnings issued for South Australia can be accessed at <http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/warnings/>

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 0.72 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.70 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 has been repaired and is operable as of 24 January 2024.

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

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 Jervois.

Privately-owned levees along the Lower Murray are managed and maintained by private landowners and access to their levee banks is at the landholder's 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

Environmental news – Red-flowering black box – not quite what it seems

Recently, a surprising find at Katarapko floodplain turned out to be not quite what it seemed. These red flowers seen on some black box trees (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*), which normally has white flowers, come about due to gall-forming flies or wasps laying their eggs in the developing flowers. The trees respond to this with additional pigmentation similar to the galls often seen on their leaves.

So if you see some of these, chances are that a fly or wasp has laid eggs in there. Let us know if you have spotted any of these unusual black box red flowers.



Pictures: Re-flowering black box. 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 Lock 8 (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Fort Courage (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Curlwaa (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Buronga (**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 Pooncarie (**Amber alert**)
- Darling River at Tolarno (**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>

Low dissolved oxygen

Low concentrations of dissolved oxygen are sometimes observed in the River Murray following flood events as a result of floodwaters washing organic matter off the floodplains and into the river. In severe cases, this appears as areas of 'blackwater', and fish and other aquatic animals may become stressed or die.

During the last week, low dissolved oxygen has been observed in the lower Goulburn River (less than 1 mg/L), and levels are declining at some River Murray locations upstream of the border.

State agencies and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority will continue to monitor the situation. Further advice will be provided if water quality in the River Murray in South Australia is expected to be affected.

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

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
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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