

SA River Murray Flow Report



Report #6/2024

Issued 12.30pm 9 February 2024

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 2 February 2024. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 16 February 2024.



Flow outlook at the SA border for the coming week

Flow outlook

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 17 GL/day and will decrease to around 14 GL/day over the coming week **depending on river operations**.

The current flow at the border comprises the full February Entitlement Flow (6.9 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 decrease to around 13 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 on [WaterConnect](#).

Upstream flows

Floodwaters from the severe weather event in early January 2024 in some Victorian tributaries contributed to a peak flow of around 22 GL/day at the South Australian border on 30 January 2024. This flow will pass through South Australia by mid-February. Rainfall that occurred earlier this week in the northern Victorian and central New South Wales parts of the Murray-Darling Basin has not resulted in any flood warnings being issued for those areas.

Heavy rainfall that occurred in the border river catchments of the northern Murray-Darling Basin in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales over the last two weeks, including rainfall associated with ex-Tropical Cyclone Kirrily, has prompted flood warnings to be issued for locations along the Balonne, Condamine and Moonie Rivers in Queensland, and the Paroo River in New South Wales.

As floodwaters move downstream, river levels are rising in the Barwon and Warrego Rivers, which may reach minor flood levels later this week. This water will flow into the Darling River and will be (at least) partially captured by the Menindee Lakes storage in western New South Wales, which is currently at around 60% capacity. It is expected that flow peaks from these events will significantly reduce and flatten out as water moves through the river systems prior to reaching Menindee Lakes. It is too early to predict if or how these flows are likely to affect the River Murray in South Australia.

The Department for Environment and Water will monitor river levels and will continue to provide regular information on river flows to South Australian communities.

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 for South Australia.

More information on upstream conditions and forecasts can be found in the [Murray-Darling Basin Authority's Weekly Flow Report](#).

Murray Mouth

Dredging operations at the Murray Mouth resumed 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. Since the 2022-23 flood, dredging has been undertaken with a single dredge of greater capacity than the two smaller dredges that were in use previously.

Barrage releases, combined with dredging, help to maintain flow connectivity of the River Murray Channel to the Murray Mouth and assist 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 0.77 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.74 m AHD.

The Lower Lakes are being managed to target a daily average lake level between 0.65 m AHD to 0.75 m AHD during February 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 – Barrage dashboard](#).

Total daily flow releases from the barrages can also be found on [Water Data SA – Flows dashboard](#)

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.

The Lock 6 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station has an intermittent fault with the flushing water supply that is currently being investigated. The remainder of the station is operating as normal.

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

Lower River Murray levees intermediate remediation funding

The Federal and State Governments have announced \$17.1 million in funding to progress intermediate remediation works for government-owned levees in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA) that were damaged in the 2022-23 River Murray flood event.

The intermediate remediation works will bolster the immediate stabilisation works, which began in March 2023 to enable dewatering of inundated agricultural areas and will support the protection of the region's economically significant agricultural land and floodplain infrastructure in the event of future high flows.

In addition to the \$17.1 million jointly-funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement funding, the South Australian Government has allocated \$14.2 million in state funds for intermediate remediation works to privately-owned LMRIA levees.

Condition assessments of the levees will inform the development of a longer-term resilience strategy for government- and privately-owned levees within the LMRIA. This strategy will also be underpinned by consultation and engagement with the region's relevant stakeholders.

The Department for Environment and Water will continue to work closely with the LMRIA landholders, irrigation trusts and community members in progressing the intermediate remediation works.

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 – Rakalis making the most of the floodplain

The playful rakalis (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), also known as native water rats, are still making the most of the fantastic floodplain conditions!

Our ecologists at Pike floodplain have been spotting more young rakalis in the shallow areas along the vegetated edges of the creek.

Check this night vision image of one rakali almost smiling at the camera and let us know if you have spotted any!

Interesting facts: Did you know the term '*chrysogaster*' comes from Latin and means 'having a yellow belly'? Did you know '*Hydromys*' means water mouse?



Night vision camera showing a Rakali at Pike floodplain. Photo credit: Sam Walters, 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 Fort Courage (**Amber alert**)
- Murray River at Curlwaa (**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 Anabranh 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 – Water Quality Alerts page](#).

More information on current alerts upstream can be found on the [WaterNSW website – Algae Alerts page](#).

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 recent weeks, low dissolved oxygen levels have 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.

Further information

- [SA River Murray Flows page - Department for Environment and Water](#)
- [2022-23 River Murray Flood event](#)
- [Government of South Australia - State Disaster Recovery](#)
- [SA Water quality alerts - SA Health](#)
- [Real-time SA water data](#)
- [Current SA daily water levels](#)
- [Daily flow and water level information at key SA Water sites on the River Murray](#)
- [SA daily salinity information](#)
- [SA Marine safety](#)
- [Real time information - whole of River Murray system](#)
- [Whole River Murray System weekly reports](#)
- [Flows in the River Murray System including water for the environment](#)
- [NSW fish kills](#)
- [NSW algal alerts](#)

Bureau of Meteorology

- [SA rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [Victorian rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [NSW rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [Climate outlooks](#)
- <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/>
- [Climate drivers](#)

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