

# SA River Murray Flow Report

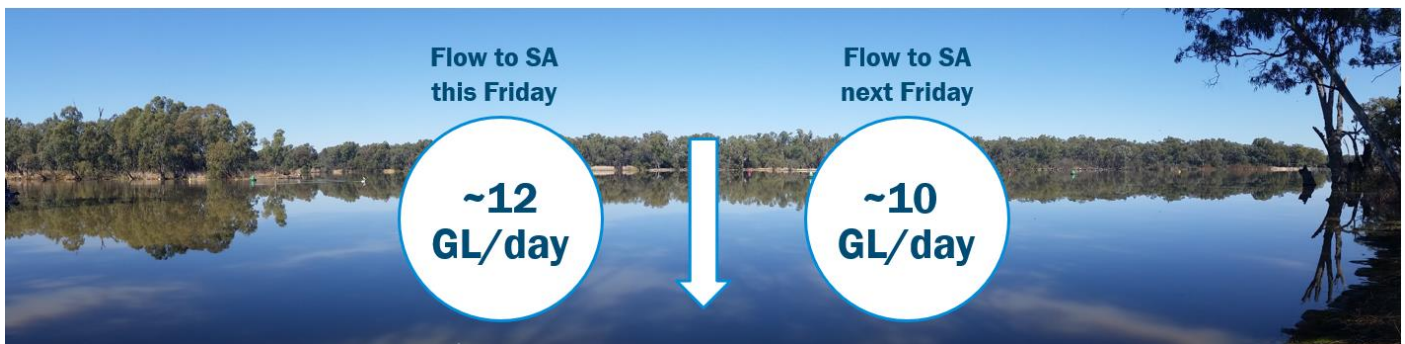


Report #50/2024

Issued 1:15 pm 13 December 2024

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 6 December 2024. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 20 December 2024.

## Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 12 GL/day and is expected to decrease to approximately 10 GL/day by next Friday, **depending on river operations**.

The current flow at the South Australian border includes the full December Entitlement Flow (7 GL/day), along with water for the environment, interstate trade adjustments and adjustment for deferred entitlement flows, which are stored and accumulated for critical human water needs during dry periods.

The current flow over Lock 1 is approximately 10.5 GL/day, but it is expected to decrease to 8 GL/day by next Friday. 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

In December, flows at the South Australian border are expected to continue to decrease as environmental water releases throughout the system continue to decline. Flow forecasts remain subject to change, depending on river operations and catchment rainfall. More information on upstream conditions and forecasts can be found in the [Murray-Darling Basin Authority's Weekly Flow Report](#).

## Water for the environment delivery

The draw down of the operation of the environmental regulators at the Pike and Katarapko Floodplains is nearing completion with the water level almost back to the normal operating level. Pumping is continuing at one site higher on the floodplain at Pike to water regenerating lignum and black box and to provide habitat for birds and frogs.

Water for the environment is also currently being delivered via pumping to sites on the Chowilla Floodplain.

The floodplain environmental watering actions are aimed at supporting the significant improvements in condition and regeneration of trees, lignum and understorey vegetation and providing important habitat for frogs, waterbirds and other fauna.

Water for the environment continues to be delivered as part of SA's Entitlement flow. In addition, water for the environment is being delivered at the border from releases in the Murray and the Murrumbidgee rivers as part of the spring pulse and through direct trade to SA. Although flow is currently around 14,000 ML/day and has remained in channel, the spring pulse is expected to

support Murray cod and golden perch breeding, increased river productivity and provide benefits to the Lower Lakes and Coorong. Similar spring flows in 2019 were followed by a significant Murray Cod recruitment event. Environmental water will continue to arrive over the next 1 to 2 weeks from releases in the Murray and Murrumbidgee. The upstream releases have recently ceased and flow to South Australia will gradually recede although the direct trade of approximately 1,000 ML per day is expected to continue throughout December. In the absence of water for the environment, SA would currently be receiving Entitlement flow only (7,000 ML/day in December).

## Murray Mouth

Dredging operations at the Murray Mouth continue. Dredging is undertaken to maintain connectivity (exchange of water) between the Coorong and the Southern Ocean.

Dredging operations have continued on the Tauwichee channel. After completing a cut in the Goolwa channel late last week, operations are working their way into the mouth. Dredging operations may be impacted by severe weather, significant swell and dredge maintenance activities.

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

As of 12 December 2024, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.82m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.81m AHD.

The Lower Lakes are being managed to target a daily average lake level between 0.75m AHD and 0.85m AHD throughout December.

During adverse weather conditions and high tides, 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. Barrage operations will continue to be undertaken dependent on upstream flows, lake levels and variable weather conditions.

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](#).

## Water quality

### Algal blooms upstream of SA

Numerous amber alerts for Blue Green Algae remain upstream of the Border. An amber alert indicates that the water should be considered unsuitable for potable use and that the water may be unsuitable for stock watering. Water users should use caution and avoid water where signs of Blue Green Algae are present. Details of the current alert locations can be found on the [WaterNSW website – Algae Alerts page](#).

## River Murray 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 hard 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 WIO Engagement Team on [DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.WIOCommunications@sa.gov.au)

## 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.

## Intermediate remediation of the LMRIA levees project

The Intermediate Remediation of the LMRIA Levees project is jointly funded by the Australian and South Australian governments, through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. This project will return the flood damaged sections of government and private levees to their pre-flood height.

Intermediate remediation works update:

- On-ground remediation works have been completed at Pompoota and Long Flat.
- The substantive on-ground works are scheduled to be completed at Mypolonga and Wall Flat by the Christmas-New Year break, with any final project close-out activities due to be completed in January 2025.
- The Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), is in the final stages of awarding the tender for the remaining 4 government levees. Site preparations including sheet piling have been completed at Burdett and Mobilong and are scheduled to be completed at Cowirra in mid-December. On-ground remediation works are scheduled to commence in January 2025.
- The procurement for works on private levees and the preparation of associated land access agreements with landholders are progressing.
- On-ground geotechnical investigations for the levee condition assessments are complete. The results are being analysed with final reporting expected to be provided to the department once this has concluded.

### Public access to levees

Where intermediate remediation works are required for government levees, they will remain closed until the works are progressively completed and safe access is determined over the next 6-9 months. Any government levee not requiring intermediate remediation work will remain closed pending the outcome of a full condition assessment and a safety risk assessment to ensure they are safe for public access.

The government levee banks are Cowirra, Neeta, Wall Flat, Pompoota, Mypolonga, Mobilong, Burdett, Long Flat, Monteith and Jervois. Access to private levees is at the landholder's discretion, however, access is not permitted where remediation works are being undertaken.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance and DEW will keep the community informed of the project's progress, including when levees may be accessible to the public, through its website and newsletter.

For more information, please visit [Department for Environment and Water – Levees](#)

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 – Katarapko operation update

Small water level changes are still important. A recent low-level operation of the environmental regulator at the Katarapko Floodplain, delivered a small amount of water for the environment. But these small amounts are still important!

The photos of Eckerts creek show how a small rise in water level still inundated fringing vegetation – great for the vegetation and great for the small aquatic animals that need to shelter and breed amongst the protection that the inundated vegetation provides. These frogs' eggs were spotted hiding amongst the sedges.



*Picture 1: Eckerts creek in the Katarapko Floodplain at the start of the spring environmental watering operation, Sep 2024 .  
Picture 2: Eckerts creek in the middle of the watering operation, Oct 2024. Picture 3: Frog's eggs spotted hiding amongst the sedges at Eckerts creek, Katarapko Floodplain. Photo credit: Richard Walsh, Brett Ibbotson, DEW.*



## 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](#)
- [Water for the environment actions in the Murray-Darling basin catchments](#)
- [NSW algal alerts](#)

### Bureau of Meteorology

- [SA rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [Victorian rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [NSW rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [Climate outlooks](#)
- [Climate drivers](#)

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