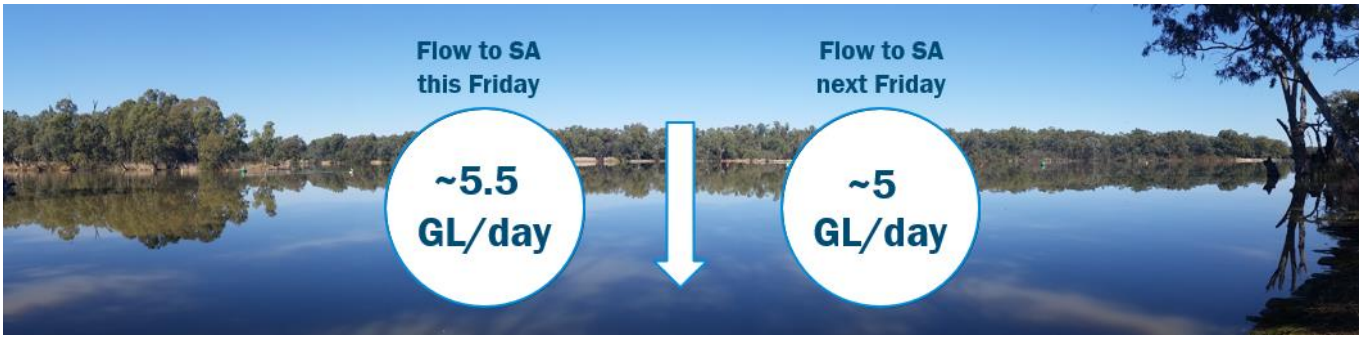
SA River Murray Flow Report

Report #23/2025

Issued 1:30 pm 6 June2025

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 30 May 2025. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 13 June 2025.

Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 5.5 GL/day and is expected to decrease to approximately 5.0 GL/day to next Friday.

The current flow at the South Australian border includes the full June Entitlement Flow (3.0 GL/day), along with water for the environment and adjustment for deferred entitlement flows, which are stored and accumulated for critical human water needs during dry periods.

The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 6.2 GL/day and is expected to decrease to about 5.0 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, rainfall and storages

There has been widespread rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin over the past 7 days. Southern Queensland and northern NSW received the greatest rainfall totals ranging from 1mm up to 25mm, with isolated pockets up to 50mm in south-east Queensland. Areas of southern Victoria and South Australia recorded rainfall totals between 1mm and 5mm. Further rainfall information can be found at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/

The current flood warning for SA Inland Rivers (Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River flowing into South Australia), which is currently affecting properties and townships, such as Innamincka, in the north east of South Australia, is not within the catchment of the Murray-Darling Basin. Both the Cooper Creek and Diamantina River catchments terminate in Lake Eyre. These catchments are distinctly different to the Murray-Darling as they are unregulated.

Rainfall in Queensland throughout March and early April has resulted in significant flow in the Upper Darling Catchments. The estimated inflows into Menindee lakes has been approximately 880 GL since early April. More recent rainfall has resulted in a revised inflow forecast for another 120-160 GL expected to flow into the Menindee Lakes to the end of July. The current estimated volume is able to be regulated into Menindee Lakes and will not result in an increase in flow to South Australia. Further information will be provided as the flow progresses through the Darling River catchment.

As of 5 June 2025, Dartmouth Dam storage has reduced to 2,731 GL or 71% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has continued to increase to 884 GL, or 29% of capacity. Storage in the Menindee Lakes has increased to 1,127 GL, or 65.1% of capacity, with sufficient airspace to capture the estimated inflows from the Upper Darling catchment.

Lake Victoria storage has increased to 373 GL, or 55% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 26% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australian border averaged around 6.1 GL/day over the past week.

This forecast remains 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 allocations

The projected minimum opening allocation for South Australian River Murray irrigators for the 2025-26 water year is 100 percent.

With the projected minimum opening allocation being greater than 50%, the carryover of unused allocations from 2024-25 will not be available for 2025-26.

As the projected minimum opening allocation is 100 percent, no more allocation announcements are scheduled for the 2025-26 water year. In mid-June 2025, the volume of water available for allocation from the River Murray Consumptive Pool will be gazetted and allocations issued for use from 1 July 2025. Water users will be advised of this at that time.

For more information see the latest allocation statement on https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water-and-river-murray/water-licences-allocations-and-markets/water-allocation-and-carryover/current-allocations.

Water quality

Algal blooms within SA

Coorong North Lagoon

Following the very high tides experienced on Tuesday 27 May, reddish brown algae was observed in the North Lagoon, with some fish deaths reported in a number of channels on Friday 30 May. Testing of water in the Coorong North Lagoon has confirmed the presence of the Karenia strain of algae, that has affected parts of South Australia's coastline. The particular species of algae has not yet been identified and further testing will be undertaken to determine the Karenia strain.

Water testing in the Coorong will be undertaken weekly to understand how the situation is developing and to inform any potential future management options. Government agencies, including DEW, PIRSA, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and SA Health continue to monitor the situation.

The Coorong region remains open. Visitors are advised to check signage and avoid contact with discoloured water, foamy water, or water where marine life is dead or in poor health. Exposure to discoloured or foamy water can cause short-term skin or eye irritation and respiratory symptoms, including coughing or shortness of breath. These symptoms usually resolve within several hours of leaving the area.

For the latest information please visit https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/news-hub/news/articles/2025/06/sa-harmful-algal-bloom-update

Goolwa Channel

A Water Quality Alert for Goolwa channel (encompassing Goolwa to Point Sturt) issued by SA Health remains current due to the detection of elevated levels of *Cylindrospermopsis*, a type of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria).

The alert advises the public to avoid ingestion or direct contact with water in Goolwa Channel, including by swimming and diving. Unlike other forms of blue green algae, the species detected there generally does not form scums, so is not easily visible to the naked eye. Swallowing water affected by the algal bloom can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, including vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps.

The Water Quality Alert does not apply to Lake Albert or Milang.

This alert and other information can be found on the SA Health – Water Quality Alerts web page.

DEW, SA Water, SA Health and PIRSA continue to monitor the location and movement of the algae. Some level of blue-green algae on a large open water body like the River Murray is normal for this time of year when weather conditions are favourable.

Algal blooms upstream of SA

WaterNSW has issued red alerts for blue-green algae (BGA) at Lake Menindee, with various other Menindee Lakes and lower Darling-Baaka sites under amber or green alerts. A red alert from WaterNSW indicates a toxic algal bloom, making the water

dangerous for humans and animals. Water users should exercise caution and avoid areas where signs of blue-green algae are visible. Details of the current NSW alert locations can be found on the WaterNSW website – Algae Alerts page.

Victoria's Goulburn-Murray Water has issued BGA warnings for Lake Eppalock, Cairn Curran Reservoir, Tullaroop Reservoir, Hepburns Lagoon and at Lake Boga. A caution for BGA has also been issued for Dartmouth Dam. Details of the current VIC alert locations can be found on the Blue-Green Algae Warnings - Goulburn Murray Water page.

Water for the environment delivery

Approximately 1 to 2 GL/day of Water for the environment is expected to continue arriving in South Australia during June. The majority of the environmental water arriving in June will be return flows from releases from Hume, the Menindee Lakes and the Goulburn. This water will help to ensure that all 11 fishways on the barrages can continue to pass small volumes of freshwater to the Coorong allowing movement and migration for our native fish and will support continuing small volumes of barrage releases. In addition to allowing fishways to remain open and delivery of fresh water to the estuary, the environmental water will also contribute to improving water levels in the Lower Lakes over this period. Water for the environment continues to be delivered as part of SA's Entitlement flow.

Water for the environment is also currently being gravity fed to a number of sites managed by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.

Planning for the delivery of water for the environment throughout 2025-26 is currently in progress. As part of this process, planning for the operation of the 3 major floodplain regulators (Chowilla, Pike and Katarapko) and the raising of the associated locks and weirs is also underway. It is intended that the operation at each site will commence in mid-late July, subject to suitable flows occurring in late winter and spring and relevant approvals.

Murray Mouth

Dredging is continuing around the Murray Mouth and Tauwitchere Channel.

Barrage releases, combined with dredging throughout most of the year, 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 5 June 2025, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.67m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.66m AHD, noting that lake levels can fluctuate considerably depending on wind conditions.

The Lower Lakes are managed, as far as practicable, to target a daily average lake level between 0.65m AHD and 0.75m AHD throughout June.

During adverse weather conditions and high tides, SA Water operates 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.

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

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, Long Flat, Wall Flat, Mypolonga, Burdett and Mobilong.
- Works at Neeta are continuing to progress and are anticipated to be complete in June. On-ground works at Cowirra will commence following the completion of works at Neeta.
- The scoping and procurement for works on private levees and the preparation of associated land access agreements with landholders are progressing. On-grounds works at Toora have commenced and works at Placid are anticipated to begin in early June.
- The department is reviewing the geotechnical assessment reports which were recently received.

Government levees in the LMRIA are temporarily closed to the public.

Where intermediate remediation works are required for government levees, they will remain temporarily closed until the works are progressively completed and safe access is determined, which is likely to be mid-to-late 2025. Any government levee not requiring intermediate remediation work will remain temporarily 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.

Recreational activities

Recreational activities are not permitted on the levees while they are closed, including:

- walking and running
- cycling
- fishing
- driving vehicles
- mooring houseboats and other vessels.

Designated council houseboat mooring sites can be obtained from the relevant local council website.

Access to private levees is at the landholder's discretion, however, access is not permitted where remediation works are being undertaken.

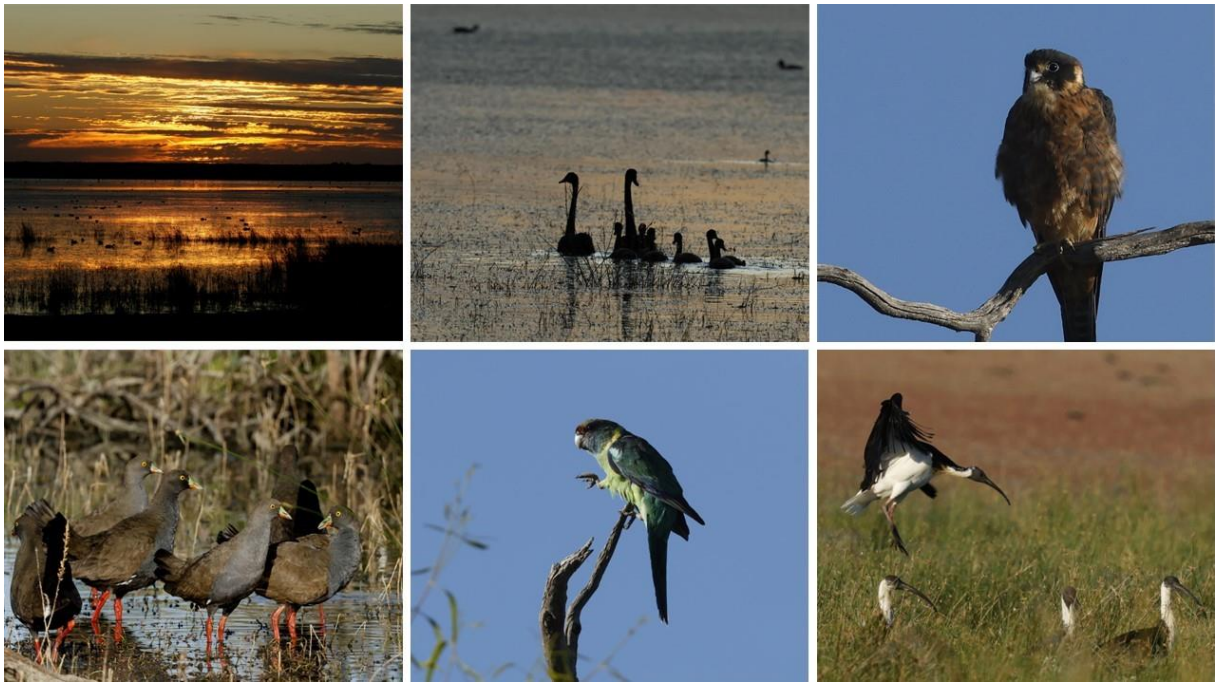
The safety of the public is of paramount importance and DEW will keep the community informed of the project's progress, including when levees may be accessible to the public, through its website and newsletter.

For more information, please visit Department for Environment and Water – Levees

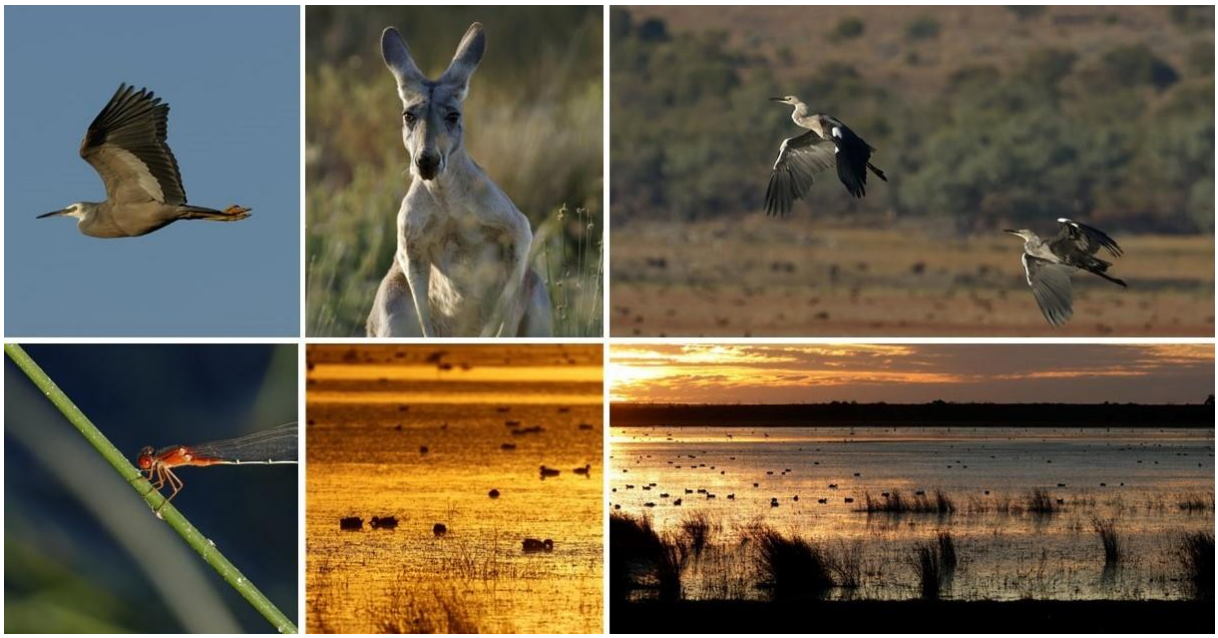
If you have any questions, please contact Lisa van der Linde, Communications and Engagement Officer on 0437 313 087 or Lisa.vanderlinde@sa.gov.au

Environmental news – Coombool Swamp, from sunrise to sunset

From sunrise to sunset, Coombool Swamp on the Chowilla Floodplain is buzzing with life! Thanks to the delivery of water for the environment, this beautiful lake is offering vital habitat and an abundance of food for over 11,000 birds, along with a rich variety of other wildlife. With low rainfall and River Murray flows near entitlement, places like Coombool Swamp are more important than ever as habitat for floodplain fauna.



Left to right, top to bottom: 1. Sunrise at Coombool Swamp. 2. Black swans. 3. Australian hobby. 4. Black-tailed native hen. 5. Australian ringneck. 6. Straw-necked Ibis. Photo credits: Helga Kieskamp.



Left to right, top to bottom: 1. White-faced heron. 2. Red kangaroo. 3. White-necked heron. 4. Red and blue damselfly. 5. Birdlife at Coombool Swamp. 6. Sunset at Coombool Swamp. Photo credits: Helga Kieskamp.

Further information

- SA harmful algal bloom update
- 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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