SA River Murray Flow Report

Report #26/2025

Issued 4 pm 27 June2025

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 20 June 2025. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 4 July 2025.

Flow outlook

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 5 GL/day and is expected to remain at that flow rate 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 4.5 GL/day and is expected to remain at 4.5 GL/day to 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 week. Parts of Queensland have recorded between 1 – 5mm of rainfall. Rainfall across New South Wales varied between 1 – 25mm, with an isolated pocket in southern New South Wales of 50mm. Victoria also recorded varied rainfall, from 1mm up to 100mm in eastern Victoria. Rainfall of between 1 – 25mm was recorded in South Australia. 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) from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), 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 26 June 2025, Dartmouth Dam storage has continued to reduce to 2,596 GL or 67% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has continued to increase to 1,111 GL, or 37% of capacity. Transferring water from Dartmouth to Hume aims to manage the risk of spills if conditions become wet, while ensuring downstream of Hume demands can still be met if the season turns out dry. Storage in the

Menindee Lakes has increased to 1,278 GL, or 74% of capacity, with sufficient airspace to capture the estimated inflows from the Upper Darling catchment.

Lake Victoria storage has increased to 399 GL, or 59% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 16% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australian border averaged around 5.0 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 opening allocation for South Australian River Murray water users for the 2025-26 water year is 100 percent. Allocations will be issued for use from 1 July 2025.

This is based on a water availability assessment provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority that shows under a "worst-case" scenario, South Australia will receive well above the 1,496 GL at which Class 3 (High Security) entitlement holders reach allocations of 100 percent.

Carryover of allocations from 2024-25 will not be available in 2025-26 as the projected minimum opening allocation announced on 15 April 2025 was greater than 50 per cent.

As the opening allocation is 100 percent for the 2025-26 water year, no more allocation announcements are scheduled for the 2025-26 water year. The next allocation announcement will be a projected minimum opening allocation for the 2026-27 water year, which will be made on 15 April 2026.

For more information see the latest allocation statement.

Water quality

Algal blooms within SA

Coorong North Lagoon

Following the very high tides experienced on Tuesday 27 May, 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 mikimotoi strain of algae, that has affected parts of South Australia's coastline.

Water testing in the Coorong is being undertaken weekly to understand how the situation is progressing 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.

Swallowing water affected by the algal bloom can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, including vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps. For further information visit the SA Health – Water quality alerts page.

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.

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. 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 in early July. 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 it will support continuing small volumes of barrage releases. In addition, the environmental water will continue to 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. This includes planning for the operation of the 3 major floodplain regulators (Chowilla, Pike and Katarapko) and associated weir pool raising at Locks 6, 5 and 4. The floodplain operations are expected to commence from mid-late July. Raising of Lock 2 during spring is also being planned. These environmental watering operations are subject to suitable river 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 26 June 2025, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.74m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.75m 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 gate operations this week have been managed around the storm event that resulted in high water levels downstream of the barrages, impacting the ability to discharge water. Barrage gate operations are adjusted to release water when tidal conditions permit.

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 early July. 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 and Placid have commenced.
- 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 – Sand goanna captured on camera at Chowilla

Recently, our Weir pool ecologist captured a sand goanna on camera at Chowilla floodplain.

The sand goanna (*Varanus gouldii*) is one of 27 species of goanna in Australia. They can live up to 40 years in the wild, grow up to 1.4 m in length and can weigh up to 6 kg.

Sand goannas live mainly on the ground and dig burrows to nest and shelter in. They are fast runners and will sprint short distances on their hind legs – often to the safety of water or a tree.

Sand goannas eat just about anything they can catch and swallow whole. Prey is dependent on the size of the goanna but includes insects, birds, eggs, small reptiles and mammals.

Sand goannas can be distinguished from the larger lace monitor (or tree goanna), which are also found in the Riverland, by the stripe running through their eye and pairs of narrow, regular bands around the entire length of the tail.

Photo: Sand goanna caught on camera at Chowilla floodplain recently. Photo credit: DEW.

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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