SA River Murray Flow Report

Report #31/2025

Issued 1:00pm 1 August 2025

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 25 July 2025. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 8 August 2025.

Flow outlook

The flow at the South Australian border this Friday is approximately 4.0 GL/day and is forecast to increase to 7.5 GL/day by next Friday.

The current flow at the South Australian border includes July Entitlement Flow (3.5 GL/day), which is adjusted for deferred entitlement volume that is stored and accumulated for critical human water needs during dry periods. Flow at the SA Border also includes environmental water from upstream deliveries from Hume Dam, Goulburn River, and the Lower Baaka/Darling River.

The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 3.5 GL/day and is expected to increase to 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

Significant rainfall was recorded across the entirety of the Murray-Darling Basin over the past week. Falls averaging 10 to 25mm were recorded Basin-wide, with isolated patches of up to 50mm recorded along the eastern Basin and South Australia, and an isolated pocket of up to 150mm recorded in south-eastern Victoria. Further rainfall information can be found at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/

The flood warning for SA Inland Rivers (Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River flowing into South Australia) is no longer current as floodwaters continue to recede. Safety information and disaster recovery resources can be found at the following website Inland River Flood Recovery. These River catchments do not fall within the Murray-Darling Basin and terminate in Lake Eyre.

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 1,016 GL since early April. More recent rainfall has resulted in a revised inflow forecast for another 85-125 GL expected to flow into the Menindee Lakes to the end of August. 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 31 July 2025, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased to 2,603 GL or 68% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has continued to increase to 1,393 GL, or 46% 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 1,374 GL, or 79% of capacity, with sufficient airspace to capture the estimated inflows from the Upper Darling catchment.

Lake Victoria storage has increased to 435 GL, or 64% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 24% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australia border averaged around 3.5 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 quality

Algal blooms within SA

Coorong North Lagoon

Water testing in the Coorong continues to be undertaken weekly to understand how the *Karenia* algal bloom 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.

For algal bloom water testing results and further information visit Algal Bloom Water Sampling Dashboard.

For Coorong North Lagoon water quality and environmental conditions visit Coorong North Lagoon Conditions Dashboard.

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 the SA Government algal bloom page.

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. Recent testing has indicated a significant decline in cell count concentration associated with *Cylindrospermopsis* in the Goolwa Channel.

Algal blooms upstream of SA

WaterNSW has issued green/amber alerts for blue-green algae (BGA) at the Menindee Lakes and a red alert for the Great Darling Anabranch. 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

An increase in the volume of water for the environment is expected to arrive in South Australia in early August. The majority of the environmental water arriving in August will be return flows from a winter pulse in the Goulburn River. This water will enable floodplain watering actions and increase flow to the Lower Lakes and Coorong. It will also support the movement and migration for our native fish including the diadromous lamprey, which move upstream from the sea to breed during winter. Water for the environment also continues to be delivered as part of SA's Entitlement flow.

Preparation 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 at Katarapko and raising of Lock 4 is planned to commence within the first week of August and Pike and Lock 5 raising is expected to commence shortly after, coinciding with the arrival of additional environmental flows. Operation at Chowilla is subject to improved River Murray flow conditions but an August start is planned if conditions are suitable. Raising of Lock 2 during spring is also being planned and is expected to commence from late August. These environmental watering operations are subject to suitable river flows occurring in late winter and spring, and relevant approvals. For further information about the planned operations please visit:
Chowilla Floodplain 2025-26 proposed environmental water operations
Pike Floodplain 2025-26 proposed environmental water operations
Katarapko Floodplain 2025-26 proposed environmental water operations

Murray Mouth

Dredging is continuing around the Murray Mouth and Goolwa 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 31 July 2025, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.79m AHD and Lake Albert is also approximately 0.79m 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 0.725m AHD and 0.825m AHD throughout July.

Successive storm surge events since the end of May have resulted in increased salinity in the upstream vicinity of the barrages, including through the Goolwa Channel. Water users in this area are advised that water quality may be highly variable. 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. The four successive storm surge events from May through to July are the four highest on record (dating back to 1976) at the Goolwa barrage downstream monitoring station.

Barrage gate operations are adjusted to release water when tidal conditions permit and are 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.
- On-ground works at Cowirra have commenced, with works at Neeta, Toora, and Placid continuing to progress.
- The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is working with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), as the state infrastructure agency, on the procurement of contractors to undertake works on the remaining private levees that were severely damaged during the 2022-23 River Murray flood. The request for tender issued by DIT in June closed on 17 July with submissions currently being assessed.
- The department is continuing to review the geotechnical assessment reports.

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 safety risk assessments that are currently underway 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

Improving access to trade in the southern Murray-Darling Basin

WaterNSW and the Victorian Department for Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) are seeking stakeholder feedback on a draft framework for assessing options to improve access to intervalley trade (IVT) opportunities and seeking proposed options that should be assessed in the next stage of the project.

You can submit feedback on the framework and options with a brief questionnaire to DEECA at www.engage.vic.gov.au/improving-access-to-trade or on to WaterNSW webpage. The consultation will be open until 17 August 2025.

Environmental news – A 'cracking' refill for Ngak Indau wetland

After two long years, Ngak Indau wetland has finally completed its drying phase and begun refilling!

Located within the stunning Katarapko floodplain, Ngak Indau is a high conservation wetland of environmental, social and cultural importance.

Prior to river regulation, Ngak Indau would have held water for most of the year, with occasional dry spells during low flows and periods of drought. These occasional dry phases provide a range of ecological benefits including:

- Control of pest species like European carp,
- Consolidation of the soils - reducing water turbidity,
- Exposure of seeds and invertebrates that provide food for birds and other wildlife,

- Establishment of terrestrial vegetation, which later becomes structural habitat for fish and waterbirds,
- Increased availability of nutrients like nitrates and phosphates, promoting aquatic plant growth upon refilling.

Ngak Indau is managed as a semi-permanent wetland, mimicking the natural regime of wet most of the time, with occasional dry periods. The last time Ngak Indau fully dried was in 2009, and after almost 15 years of being inundated, the wetland began drawing down in September 2023, taking almost 2 years to fully dry again.

Following the slow refill of the wetland over the last few weeks, we've already welcomed the return of a range of waterbirds including a pair of mountain ducks, pacific black ducks, welcome swallows, white-faced herons, and the Australasian grebe. Monitoring over the next few months will capture the suite of ecological responses to the refill.

Pictures: 1 and 2. Cracking soils at Ngak Indau wetland. 3. Ngak indau wetland when dry. 4. Ngak indau wetland during refill. Photo credit: Claudia Sabeeney, DEW.

Pictures: 5. Australasian grebe at Ngak Indau. 6. Shelducks and Pacific black duck at Ngak Indau. 7. Welcome swallows within the vegetation at Ngak Indau wetland (can you spot them?).

Further information

- Algal bloom information
- 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
- Weir pool manipulation

Bureau of Meteorology

- SA rainfall and river conditions
- Victorian rainfall and river conditions
- NSW rainfall and river conditions
- Climate outlooks
- Climate drivers

ID	RM-Flow-Report_2025_08_01
Classification	Public I2 A2
Issued	1 August 2025
Authority	DEW
Master Document Location	R:\Water Group\RMO\WRO\04 Communications\Flow Advices\2025-26
Managed and Maintained by	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Author	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Reviewer	Director, Water Infrastructure and Operations