SA River Murray Flow Report

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

Report #34/2025

Issued 12:00pm 22 August 2025

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 15 August 2025. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 29 August 2025.

Flow outlook

The flow at the South Australian border this Friday is approximately 8.0 GL/day and is forecast to remain at 8.0 GL/day to next Friday.

The current flow at the South Australian border includes August Entitlement Flow (4.0 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 7.5 GL/day and is expected to remain at 7.5 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

Rain was widespread across the Murray-Darling Basin this week, with the majority of the Basin, including South Australia, receiving rainfall of 1-5mm. Rainfall of up to 15mm was recorded in isolated patches in south-east Queensland and western-central New South Wales. Eastern Victoria also recorded higher rainfall of 10-25mm. Further rainfall information can be found at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/

Rainfall in Queensland throughout March and early April has resulted in significant flow in the Upper Darling Catchments. More recent rainfall has resulted in a revised inflow forecast for another 400 - 500 GL expected to flow into the Menindee Lakes to the end of October. 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 21 August 2025, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased slightly to 2,614 GL or 68% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has continued to increase to 1,561 GL, or 52% 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 decreased to 1,365GL, or 79% of capacity, with sufficient airspace to capture the estimated inflows from the Upper Darling catchment. With increased inflows in-transit to the Menindee Lakes and a relatively dry forecast for the Murray, the MDBA began calling for water from the Menindee Lakes on Thursday 7 August. This call on water is to manage storage levels at Lake Victoria and allow the MDBA to delay transfers from Hume to Lake Victoria.

Lake Victoria storage has increased to 490 GL, or 72% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 8% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australia border averaged around 8.0 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 quality

Algal blooms within SA

Coorong

Water testing in the Coorong continues to be undertaken but has now reduced to a fortnightly sampling program. The sampling is helping understanding of 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.

For further information visit the SA Health – Water quality alerts page.

For the latest information please visit the SA Government algal bloom page.

Algal blooms upstream of SA

WaterNSW issues blue-green algae (BGA) alerts as Red, Amber or Green. A red alert indicates a toxic algal bloom, making the water dangerous for humans and animals; an amber alert indicates BGA may be multiplying in numbers and water should be considered unsuitable for human or animal consumption but remains suitable for recreational use; and a green alert indicates the presence of BGA but not at levels to pose a threat to recreational, stock or domestic use.

WaterNSW has issued a green alert for BGA at the Menindee Lakes and a red alert for the Great Darling Anabranch. Numerous BGA amber and green alerts apply to the River Murray between Lake Hume and the SA border. Further 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 3 to 5 GL/day of water for the environment is expected to arrive at the South Australian border over the coming week. The majority of the environmental water arriving consists of return flows from a winter pulse in the Goulburn River. This water will support 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.

The floodplain operation at Katarapko is underway and is progressing smoothly. Lock 4 raising is planned from late-August. Pike floodplain operation and Lock 5 raising is expected to commence as soon as on-site construction work is completed. This is anticipated to be within the next 1 to 2 weeks.

Planning for further delivery of water for the environment throughout 2025-26 and preparation for the operation of the floodplain regulator at Chowilla and associated weir pool raising at Lock 6 is still in progress. Operation at Chowilla is subject to suitable River Murray flow conditions but an early September start is planned if conditions are suitable. Raising of Lock 2 during spring is also being planned and is expected to commence from early September.

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
Lock 2 weir pool 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 21 August 2025, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.78m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.82m 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 0.75m AHD and 0.85m AHD throughout August.

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 severely 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.
- Site preparation work including sheet piling has commenced at Westbrook, with construction works at Cowirra, Toora, and Placid continuing to progress. The substantive on-ground works have been completed at Neeta with final project close-out activities underway.
- 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 assessment to ensure they are safe for public access. These assessments are currently underway.

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

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

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