SA River Murray Flow Report

Report #44/2025

Issued 12:00pm 31 October 2025

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 24 October 2025. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 7 November 2025.

Flow outlook

The flow at the South Australian border this Friday is approximately 10 GL/day and is forecast to remain at 10 GL/day to next Friday.

The current flow at the South Australian border includes October Entitlement Flow (5.5 GL/day), which is adjusted for deferred entitlement volume that is stored and accumulated for critical human water needs and private carryover during dry periods. Flow at the SA Border also includes Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) and environmental water from upstream deliveries from the Goulburn River and Hume Dam.

The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 8.0 GL/day and is expected to remain at 8.0 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

Rainfall was widespread across the Murray-Darling Basin this week, with the highest totals being recorded in the south and the east. Queensland and New South Wales recorded rainfall of up to 25mm. Heavier falls of up to 50mm were recorded in Victoria, with an isolated pocket of up to 100mm in the southeast. South Australia also received widespread rain but smaller totals ranging between 1 and 25mm. Rainfall distribution within the Basin can be found at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/.

Flows from the Northern Basin have continued to recede, and updated forecasting indicates a further 40 - 80GL of inflows to Menindee Lakes to the end of November. South Australia receives an additional 3 GL/day of Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) when triggers are met. During October, the ADF triggers require Menindee Lakes Storage volumes to be above 1,300 GL and the combined volume of both Hume and Dartmouth reservoirs to be greater than 2,000 GL. These triggers are currently being met, and South Australia is receiving the additional 3 GL/day of ADF.

As of 30 October 2025, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased to 2,808 GL, or 73% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has decreased to 1,509 GL, or 50% of capacity. Storage in the Menindee Lakes continues to decrease and is at 1,420 GL, or 82% of capacity.

Lake Victoria storage is at 556 GL, or 82% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 15% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australia border averaged around 10 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

Water quality upstream of SA

Please be advised that with additional flows coming from the Darling River there will be an increase in turbidity of the water in the main channel of the River Murray. Horticulturalists may consider this as part of filtration and backflush programs for irrigation systems.

Algal blooms within SA

Coorong

Water testing in the Coorong continues to be undertaken on a fortnightly basis. The sampling is helping with understanding how the *Karenia* algal bloom situation is progressing and informs any potential future management options. Government agencies are working together to 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. When the algae are broken up by wave action, algal particles can cause short-term skin or eye irritation and respiratory symptoms, including a cough or shortness of breath. If you notice symptoms, move away from the beach or water. Most symptoms will resolve within hours of leaving the area.

Health advice for people with asthma

Some algal species can release biotoxins into the air through wave action that may trigger symptoms in people with asthma.

People with asthma are advised to:

- carry their reliever medication with them while on beaches, especially when there is thick, visible foam or discoloured water
- take their preventive medication as prescribed
- check their asthma management plan is up-to-date.

People with known asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, or other form of chronic lung disease may be more vulnerable to the respiratory effects of biotoxins and should avoid areas where there is discoloured or foamy water, particularly if there is an onshore breeze.

International evidence indicates there are no long-term health consequences of exposure at the beach to either algal particles or biotoxins.

If symptoms persist, see your doctor.

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 red alert for the Great Darling Anabranch (Silver City Highway). 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 a BGA warning 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 1-2 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 the end of Goulburn River spring pulse. This water is supporting floodplain watering actions, improving river channel habitat for native fish - including creating conditions suitable for Murray cod breeding, and increasing flow to the Lower Lakes and Coorong. Water for the environment also continues to be delivered as part of SA's Entitlement flow.

The floodplain operations underway include:

- Katarapko floodplain - Water levels at Katarapko are now gradually drawing down from the recent operation of the floodplain infrastructure. Lock 4 is still raised by ~ 30cm above normal pool level (up to 13.5m AHD) with the drawdown back to normal pool level set to commence early next week.
- Pike floodplain - operation at the Pike environmental regulator commenced in mid-September and with further raising over the last week is now at the target height 15.3m AHD – 75cm above normal pool level. Lock 5 raising (of up to 30cm above pool level) is also underway.
- Chowilla - operation of the Chowilla regulator commenced on 3 September and is progressing as planned with water level now at the target height. Lock 6 has also been raised by up to 40 cm above normal pool level (up to 19.45 m AHD). The gradual drawdown of water levels will commence in early November.
- Lock 2 - raising commenced on 3 September with the level being raised by on average 2.5 cm/day. The water level is now 50 cm above normal pool level (up to 6.6 m AHD). Drawdown will commence in November.

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

Planning for further delivery of water for the environment throughout 2025-26 is continuing and further delivery is expected throughout late October and November.

Murray Mouth

Dredging is continuing directly in the Murray Mouth at the junction of the Tauwitchere and Goolwa Channels.

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 30 October 2025, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.79m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.81m 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 October.

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.

Salinity throughout the Goolwa Channel from the Goolwa Barrage to Clayton Bay remains elevated as a result of salt water ingress from recent storm surge events.

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 at Wellington, has been completed, with construction works at Cowirra, Toora, and Placid continuing to progress. The substantive on-ground works at Neeta have been completed 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. All government levees remain temporarily closed pending the outcome of full condition assessments and safety risk assessments to ensure safe access can be determined before opening to the public. These assessments and associated works including but not limited to, sign installation, fence installation and tree assessments are underway and likely to be completed early 2026.

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

Water Markets Intermediaries Code and Trust Accounting Framework – Phase 2 (1 October 2025)

From 1 October 2025, the second phase of the Water Market Intermediaries Code (the Code), prescribed by the *Water Amendment (Water Markets Intermediaries Code and Trust Accounting Framework) Regulations 2025,* will commence.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is responsible for enforcing the Code and trust accounting requirements. The ACCC has guidance materials on the Code published on its website and can be contacted at watercode@accc.gov.au.

For more information, visit the DCCEEW water market reform website or email the water markets team at water.markets@dcceew.gov.au

Waterbird Aerial Survey 2025

From 30 September to 30 November, the University of NSW will be conducting the 2025 Eastern Australian Waterbird Survey.

The Eastern Australian Waterbird Survey is one of the largest wildlife surveys in Australia, surveying major wetland sites in Eastern Australia and the Murray-Darling Basin, providing invaluable information on the ecosystem health of wetlands and rivers. 2025 will be the 43rd year the survey has run.

Further information can be found on the low-level aerial survey of waterbirds can be found at:

https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/ecosystem/our-research/rivers-and-wetlands/eastern-australian-waterbird-survey

If you would like further information or have any concerns, please contact us at: ecosystemsurvey@gmail.com

Environmental News – Marsh sandpipers at Chowilla

Our floodplains team has been busy monitoring wildlife recently to document and better understand the responses to providing water for the environment.

A recent highlight was the observation of 6 adult marsh sandpipers (*Tringa stagnatilis*) at Coombool Swamp on the Chowilla floodplain.

They were foraging in the shallow water and recently exposed mudflats around the edges of the wetland as it continues to dry. Although their conservation status is secure in South Australia, marsh sandpipers have only been seen in low numbers across Chowilla in recent years (2 to 3 recorded each year for the last three years of monitoring). They breed in the northern hemisphere between May and August and migrate down to Australia and other parts of the southern hemisphere over the summer for feeding. They use their long probing beak to find insects, worms, crustaceans and small fish in the shallow water.

Ecologists also observed many resident waders flocking to wetlands across Chowilla in early spring, including Pied stilts and black-fronted dotterels, taking advantage of the good food resources that are available after the delivery of water for the environment.

Photo credit: Marsh-sandpiper-Paul-Fenwick-CC-BY-NC

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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