

SA River Murray Flow Report



Government of South Australia

Department for Environment
and Water

Report #35/2026

Issued 10:00am 28 August 2026

This supersedes all previous Flow Reports issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border this Friday is approximately 23.5 GL/day and is forecast to increase to around 25 GL/day next Friday.

The flow at the South Australian border includes August Entitlement Flow (4 GL/day) and environmental return flow from upstream watering events. An unregulated flow event resulting from significant tributary inflows below storages in Victoria and NSW is providing the majority of additional water. The unregulated flow event which commenced on 8 July 2026, continues to deliver additional 'Planned Environmental Water' to South Australia. This unregulated flow event is forecast to continue into September and is dependent on further rainfall.

The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 21 GL/day and is forecast to increase to approximately 22 GL/day 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 due to operational changes at Lake Victoria and upstream Locks as unregulated flow works its way to the South Australian Border. Environmental watering actions and further rainfall may also change the flow outlook.

Upstream flows, rainfall and storages

Rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin in the week up to 26 August 2026 was widespread with the majority of the Murray-Darling Basin receiving rainfall.

Rainfall across Victoria was widespread with the Victorian tributary catchments receiving 25 to 50mm and the Upper Murray around Hume and Dartmouth dams receiving higher totals in the range of 50 to 100mm. Some gauges in the highlands recorded in excess of 100mm of rainfall.

NSW generally received totals above 15mm, with the eastern boundary of the catchment receiving widespread falls of 25 to 50mm. Southern Queensland also saw widespread rainfall exceeding 15mm, with some areas receiving higher totals in the range of 25 to 50mm.

Rainfall through late June and into early July resulted in a number of tributaries in NSW and Victoria generating significant flow into the River Murray. An unregulated flow event commenced on 8 July from Wentworth to the South Australian border and is still ongoing. More rainfall through early August and through the last fortnight has seen continued inflows generated into the Upper Murray storages and additional inflow from the Victorian tributaries to the Murray. The Victorian tributaries enter the Murray below Dartmouth and Hume Dams, and with Lake Victoria near capacity, there is limited ability for this water to be regulated and stored.

The current unregulated flow is forecast to persist throughout September and will be dependent on further rainfall events. Flow continues to travel towards the South Australian Border and further information will continue to be provided in subsequent flow reports.

Under the Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse, unregulated flow is classified as 'Planned Environmental Water'. This is water that is preserved for environmental outcomes and cannot be used for any other purpose.

In South Australia rainfall was widespread. The Riverland received totals in the range of 10 to 15 mm, and the Lower Murray generally received similar totals. The Lower Lakes and Coorong region received rainfall in the range of 15 to 35 mm. Further rainfall information for the Basin can be found at:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/>

As of 26 August 2026, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased to 2,854 GL, which is approximately 74% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has increased to 2,178 GL, approximately 72% of capacity. Storage in the Menindee Lakes has gradually receded to 518 GL, approximately 30% of capacity. Menindee Lakes storage goes into NSW control when the volume falls below 480 GL and does not return to a shared storage until the volume rises back above 640 GL. Lake Victoria has remained close to capacity at 648 GL, which is 96% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 7% of the flow to South Australia.

Flows at the South Australian border have gradually increased and averaged 20.3 GL/day over the past week to 26 August.

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

Monitoring for *Karenia* continues across the South Australian coast and at the Coorong. For algal bloom water testing results and further information visit [Algal Bloom Water Sampling Dashboard](#).

For current conditions and health advice please visit the [SA Government algal bloom website](#) or the [SA Health water quality alerts 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 numerous amber alerts for around Menindee Lakes and a red alert for Sunset Strip. There are multiple amber alerts for the Darling River downstream to Ellerslie. A red alert is present for Tapio on

the Darling River and Yanga Lake near Balranald. 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 recreational BGA warning for Lake Eildon, with alerts for other locations recently removed. Details of the current VIC alert locations can be found on the [Blue-Green Algae Warnings - Goulburn Murray Water](#) page.

Various low to mid-level recreational BGA alerts remain current on the River Murray from Boundary Bend through to Lock 9. Details of LMW alert locations can be found on the [Blue-green algae monitoring - Lower Murray Water](#) page.

Water for the environment delivery

Delivery of water for the environment to the South Australian border will continue to be low as there are no large watering actions in progress upstream. The bulk of the flow entering South Australia in early September will be unregulated (or unmanaged) flow resulting from rainfall upstream. There will around 200 ML/day of water for the environment arriving from the Darling river. The unregulated flow event will continue into September. Opportunities to add environmental water to the unregulated flow to water low lying floodplains and wetlands are being actively considered.

Water for the environment also continues to be delivered as part of SA's Entitlement flow.

Planning for delivery of water for the environment throughout 2026-27 remains in progress. A mid to high level operation of the floodplain regulators at Katarapko along with a 30 cm raising of Lock 4 has commenced and will continue throughout spring. Water levels will continue to increase over the coming weeks.

The operation of the Pike floodplain regulators is being planned to commence in mid-September with Lock 5 proposed to be raised when the current works at the lock are completed in October.

Weir pool raising is also proposed at Lock 2 and Lock 1 and these are expected to commence in mid-September. Levels at Lock 2 are planned to be raised up to 50 cm higher, while the level at Lock 1 is only planned to increase 10 cm.

These environmental watering operations are aimed at supporting further recovery of floodplain vegetation health and providing important habitat for frogs, fish, waterbirds and a range of other biota. Proposed operations remain subject to water availability and relevant approvals.

Murray Mouth

Dredging is continuing to take place in the Tauwitschere Channel and Goolwa Channel adjacent to Younghusband Peninsula.

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.

Barrage operations and water levels in the Lower Lakes

As of 26 August 2026, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.73 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.78 m AHD, noting that lake levels can fluctuate considerably depending on wind conditions.

Lake Alexandrina is managed, as far as practicable, to target a daily average lake level between 0.675 m AHD and 0.775 m AHD throughout August, with current operations targeting the top of the planned envelope.

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 closures are undertaken to mitigate the impact of saltwater ingress into Lake Alexandrina and the Goolwa Channel. A reverse head means that water cannot be physically discharged as the water level on the downstream side of the barrages is higher than that on the upstream side of the barrages. Gates are operated around high tides and prevailing conditions to discharge water when the conditions permit.

Additional gates are currently open due to unregulated flow arriving at Lake Alexandrina. Gate operations will be adapted to maintain the target lake level and deliver water to the Murray Estuary and Coorong as the unregulated flow arrives. 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 (RVWDS)

Following damage sustained during the 2022-23 River Murray flood, pontoon repair works are scheduled to occur at the following RVWDS sites over the dates listed below.

Please note that impacted stations will be CLOSED during the repair periods.

These dates are subject to change dependant on weather conditions.

- Loxton RVWDS: 24 Aug – 5 Sept
- Morgan RVWDS: 7 Sept – 12 Sept

Temporary pump out stations:

During site closures, temporary pump out services will be opened upstream of each of the regular RVWDS sites.

To request a temporary pump out service, please contact Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners on **(08) 8102 0998** to arrange attendance to the temporary pump out site.

Please provide as much advance notice of your pump out needs as possible.

The minimum notice requirement for each site is listed below.

Station	Minimum notice time	Temporary pump out site
Loxton	4+ hours	View on maps
Morgan	24+ hours	View on maps

A skip bin will be available at pump out sites for disposal of household waste.

Access and use of the skip bins will be provided to users during attendance by Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners.

Upgrade works are scheduled to occur at Lock 3 and 6 RVWDS sites from early-September. More information about these upgrades and temporary pump out services for these sites will be provided in the coming weeks.

Note: The Lock 3 RVWDS does not accept toilet waste (blackwater) or wastewater (greywater), however general boat hard waste (domestic and galley waste) can still be deposited at the Lock 3 facility until works commence in late-August. The nearest alternative waste facility is the Waikerie RVWDS.

For a full list and map of the stations visit: <http://environment.sa.gov.au/waste-disposal-stations>

You can report any RVWDS issues on 1800 799 065.

If you have any questions, please contact the DEW WIO Engagement Team at 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.

Higher salinity may be observed in the Goolwa Channel and the direct upstream vicinity of the Barrages as a result of reverse head conditions. Water users are recommended to monitor salinity at their extraction points in these locations.

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:

- Construction works at Toora, Neeta and Cowirra are complete
- Construction works are underway at the Westbrook and Wellington levees.
- Contracts for the remaining private levees have been awarded.

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

Where intermediate remediation works are required, levees will remain closed until works are complete to ensure safe access.

Public safety risk assessments, including tree condition assessments, have now been completed across all levees. Fencing repairs are ongoing, with signage to be reinstated prior to reopening.

Arborist works are now complete at Burdett and Long Flat with works to be scheduled for remaining levees - subject to suitable weather conditions. Levees will reopen in stages as associated works are completed, with progressive reopening anticipated in the coming months.

For more information, including locations and access updates, please visit the [LMRIA levees page](#). If you have any questions, please contact the DEW Levee Team at DEW.lmrialevees@sa.gov.au.

Further information

• Algal bloom information	Bureau of Meteorology forecasts
Other flow updates and information	• SA rainfall and river conditions
• Current SA daily water levels	• Victorian rainfall and river conditions
• SA Water daily flow report	• NSW rainfall and river conditions
• SA Water daily salinity report	• Climate outlooks
• SA Water daily river graphs	• Climate drivers
• Murray-Darling Basin Authority weekly report	• Long-range forecast
• Real Time Water Data (DEW)	Further information
• Live river system data (MDBA)	• Murray-Darling Basin Authority news
• SA Health water quality alerts	• Water for the environment actions by region
Mapping	• NSW algal alerts
• River Murray inundation mapping	• Government of SA - State Disaster Recovery
• 2014 River Murray floodplain flood mapping	• SA Marine safety
• Flood awareness mapping	• Weir pool manipulation
• Algal bloom information	• 2022-23 River Murray Flood event

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