

SA River Murray Flow Report

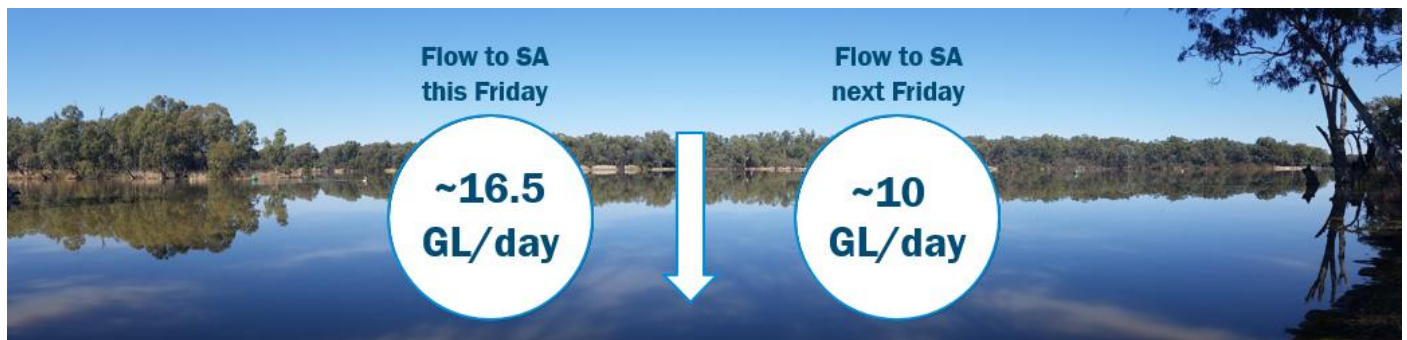


Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water

Report #41/2026
Issued 10:00am 09 October 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 16.5 GL/day and is forecast to decrease to around 10 GL/day by next Friday.

The flow at the South Australian border includes October Entitlement Flow (5.5 GL/day) and environmental return flow from upstream watering events. The recent elevated flows have been largely driven by substantial tributary inflows downstream of major storages in Victoria and New South Wales; however, with peak contributions having passed, the flows are now receding. 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 until mid-October.

The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 18.5 GL/day and is forecast to decrease to around 15 GL/day by 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

Extensive rainfall occurred across the south-eastern Murray-Darling Basin, with the highest totals recorded in the alpine regions of north-eastern Victoria and south-eastern New South Wales. Thredbo Village received over 100 mm, many Victorian alpine areas recorded more than 50 mm, and Dartmouth Reservoir received close to 70 mm. Elsewhere across Victoria, rainfall totals were generally between 25 and 50 mm. In contrast, rainfall across the Upper Darling catchment was more widespread but generally much lighter, with most areas recording between 1 and 10 mm.

In South Australia, Renmark recorded 30.6 mm, with similar totals across the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges. These rainfall events are expected to increase runoff and inflows into the Murray system over the coming week. Further rainfall information for the Basin can be found at:

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

As of 7 October 2026, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased to 3,0106 GL, which is approximately 78% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has increased to 2,661 GL, approximately 89% of capacity. Storage in the Menindee Lakes has gradually receded to 475 GL, approximately 27% 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 664 GL, which is 98% capacity. Releases from Lake Victoria are currently contributing to approximately 5% of the flow to South Australia.

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 upstream of SA

WaterNSW has advised that multiple water quality alerts remain in effect across the Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling River System. These include a red warning alerts at Menindee Lakes Sunset Strip and amber warning alerts at Lake Wetherall, Copi Hollow, and several Lower Darling River locations, including Pooncarie, Elerslie and Tapio. Details of current NSW alerts can be found on the [Algae Alerts NSW Map](#).

Please note that WaterNSW reports algae alerts differently to South Australia, please see the WaterNSW Algae alerts page for more information on how NSW reports algae alerts.

Goulburn-Murray Water currently has an ongoing blue-green algae warning in place for Lake Eildon, advising the public to avoid contact with the water following the detection of elevated algae levels. Details of the current VIC alert locations can be found on the [Blue-Green Algae Warnings - Goulburn Murray Water](#).

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

During mid-October, approximately 1 – 2 GL/day of water for the environment is expected arrive at the South Australian border. Return flows from Hume releases are expected to contribute around 1.4 GL/day in addition to approximately 1 GL/day of direct trade to SA. These deliveries may be impacted by rain events upstream.

The unregulated (or unmanaged) flow is expected to cease in the coming days and flow to South Australia will comprise SA's of entitlement flow and water for the environment. The 'directed release' environmental watering action which was underway during the unregulated flow will also cease. 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 is ongoing. A mid to high level operation of the floodplain regulators at Katarapko is in progress along with a raising of Lock 4 by up to 30 cm. The watering at Katarapko will continue throughout spring.

Raising of the Pike floodplain environmental regulators is underway targeting a low-level watering event with water levels reaching up to 0.85 m above the usual pool level. Lock 5* is also being raised in October by up to 50 cm to support the floodplain watering event once the current maintenance works at the lock are complete.

Locks 1, 2, 3 and 6 will be operated within normal operating range.

These environmental watering operations are aimed at supporting recovery of vegetation by improving soil moisture for native plants and floodplain trees at low elevation. It will also provide additional foraging habitat for waterbirds, cues for frog breeding, habitat for fish and a range of other biota.

***Lock 5 raising and canoe passage at Bookmark Creek regulator**

River users are to be aware that the scheduled raising at Lock 5 to support floodplain inundation will temporarily impact access to the canoe passage located at the Bookmark Creek regulator.

The passage is currently **CLOSED** and is expected to reopen in mid-December, once the river levels are back to a range where the canoe passage can be operated and used safely.

Canoeists will still be able to use the canoe portage at the regulator to access Bookmark Creek.

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 7 October 2026, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.83 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.83 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 0.7 m AHD and 0.8 m AHD throughout October.

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)

RVWDS upgrade works

DEW will be undertaking construction works from late September to upgrade river vessel waste disposal infrastructure near Lock 3 and Lock 6.

Construction of a new river vessel waste disposal station (RVWDS) commenced at Kingston on Murray on Monday 21 September 2026, with completion estimated by March 2027, dependent on weather and site conditions.

This new RVWDS will replace the decommissioned Lock 3 RVWDS, ensuring continued safe and reliable wastewater disposal services for river users and the adjacent Kingston on Murray houseboat mooring marina. Further information about the construction of the RVWDS can be found in the [fact sheet](#).

Works will commence in late September to upgrade RVWDS infrastructure at the existing Lock 6 site.

Key dates

These RVWDS will be **CLOSED** during the below dates, while works are undertaken*:

- Lock 6 RVWDS: September 2026 – March 2027
- Lock 3 RVWDS: 4 October 2026 (decommissioned)

* Dates are weather dependent and subject to change.

Temporary pump-out stations

While works occur, alternative pump-out services will be available by contacting **Riverland Tank and Drain Cleaners on (08) 8102 0998**. Please provide as much advance notice of your pump-out needs as possible.

Station	Minimum notice time	Temporary pump-out site
Lock 3	4 hours	View on maps
Lock 6	4 hours	View on maps

For more information about Lock 3 and 6 works please email SAconstraints@sa.gov.au or see the RVWDS webpage linked below.

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

As intermediate works on eight Government owned LMRIA levees near completion, the project is on track to progressively reopen all government owned levees by the end of the year, subject to inspections and any necessary safety works, with private levees scheduled for completion by March 2027.

Intermediate remediation works update:

- Burdett and Long Flat levees have now reopened to the public.
- Construction works at Toora, Neeta and Cowirra are complete.
- Construction works are underway at the Westbrook, Wellington, and Swanport levees.
- Contracts for the remaining private levees have been awarded.

Government levees in the LMRIA (except Burdett and Long Flat) remain temporarily closed to the public.

Where intermediate remediation works are still 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 will be scheduled for remaining levees, subject to suitable weather conditions.

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.

For more information, including locations and access updates, please visit the [LMRIA levees page](#).
If you have any questions, please contact the DEW Levee Recovery 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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