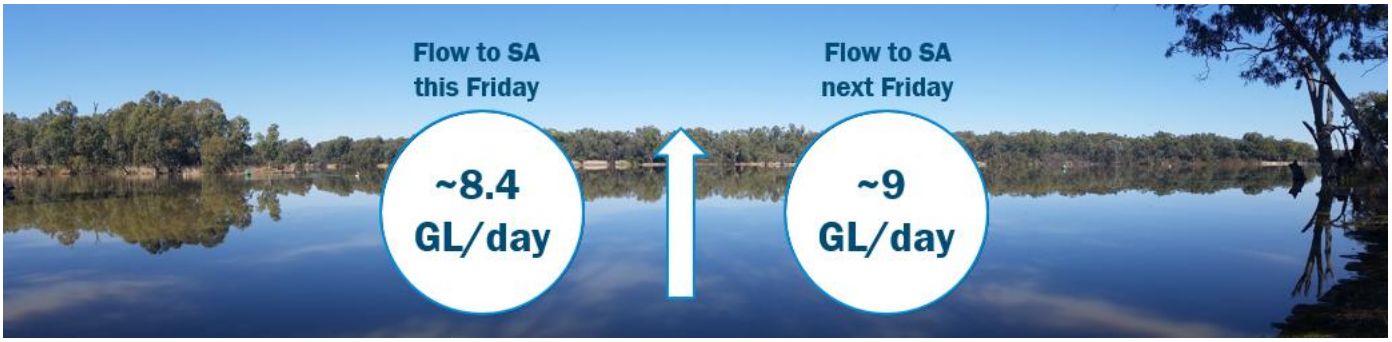
SA River Murray Flow Report

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

Report #44/2026
Issued 11:00am 30 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 8.4 GL/day and is forecast to increase slightly to around 9 GL/day by next Friday. The flow currently comprises of October Entitlement Flow (5.5 GL/day) and environmental return flow from upstream watering events. The flow over Lock 1 this Friday is approximately 6.6 GL/day and is forecast to increase to around 7 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

Rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin over the past week was widespread, with significant falls recorded throughout the south-eastern Basin. In South Australia, rainfall across the Riverland region generally ranged from 15 to 30 mm, with Renmark Airport recording 36 mm. Similar totals were also recorded across the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges. Across the Murray River catchment, rainfall varied considerably, with the highest falls recorded in the alpine regions of north-eastern Victoria and the Southern Highlands, where totals generally ranged from 25 to 50 mm.

The Upper Darling catchment also received widespread rainfall, with totals generally ranging from 25 to 100 mm across central south-west Queensland and north-central New South Wales. Higher rainfall totals were recorded towards the north-eastern extent of the Basin, where some locations received between 150 and 200 mm, with totals reaching 222 mm at Allora.

Further rainfall information for the Basin can be found at: http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall/

As of 28 October 2026, Dartmouth Dam storage has increased to 3,040 GL, which is approximately 79% of capacity, and Hume Dam storage has decreased to 2,572 GL, approximately 86% of capacity. Storage in the Menindee Lakes has gradually receded to 452 GL, approximately 26% 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 12% 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. Current alerts 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, Ellerslie and Tapio. Details of current NSW alerts can be found on the Algae Alerts NSW Map.

Further information on current NSW algae is available via the WaterNSW Algae Alert Map. It should be noted that WaterNSW uses a different algae alert classification and reporting framework to that used in South Australia.

Separately, Goulburn-Murray Water continues to maintain a public warning advising people to avoid contact with water in Lake Eildon following the detection of elevated algal 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

In early November, approximately 2.5 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 1.5 GL/day in addition to approximately 1GL/day of direct trade to SA. Delivery of water for the environment to South Australia remains constrained due to floodplain works upstream.

The unregulated (or unmanaged) flow finished in mid-October. This event, which was enhanced by environmental water delivery, provided considerable ecological benefits to low-lying floodplains and wetlands, improved conditions for fish breeding in the River Murray channel, and supported extensive Ruppia growth in the Coorong. The flow to South Australia is now comprised of SA's Entitlement Flow and water for the environment. The water for the environment currently being delivered is supporting current floodplain operations, may support Murray cod breeding, and is increasing flow to the Coorong. 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 continues and water levels recently peaked at the regulators along with a raising of Lock 4 by 30 cm. The watering at Katarapko will continue throughout spring with the drawdown commencing recently.

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 by up to 50 cm to support the floodplain watering event.

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

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

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

River users should 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 return 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.

Freshwater catfish survey is live now!

The South Australian Research and Development Institute, together with the Department for Environment and Water, are seeking your help to collect local information on freshwater catfish *(Tandanus tandanus)* in the South Australian (SA) River Murray, to support the conservation management of this important species.

Freshwater catfish are a protected species in South Australia, and this survey **does not** encourage fishing of this species, however, we understand freshwater catfish may be inadvertently caught when fishing for other species. Any freshwater catfish that are caught must be returned to the water immediately.

Get involved

If you are over the age of 18 and have caught a freshwater catfish in the SA River Murray, we invite you to share details about your catch via a survey and interactive map. The survey and sightings map should take approximately 10 minutes to complete and is completely anonymous, with information provided helping to identify potential hot spots for future freshwater catfish monitoring and population recovery programs.

If you are interested in participating, you can complete the survey here:
www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/catfish-sightings

Murray Mouth

Dredging is continuing to take place in the Tauwitchere 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 28 October 2026, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.77m 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 0.7 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.

Barrage gate reductions have been occurring due to a recession of Lake inflow associated with the conclusion of unregulated flow. Operations will continue to be adjusted as required to maintain target lake levels and support flows to the Murray Estuary and the North Lagoon of the Coorong. The distribution of flow is being prioritised through Tauwitchere to support ecological processes in the Coorong. Gate openings at the barrages can 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

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 is returning the severely flood damaged sections of government and private levees to their pre-flood height.

Intermediate works to eight Government owned LMRIA Levees are complete, with safety inspections and necessary safety works on track to enable progressive reopening of all government owned levees by the end of the year. Burdett and Long Flat levees have now reopened to the public, **all other government-owned LMRIA levees remain temporarily closed to the public**.

Intermediate remediation works are currently underway at the Westbrook, Wellington, Swanport and Kilsby levees. All remaining private levees are scheduled for completion by June 2027.

Public safety risk assessments, including tree condition assessments, have now been completed across all government-owned levees. Fencing repairs are ongoing, with signage to be reinstated prior to reopening to the public. Arborist works will be scheduled for remaining levees, subject to suitable weather conditions. Where works are still required, levees will remain closed to the public until these are complete to ensure safe access.

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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