



South Australia

River Murray Water Resources Report



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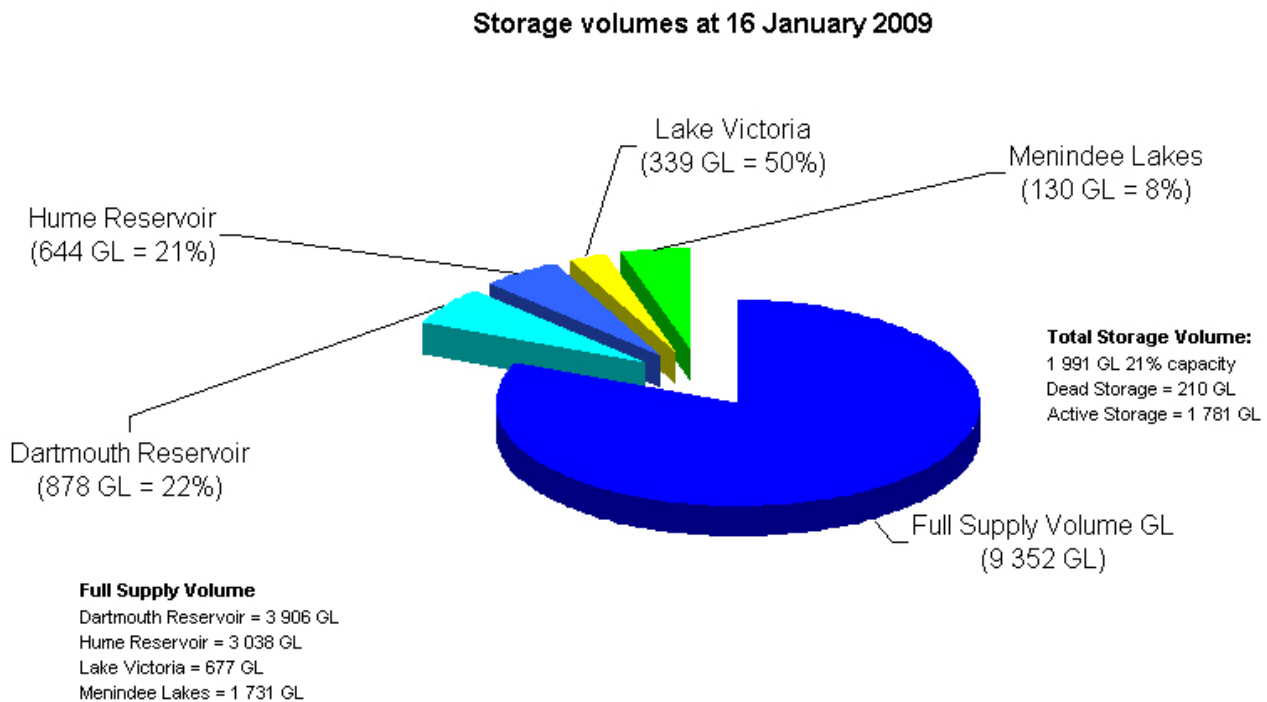
Observations at a glance

- River Murray irrigation allocations will increase from 15% to 18% on 1 February 2009.
- River Murray system inflows remain at historically low levels.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 1 991 GL (21% capacity), compared to about 1 744 GL (18% capacity) at the same time last year.
- Below Lock 1 water levels remain low and salinity levels remain high due to reduced flows to South Australia.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 1 991 GL (21% capacity), compared to about 1 744 GL (18% capacity) at the same time last year. Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Storage levels at 16 January 2009



The volume of water held in other major storages is as follows:

- Murrumbidgee (Burrinjuck and Blowering) 1 089 GL (41%)
- Goulburn River (Lake Eildon) 719 GL (21%)
- Snowy Hydro - Lake Eucumbene 1 238 GL (26%), Jindabyne 372 GL (59%)

Rainfall

A summary of the rainfall received during December 2008 compared to the mean rainfall is provided below.

- Dartmouth – 65mm (mean rainfall 74mm)
- Wodonga – 54mm (mean rainfall 41mm)
- Thredbo – 179mm (mean rainfall 114mm)
- Echuca – 67mm (mean rainfall 29mm)
- Renmark – 33.2mm (mean rainfall 18mm)
- Meningie – 30mm (mean rainfall 23mm)

Rainfall in the northern part of the Murray-Darling Basin has not been at the levels experienced during December 2007 and January 2008, and the storage volume in Menindee Lakes is expected to continue to decline. At present, there are no significant inflows in this area of the Murray-Darling Basin.

River operations, salinity and water levels

Based on estimated demands (pumped diversions and losses) the target flow into South Australia for January 2009 is 135 GL or 4 350 ML/day. As a result of the recent hot weather, flows were increased to 4 650 ML/day to minimise any further drop in weir pools levels above Lock 1 to minimise potential water quality issues.

Salinities remain low from the border to Wellington; however, salinities in Lake Alexandrina remain high. Current salinities at selected locations are provided below compared to the same time last year:

- Lock 5 = 275 EC (245 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Loxton = 365 EC (322 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Morgan = 500 EC (486 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Lock 1 = 480 EC (624 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Mannum = 735 EC (830 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Murray Bridge = 739 EC (710 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Milang = 5 615 EC (3 310 EC at 16/1/2008)
- Meningie = 7 754 EC (3 643 EC at 16/1/2008)

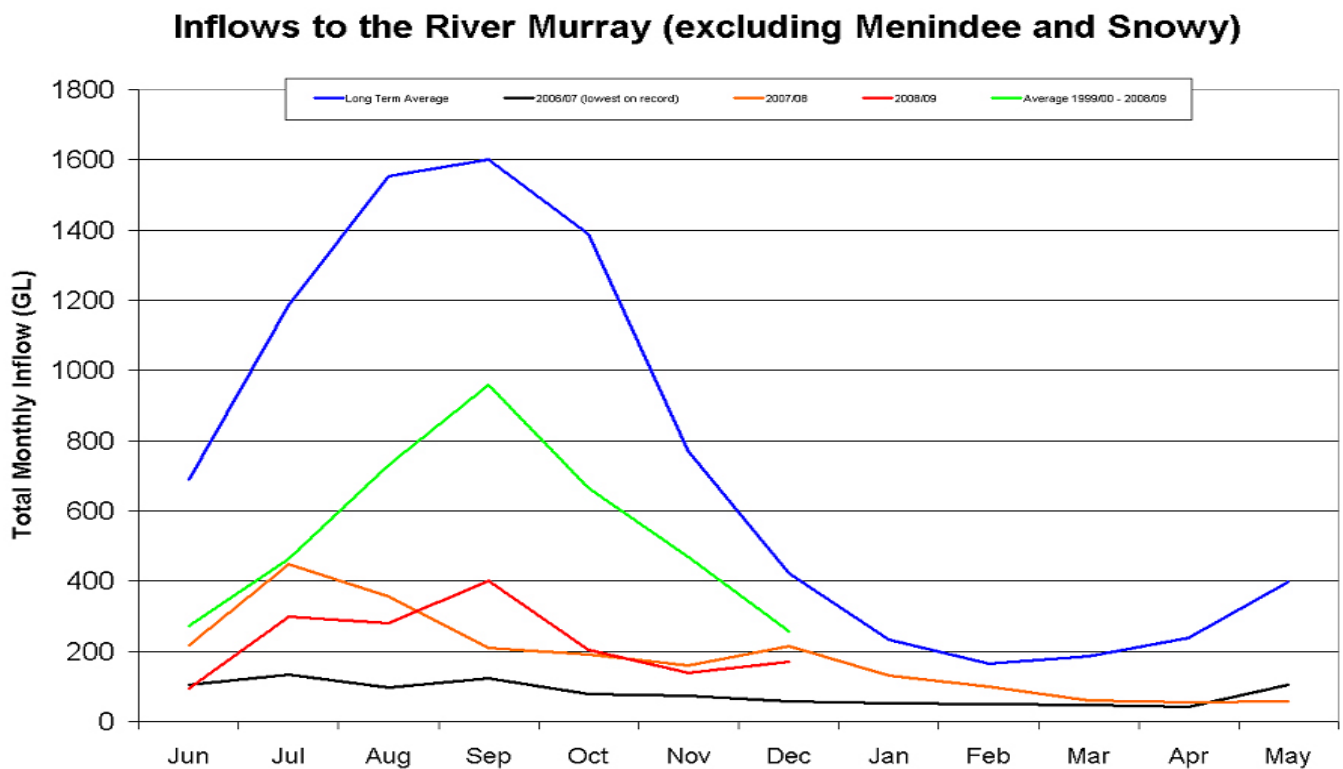
Based on a five-day average, the water level in Lake Alexandrina (Milang) is currently minus 0.7m AHD and Lake Albert (Meningie) is currently minus 0.45m AHD. Under the worst-case scenario, Lake Alexandrina is projected to decline to about minus 1.17m AHD in early June 2009.

River Murray inflows

Inflows into the River Murray system remain extremely low. From June 2008 to the end of December 2008, the total inflow was only 1 592 GL, compared to 1 798 GL for the same period last year and the long-term average of 7 613 GL.

Just 172 GL of inflows were recorded in December 2008, compared to 214 GL in December 2007. The long-term December average is 422 GL. **Figure 2** shows monthly River Murray inflows.

Figure 2: Inflows to the River Murray



The prospect of any significant improvement in River Murray water resources over summer remains low.

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

South Australia

River Murray irrigation allocations will increase from 15% to 18% from 1 February 2009 following a slight improvement in the volume of water available to South Australia. Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said the extra 20 GL available to South Australia – on top of the volume to be reserved for critical human needs for 2009-10 – will be used to increase irrigation allocations.

“This increase in irrigation allocations will provide additional water during summer to both permanent and annual crops,” Minister Maywald said.

For further information see the Minister’s full 15 January announcement at www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?minister=13

New South Wales and Victoria

Current allocation levels in NSW and Victoria are:

- NSW Murray High Security 95%, General Security 9% plus carry-over;
- NSW Murrumbidgee High Security 95%, General Security 21% plus carry-over;
- NSW Lower Darling High Security 100%, General Security 50% plus carry-over;
- Vic Murray High Reliability Water Share 35% plus carry-over; and
- Vic Goulburn High Reliability Water Share 29% plus carry-over

The latest allocation announcement issued in New South Wales can be found here: <http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au/home/>

The latest allocation announcement issued in Victoria can be found here: www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/media-releases-2008/

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology’s rainfall and temperature outlook for January to March 2009 shows there is a 50% chance of exceeding median rainfall over the Murray-Darling Basin. It also shows there is a 55% chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures.

Further information on River Murray conditions and rainfall forecasts can be obtained from the following websites:

Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au
SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au
Murray-Darling Basin Commission www.mdbc.gov.au
SA Water Daily Reports www.riverland.net.au/~heinz/mdbcrep.htm
Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au
Queensland Department of Primary Industry www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au

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