



River Murray Water Resources Report

Issue 34: 19 March 2009

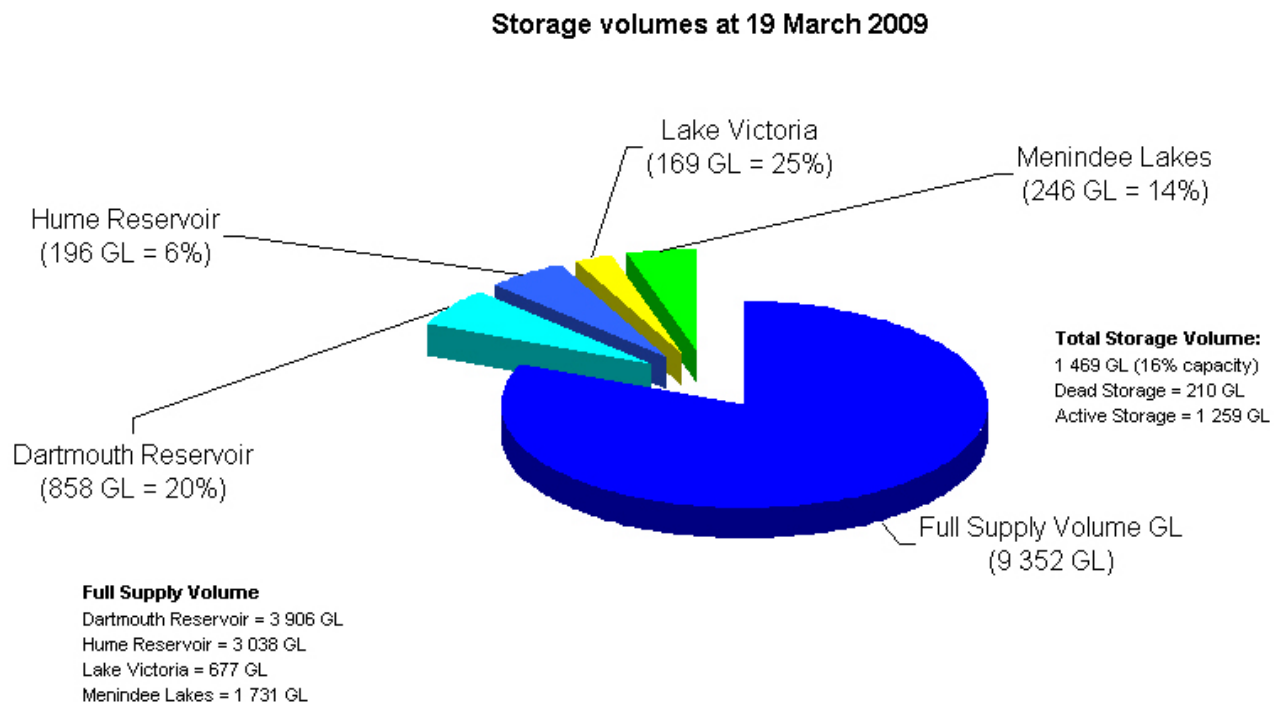
Observations at a glance

- River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia remain at 18% as extreme drought conditions continue across the Murray-Darling Basin.
- The volume of water in upstream storages is currently 1 469 GL (16% capacity), compared to about 1 894 GL (20% capacity) at the same time last year.
- Applications to carry-over water for use in 2009-10 have now closed.
- Below Lock 1 water levels remain low and salinity levels remain high due to reduced flows into South Australia.

Murray-Darling Basin storages

The volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 1 469 GL (16% capacity), compared to about 1 894 GL (20% capacity) at the same time last year. Current storage levels are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin storages



River Murray inflows

Rainfall during February 2009 remained well below average across the Upper Murray catchment and in South Australia. Just 40 GL flowed into the River Murray system during February 2009, which is extremely low and below the previous historic minimum inflow of 60 GL set in February 2007.

Inflows during March 2009 are expected to remain low, although recent rainfall (10-40mm) over parts of the southern Murray-Darling Basin will help to reduce losses.

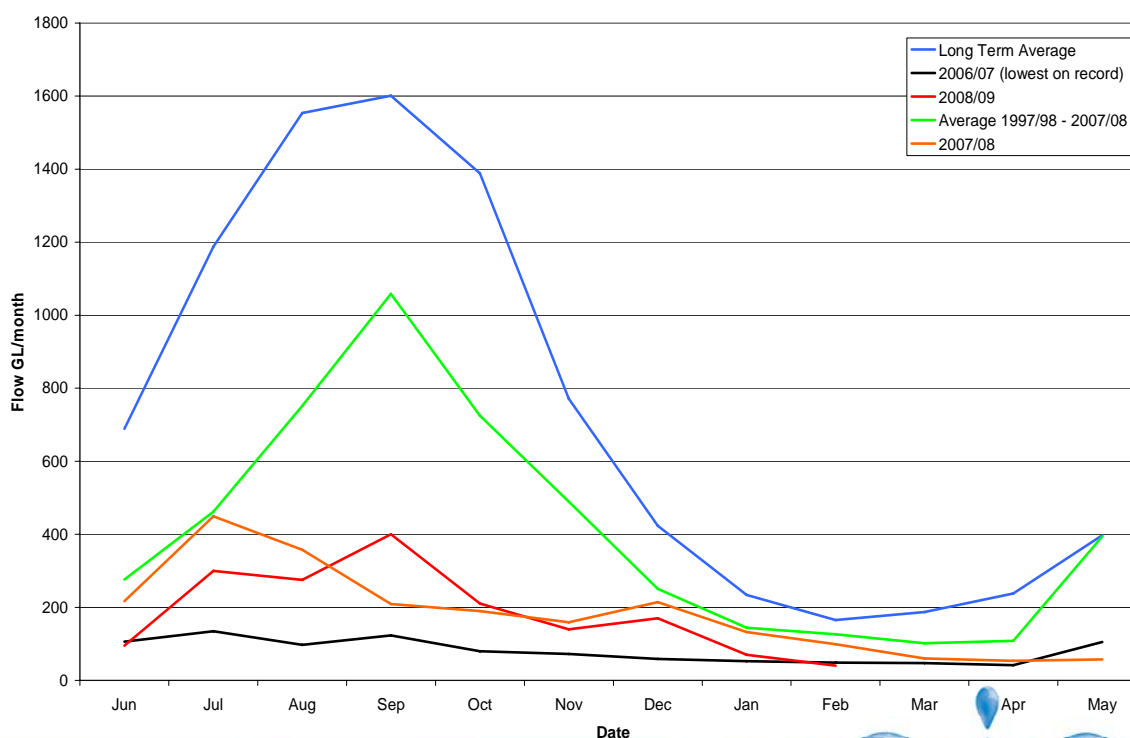
Table 1 outlines the inflows from June-February in selected years against the long-term average. The 2008-09 water year continues to track as the seventh driest year on record. **Figure 2** shows monthly River Murray inflows.

Table 1: River Murray system inflows in selected years v the long-term average

	2008-09 (GL)	2007-08 (GL)	2006-07 (GL)	Long-Term Average (GL)	Last 10 years (GL)
June	95	217	106	690	274
July	300	450	135	1 190	464
August	280	358	98	1 550	732
September	400	210	120	1 610	959
October	205	190	80	1 390	666
November	140	159	72	771	468
December	172	214	59	422	257
January	70	132	53	234	151
February	40	100	60	165	126
TOTAL	1 642	1 930	723	7 847	3 971

Figure 2: River Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee and Snowy)

River Murray System Inflows (excluidng Menindee and Snowy)



River operations

Flows to South Australia have been reduced to an average of 4 030 ML/day. The normal Entitlement Flow for February is 6 000 ML/day. The flow over Lock is ranging between 1500-1700 ML/day, depending upon weir pool operations.

The daily flows will be adjusted to take into account the re-wetting of some wetlands in accordance with the SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board's re-wetting program, which will occur during March and April 2009.

Salinity and water levels

Salinity levels above Lock 1 remain fairly low. However, downstream of Lock 1 salinity levels remain high due to low water levels. Salinity in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently 5 483 EC compared to about 3 870 EC at the same time last year. Salinity in Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently 11 089 EC.

The water level in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently -1.04m AHD, compared to about -0.45m AHD at the same time last year. The water level in Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently -0.53m AHD, compared to about -0.50m AHD at the same time last year.

Table 2 shows the current water levels and salinity at selected locations.

Table 2: Salinity and water levels at selected locations

	Actual Water Levels at 19/03/09		Full Supply Level Level	Variation from Pool Level	Current EC Level
	U/S mAHD	D/S m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	U/S of Weir m AHD	
Lock 6	19.26	16.27	19.25	0.01	231
Lock 5	16.30	13.25	16.30	0.00	267
Lock 4	13.16	10.19	13.20	-0.04	363
Lock 3	9.80	6.21	9.80	0.00	401
Lock 2	6.11	3.34	6.10	0.01	425
Lock 1	3.24	-0.70	3.20	0.04	482
Lake Alexandrina (Milang)	-1.04				5 483
Lake Albert (Meningie)	-0.53				11 089
Goolwa	-0.95				28 676
Water levels below Lock 1 are affected by wind and will vary throughout the day					
EC Readings below Lock 1 are daily averages and will vary throughout the day					

Water allocations in South Australia and interstate

River Murray irrigation allocations in South Australia remain at 18% as extreme drought conditions continue across the Murray-Darling Basin. View the Minister's latest allocations announcement at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/assets/files/MR_allocations16Mar09.pdf

The latest information about allocations in New South Wales is available at www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currn.html

The latest information about allocations in Victoria is available at www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/media-releases-2008/

Temporary water trade deadlines

Irrigators are reminded that all River Murray water trades with New South Wales must be finalised by 31 May 2009. All trades with Victoria must be finalised by 2 June 2009.

Carry-over applications closed

Applications to carry-over irrigation allocations not used in 2008-09 into the 2009-10 water year have now closed. Late applications will not be accepted.

The carry-over policy and further information is available at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html#Carryoverwater

Weather outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's outlook for March to May 2009 shows there is a 50-60% chance of exceeding median rainfall over the Murray-Darling Basin. It also shows there is a 40-45% 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/%7Eheinz/ex-flow-frame.htm
Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au
Queensland Department of Primary Industry www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au

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