

River Murray Flow Report



Report #9/2020

Issued 10:00 am 28 February 2020

This supersedes the previous flow report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 21 February 2020. The next flow report will be provided on Friday 6 March 2020.

In this report, for ease of representation, large volumes of water are expressed in gigalitres (GL), while smaller volumes are expressed in megalitres (ML). One GL is equal to 1 000 ML.

WATER ALLOCATIONS

Water allocations for South Australian River Murray Class 3 water access entitlement holders are 100%.

For more information on South Australia's water allocations visit the [DEW website](#) or email DEWRiverMurrayOps@sa.gov.au

For information on Victoria's water allocations visit [Victorian Water Allocations](#)

For information on NSW water allocations visit [NSW Water Allocation Statements](#).

QUARTERLY METER REPORTING

All River Murray water users must ensure that they have not used more water than is available on their account by the end of each quarter. This is to help ensure that water can be reliably delivered to all River Murray water users in South Australia. **A penalty for excess water use will apply if you have used more water than the volume of water available on your account at close of business on 31 March 2020.** For more information, please see the [DEW website](#).

PROPOSED CHANGES TO RIVER MURRAY PRIVATE CARRYOVER POLICY

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board (the Board) is encouraging people to have their say on proposed changes to the Private Carryover Policy, which is included in the River Murray Water Allocation Plan. The proposed changes would enable private carryover to be rolled over from one year into the next in a series of dry years, rather than being lost if water allocations reach 100%.

The Board invites your feedback on the proposed changes. **The closing date for written submissions is 5pm on Tuesday 10 March 2020.** Written submissions can be sent to:

Rebecca Freshwater, Senior Project Officer, River Murray Water Allocation Plan
Natural Resources, South Australian Murray-Darling Basin
GPO Box 1047

ADELAIDE SA 5001

Phone: 08 8463 6877

Email: rmwap.feedback@sa.gov.au

Online: www.YourSAy.sa.gov.au

For more information visit the [YourSAy website](#)

RAINFALL EVENTS

Northern Basin (Barwon-Darling River System including Menindee Lakes)

During the last week, there has been another high rainfall event across some parts of the Northern Basin (mainly across Queensland). This rainfall event, along with the previous recent rainfall events, have generated inflows in some river systems across the Northern Basin, in particular the Balonne, Barwon-Darling, Namoi and Gwydir Rivers., with major flooding occurring in some of the border rivers. Flow moving its way down the Barwon-Darling to the Menindee Lakes will experience significant losses due to re-wetting the dry riverbed, refilling of weir pools and long travel times. As a result, it is difficult to accurately forecast the flow into the Menindee Lakes. On 24 February 2020, Water NSW advised that the total forecast volume expected to reach Menindee Lakes (Lake Wetherell) has increased to around 85 GL and 105 GL. However, as a result of the most recent rainfall in Queensland, the volume is likely to be higher than this forecast. The flow is

expected to arrive around late March 2020. The projected volume will be updated as changes are observed. For the latest information on inflows please visit <https://www.watarnsw.com.au/about/newsroom>

The Northern Basin has been experiencing significant drought for the last three years. Inflows will be critically important to provide additional water security for regional towns, provide partial replenishment flows and a welcome boost for native plants and animals (including native fish).

Southern Basin (River Murray System)

Most of the recent high rainfall activity has occurred on the eastern side of the Great Diving Range however some rainfall activity has also occurred across the Southern Basin (west of the Great Dividing Range). As a result, the recent rainfall activity has generated very small inflows into Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs.

FLOW OUTLOOK

It is likely that reduced Entitlement Flow will continue during the 2019-20 water year. In addition to reduced Entitlement Flow, South Australia will receive water for the environment.

The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 5.9 GL/day and will reduce to around 5.1 GL/day during the coming week. It comprises:

- reduced February Entitlement Flow;
- water for the environment (see below *Water for the Environment*); and
- interstate trade adjustments.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 2.9 GL/day and will decrease to around 2 GL/day during the coming week, depending on weather conditions and extractions.

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 as new gauging information becomes available or due to rainfall events or changed operations upstream.

WATER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Water for the environment is currently being used to:

- maintain connections through open fishways (at a minimum) between the Coorong, Lower Lakes and the River Murray to enable fish movement;
- maintain water quality, salinity and water levels below critical thresholds in the River Murray channel, Lower Lakes and Coorong;
- deliver a range of outcomes to wetlands in the Riverland via arrangements with the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board, Renmark Irrigation Trust, Banrock Station and the Nature Foundation South Australia ; and
- deliver a range of outcomes to wetlands on the Chowilla floodplain via The Living Murray.

MURRAY MOUTH

Dredging operations at the Murray Mouth commenced on 9 January 2015 to maintain connectivity (exchange of water) between the Coorong and the Southern Ocean. At 23 February 2020, a total of approximately 5 415 579 cubic metres of sand had been removed by dredging operations.

Two dredges are operating between the Goolwa and Tauwitchere channels 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Barrage releases combined with dredging have helped to maintain connectivity of the Murray Mouth.

There are a number of shallow zones in and adjacent to the Murray Mouth. Mariners should use caution when traversing the mouth area, follow all directions, reduce speed and avoid travelling at low tide. Mariners equipped with echo sounders should check depths regularly. Navigation through the Murray Mouth is only permitted during daylight hours. Exclusion Zones established around the dredging operations are in place to ensure public safety. Refer to Notice to Mariners No 42 of 2016 [Notice 42](#).

There is a partial park closure in place for the northern tip of the Coorong National Park. For more information visit [Coorong partial park closure notice](#).

BARRAGE OPERATIONS AND WATER LEVELS IN THE LOWER LAKES

The water level in Lake Alexandrina is approximately 0.57 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.54 m AHD. The difference in water level is due to wind effects.

Water for the environment has enabled continuous fishway releases and small barrage releases to be undertaken during summer. During the past week, one or two barrages (plus all fishways) have provided targeted releases when the wind, swell and tide conditions align to push water down the Coorong. As of Tuesday 25 February 2020, the weekly releases were approximately 3.2 GL. During adverse weather conditions, SA Water will operate the barrages to minimise the risk of seawater entering Lake Alexandrina, therefore minimising any negative salinity impacts from reverse flow events.

Water levels and barrage operations are monitored closely by the South Australian Government, Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

LOCK 3 RIVER VESSEL WASTE DISPOSAL STATION

The Lock 3 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station is temporarily closed due to an infrastructure failure. Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the failure and a method to rectify the issue. The nearest alternative waste facilities are located at Waikerie and Loxton. Boat operators who require an urgent pump-out, or to discuss any other concerns, should contact Mr Hayden Smith on 0457 820 553.

NAVIGATION ISSUES

Sandbars in the vicinity of the Murray Mouth may cause navigation hazards. Mariners are advised to navigate with caution when operating in the area. Sandbars are also present along sections of the River Murray downstream of Locks 7 and 8 and in South Australia. All Mariners should be aware of the risk of submerged navigation hazards and should regularly check river depth.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RIVERLAND FLOODPLAINS INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Katarapko

Construction works on the Katarapko Floodplain are progressing well and are expected to be completed by mid-2020.

Some parts of the Murray River National Park remain closed for camping and other recreational activities. However, the Department for Environment and Water aims to open sections of the park to the public over the Easter period. Information about opening sections of the park will be available and communicated via the following website soon https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/find-a-park/Browse_by_region/Murray_River/murray-river-national-park

For safety reasons, the following water access restrictions apply to river vessels and people (other than authorised personnel) until late March 2020:

- Sawmill Creek, the entire length between Katarapko Creek and Eckert's Creek; and
- Eckert's Creek, for 1.3 kilometres upstream of the confluence point with Katarapko Creek (ie *The Splash*).

The Department for Environment and Water is taking expressions of interest for anyone who would like to participate in a tour of the Katarapko works. Please register your interest to the Department for Environment and Water's Engagement Officer, Ms Ellee Eleftheriadis on telephone: 8463 3740 or email: ellee.elftheriadis2@sa.gov.au.

Pike

Although work on the regulating structures and blocking bank on the Pike Floodplain is now complete, other works continue in this area. Vessels and persons other than those participating in the works are still prohibited from entering the Pike River near the Rumpagunyah Creek and Tanyaca Creek junction, downstream of the Mundic Creek junction.

RIVER MURRAY WATER LEVELS

Below is a table of River Murray water levels at a number of locations from Lock 10 to Murray Bridge.

River Murray Water Levels

Location	River km	Normal Pool Level (m AHD)	Current Level 26/2/2020 (m AHD)	1974 Flood Level (m AHD)	1993 Flood Level (m AHD)	2016 High Water Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.89	33.81	33.32	32.72
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.33	30.03	29.44	28.85
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	23.62	27.60	27.19	26.85
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	21.55	25.70	25.24	24.97
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.28	21.03	20.50	20.19
Renmark	567.4	-	16.34	18.54	18.04	17.44
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.34	18.07	17.50	17.05
Lyrup	537.8	-	13.30	16.85	16.26	15.80
Berri	525.9	-	13.27	15.81	15.74	15.21
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.26	15.65	15.08	14.73
Loxton	489.9	-	10.05	15.05	14.12	13.54
Cobdogla	446.9	-	9.88	13.44	12.38	11.59
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.85	13.16	12.02	10.98
Overland Corner	425.9	-	6.27	12.73	11.58	10.41
Waikerie	383.6	-	6.28	11.26	10.24	9.20
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.19	10.28	9.30	8.32
Cadell	332.6	-	3.39	9.17	8.08	7.01
Morgan	321.7	-	3.33	8.85	7.65	6.38
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.27	6.81	5.38	4.46
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	0.60	6.06	4.51	3.11
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.63	3.15	1.90	1.33
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.68	2.06	1.26	1.04

Note that the above water levels may be affected by local wind conditions

FURTHER INFORMATION

The WaterConnect website is South Australia's comprehensive water information portal. For real-time data (like salinity, water levels) go to the following page: [WaterConnect Real-time water data](#).

Up-to-date River Murray salinity, flow and water level information can be accessed at the Department for Environment and Water, SA Water and Murray-Darling Basin Authority websites:

- [Water allocation and carryover announcements](#)
- [River Murray real-time water data](#)
- [SA Water River Murray info - levels, flows etc.](#)
- [Murray-Darling Basin real-time water data](#)

The latest news, information and announcements about the River Murray and Basin Plan are available at [River Murray Update](#).

The Department for Environment and Water has published a series of inundation maps for the River Murray. They are available at [River Murray Inundation Maps](#).

Information on the management of acid drainage water in the Lower River Murray can be accessed at: [Acid drainage water LMRIA](#)

Details of river height and rainfall information in the River Murray within Victoria and New South Wales are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website:

- [Victoria rainfall and river conditions](#)
- [NSW rainfall and river conditions](#)

Information provided by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office can be accessed at [CEWH Environmental Watering](#).

Information on The Living Murray can be accessed at [MDBA TLM](#).

Chowilla Floodplain Icon Site management [Chowilla-floodplain](#).

Department for Environment and Water [Home page](#).

Information provided by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure on boat licences, registering motor boats, owning and operating water craft, and boat and marine safety can be accessed at [Boating and marine](#).

ID	RM-Flow-Report 20200228
Classification	Public I2 A2
Issued	28 February 2020
Authority	DEW
Master Document Location	R:\Water Group\RMO\WRO\04 Communications\Flow Advices\2019-20
Managed and Maintained by	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Author	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Reviewer	Director, Water Infrastructure and Operations