

RIVER MURRAY FLOW HIGH FLOW ADVICE

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Advice # 3/2016

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THIS IS NOT A FLOOD WARNING

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

Due to the increased flow upstream of the South Australian border, the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources predicts that flow in the River Murray is likely to remain in the range of 40 to 60 GL/day at the South Australian border throughout October 2016.

At this flow rate, inundation above normal pool level is expected to be minimal. However, the main River Murray channel is expected to experience **high flow**.

The flow will continue to increase during November and into early December. Based on very preliminary estimates, the flow may peak between 70 to 80 GL/day in early December. The actual peak flow will be highly dependent on inflows and floodplain consumption upstream of South Australia.

Now is a great time to enjoy the River Murray at its best. However visitors are reminded to exercise caution at all times when using the river and seek local advice.

Operating watercraft and swimming in the main River Murray channel can be more hazardous during high flow. Submerged objects, debris and the force of the current can present a risk to public safety.

People operating watercraft, swimming, canoeing or participating in other activities on the main River Murray channel are advised to be aware of the risk of high flow, and take appropriate precautions.

Backwaters, lakes and other parts of the river away from the main channel are likely to be less affected by the high flows, and present lower risks to life and property.

Enquiries regarding areas potentially affected by inundation resulting from these flows, and how to respond to them are to be directed to the SA State Emergency Service (SES). For up to date flood advice visit the SES website at www.ses.sa.gov.au.

Safety Advice

In the interests of community safety, the following precautions are recommended:

- Don't drive, ride or walk through flood-affected causeways or roads.
- Be aware that significant debris is being carried downstream and may pose a hazard to water-based activities.
- When operating a boat on the floodplain or near inundated river banks, be aware of submerged obstacles such as trees and fence lines.
- Landholders, especially those with shacks or other structures in low-lying areas, should consider securing their property from likely rising water levels.
- The hazards associated with riverbank collapse still exist in some areas so be aware of the signs - such as cracked riverbanks and leaning trees and keep away from fenced or sign-posted affected areas.
- Regularly monitor river levels in your local area, and take care not to become isolated by rising water.
- Always wear a personal floatation device on the river.
- Do not jump or dive into the river when you do not know what is below the surface.
- Camp on higher ground away from the river bank.



River Murray High Flow Advice

- Supervise children at all times and do not allow them to play in or near fast-flowing river water.
- If in doubt, stay out.
- Listen and take action on any instructions from the emergency services - the SES, SA Police and the CFS.
- Tune to ABC local radio for community safety information.
- For flood-related assistance, call the SES on 132 500.
- For life-threatening emergencies, call 000.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Details of river height and rainfall information in the South Australia are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website

<http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/flood>

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

- <http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood> ; and
- <http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/flood>

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has published a series of inundation maps for the River Murray. They are available at www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/Systems/RMIM/SitePages/Home.aspx

The WaterConnect website is South Australia's comprehensive water information portal and can be accessed at <http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au>

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

- www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/river-murray/water-allocation-and-trade/water-allocations-and-announcements
- www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/Systems/RTWD/Pages/Default.aspx
- www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/WaterProofingAdelaide/TheRiverMurray/RMOU/Dailyflow.htm
- <http://livedata.mdba.gov.au/>

The latest news, information and announcements about the River Murray and Basin Plan are available at <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/river-murray/latest-news>

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources www.environment.sa.gov.au/Home

HIGH FLOW ADVICE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a River Murray High Flow Advice?

- A High Flow Advice is not a flood warning, but an alert of a higher than average river current.
- The flow level quoted in an Advice is a figure that may occur, and subsequent forecasting will refine the figure.
- The purpose of a High Flow Advice is to create raised alertness and monitoring in the community of the danger associated with flows in the River, and prevent unnecessary losses to the community.

Why is it being issued by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and not the Bureau of Meteorology?

- The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources is currently the responsible agency for the issuing of community bulletins relating to high flows in the River Murray.

Is it safe to go the River Murray?

- Yes, people are encouraged to enjoy the River Murray, while being aware of the hazards and acting responsibly to stay safe. As mentioned in the High Flow Advice, the River Murray flows are higher than normal, and the main river channel may contain debris and other submerged hazards, and will be harder to navigate by swimming or boat.

What is at risk of being flooded?

- With flow at the border in the range of 40 to 60 GL/day, there is minimal likelihood of extra inundation in the River Murray. The River channel will transport the extra flow through the locks and weirs, which causes a higher river current.

What are the flood levels for the SA River Murray?

Flood level descriptions are based on flows at the SA-Victoria Border as follows.

- Up to 40 GL/day at the border is normal range, and no warnings are needed.
- Above 40 GL/day, the current in the river becomes elevated, and a High Flow Advice is issued.
- Above 60 GL/day the River Murray towns are unaffected, and a High Flow Advice remains current for most of the River. Low lying areas and floodplains become inundated, and a Minor Flood Warning is issued for the low-lying shack areas (not towns) between Cadell and Mannum. This is the range of the February 2011 event, which peaked at 94 GL/day
- From 100 GL/day, a Minor Flood Warning is issued for the River Murray
- From 130 GL/day, a Moderate Flood Warning is issued for the River Murray
- From 200 GL/day, a Major Flood Warning is issued for the River Murray

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