

SA River Murray High Flow Advice



Advice #9/2022

Issued 10:00 am 19 August 2022

THIS IS NOT A FLOOD WARNING

The flow at the South Australian border continues to remain above 40,000 ML/day. The flow at this location peaked at 54,800 ML/day on 11 August 2022 and is now receding. Further increases in water levels may still occur at downstream locations in South Australia as the peak moves down the river in the weeks ahead.

At this flow rate, inundation above normal pool level is expected to be limited to low-lying areas of the floodplain. However, the main River Murray channel is expected to experience **high flow**.

The latest forecasts upstream of the South Australian border indicate that the flow to SA is likely to fall to below 50,000 ML/day over the next week. The flow is then likely to increase again in early September as a result of rainfall in the upstream catchments in mid-August. The extent to which it will rise again is currently difficult to predict, however there is a possibility that flow to SA could exceed 60,000 ML/day by mid September. The accuracy of the forecast will continue to be improved in coming weeks as tributary flows approach South Australia, and will also be contingent on any additional rainfall.

Over the coming week the community around the Lower Lakes should be aware that water levels in the Lakes may change rapidly due to the combination of continued high flows entering the Lakes and unavoidable barrage closures. High tides and large swells are forecast over the coming week which will likely require the barrages to be closed to prevent seawater ingress into the Lakes, which may lead to increases in water level. As soon as tide conditions return to being favourable to releasing water out the barrages, gates will be opened to assist in lowering water levels if they have risen above the target operating level.

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 precautions to protect life and property.

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.

Requests for assistance for on-water incidents or inundation of property should be directed to the SA State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500.

For life threatening emergencies call 000.

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.
- 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.

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 identified in a *High Flow Advice* is a figure that may occur, and subsequent forecasting will refine the figure.

The purpose of the *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.

Is it safe to go to 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?

When the flow at the SA border is in the range of 40 to 60 GL/day, there is a small 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 warnings 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 within the normal range, and *no warnings* are required.
- Above 40 GL/day, *High Flow Advice* is issued by DEW.
- Above 60 GL/day, River Murray towns are unaffected and a *High Flow Advice* remains in place. Low lying areas and floodplains become inundated and a *Flood Advice - River Murray Shack Areas* between Cadell and Mannum (not towns) is issued by SES.
- From 100 GL/day, a *Flood Advice - River Murray* is issued by SES.
- From 130 GL/day, a *Flood Watch and Act - River Murray* is issued by SES.
- From 200 GL/day, a *Flood Emergency Warning - River Murray* is issued by SES.
- The Bureau of Meteorology also issues flood warning products (warnings, watches, bulletins) complementary to those issued by the SES.

Further information

Requests for assistance for on-water incidents or inundation of property should be directed to the SA State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500. More information can be found on the SES website: <https://www.ses.sa.gov.au/home/>

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

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

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

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](#).

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](#)

The National Parks and Wildlife website will provide updates on any areas of National Parks that are impacted under a high flow. Visit their Closures and Alerts page to find out more: <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/know-before-you-go/closures-and-alerts>

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