

# River Murray Flow Report



**Report #50/2021**

**Issued 10:00 am 24 December 2021**

**This supersedes the previous flow report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 17 December 2021. The next flow report will be provided on Friday 8 January 2022.**

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.



## QUARTER 2 METER READINGS DUE 31 DECEMBER 2021

If you hold a water resource works approval that includes a condition that requires you to provide quarterly meter readings to the Department for Environment and Water, please be reminded that meter readings for the Quarter 2 accounting period for 2021-22 (which ends on 31 December 2021) must be recorded within the first fourteen days of January 2022 and submitted to the department by 31 January 2022.

Your meter reading can be submitted via one of the following options:

- The online meter reading form at <https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/sa-dfw/meter-reading-form/>; OR
- By emailing the Department for Environment and Water at [DEW.waterlicensingberri@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.waterlicensingberri@sa.gov.au)

Should you require assistance in supplying your meter reading, including how to complete the online meter reading form, please call the Berri office on (08) 85952053 and an officer of the department will be happy to assist you.

The department's preferred approach is to encourage and facilitate voluntary compliance. However, failure to voluntarily comply with the conditions of a water resource works approval may result in an expiation notice being issued.

## NEW PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED OR UNLAWFUL WATER USE

All South Australian River Murray water users are reminded that they must remain within the available allocation on their water account at all times.

New penalty rates have been declared for taking water in excess of available allocation (unauthorised use) or without authorisation (unlawful use). These penalty rates will apply to any unauthorised or unlawful water use in the current quarter, being Quarter 2 of the 2021-22 water use year (between 1 October 2021 and 31 December 2021).

Accounting period	Up to and including 500,000kL overuse	More than 500,000kL overuse	Unlawful taking or use of water
1 Oct 2021 to 31 Dec 2021	\$0.96/kL	\$1.28/kL	\$1.28/kL

For further information please visit the following website <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/water-markets-and-trade/fees-and-charges>

## FLOW OUTLOOK



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 36 GL/day and will remain around 36 GL/day over the coming week. It comprises:

- full December Entitlement Flow (7 GL/day);
- plus water for the environment (see below *Environmental News*);
- interstate trade adjustments;
- Additional Dilution Flow (ADF); and
- Unregulated flow.

The flow over Lock 1 is approximately 30 GL/day and will increase to around 33 GL/day over the coming week.

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.

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Unregulated flow from rainfall in upstream catchments continues to reach South Australia. South Australia, with flows into SA currently increasing as pulses from the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling combine. South Australia is also receiving water for the environment from South Australia's environmental water allocation and return flows from upstream watering actions including the 2021 Murray Wetland Flow. More information on this event can be found [here](#).

The current flows from the River Murray and upstream tributaries, through to the Coorong, will provide a range of benefits for the environment in SA, including:

- providing 'flowing water habitat' to benefit native fish, animals and plants in the River Murray channel that have adapted to a riverine environment, including supporting conditions that favour spawning and recruitment of golden perch and Murray cod. Monitoring detected golden perch eggs and larvae at various sites throughout the Lower Murray during spring;
- providing for barrage releases to the Coorong to support a productive, food-rich environment for fish and birds and promote suitable conditions for estuarine fish to spawn and support salinities and water levels that encourage the reproduction and growth of keystone native plant *Ruppia tuberosa*;
- providing habitat for birds, frogs and threatened small-bodied native fish species in the Lower Lakes;
- maintaining good connections from the Coorong to the upstream areas of the River Murray, and its tributaries, to enable fish movement and migration;
- maintaining healthy water quality, salinity and water levels in the River Murray Channel and the Lower Lakes and Coorong;
- removing excess salt from the River Murray; and
- delivering a range of outcomes to wetlands in the Riverland via arrangements with Nature Foundation Limited, Australian Landscape Trust, Accolade Wines Ltd and the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.

## STAY SAFE ON AND AROUND THE RIVER OVER THE FESTIVE BREAK

Higher flows have breathed life into the River and its creeks and floodplains over recent months and it's a fantastic time to get out and explore. While out exploring people should be aware that the river is moving faster and to only swim in areas of slow flowing water, free of submerged hazards and always wear a life jacket.

If you are intending to travel on houseboats or explore quiet backwaters and creeks in smaller craft, it's strongly recommended that you get in touch with commercial boat operators for local advice.

For more information on boat safety you can visit the Marine Safety SA website at: <https://www.marinesafety.sa.gov.au/>

# Happy Holidays



## 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 19 December 2021, a total of approximately 7 941 788 cubic metres of sand had been removed by dredging operations.

Both dredges will now take a short break over the festive period and will return to operations in early January 2022.

Barrage releases combined with dredging have helped to maintain flow connectivity of the River Murray Channel to the Murray Mouth and have assisted in exporting salt from the river system.

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 0.84 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.77 m AHD. The difference is due to wind effects.

As of Tuesday 21 December 2021, the weekly releases were approximately 88 GL. Total daily release volumes from the barrage can now be accessed via [Water Data SA](#) by searching for the gauge [A4261002](#).

Gate openings at the barrages during the week can be seen in Table 1. Barrage releases are currently being prioritised through Tauwitchere barrage in order to maintain water levels in the Coorong.

Table 1: Number of barrage gates open each day for the week ending Tuesday 14 December 2021

Barrage (total number of gates)	15 Dec 2021	16 Dec 2021	17 Dec 2021	18 Dec 2021	19 Dec 2021	20 Dec 2021	21 Dec 2021	Objective of releases
<b>Goolwa (120)</b>	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Maintain connectivity between the River Murray channel through to the Murray Mouth to support fish migration, provide some scouring of the Goolwa Channel and Murray Mouth.
<b>Mundoo (25)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Provide some localised freshening conditions in the Mundoo channel and support fish passage.
<b>Boundary Creek (5)</b>	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	Provide attractant flow adjacent the fish way to support fish passage.
<b>Ewe Island (110)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Releases will help push fresher water down the Coorong to assist lowering salinity levels and provide habitat diversity.
<b>Tauwitchere (319)</b>	30	30	30→40	40	40	40	40	
<b>Fishways</b>	Fishways at all barrages and at Hunters Creek (11 in total) were open during the entire week							Provide for fish passage between the Coorong and Lower Lakes.

\*Automated gate utilised to maximise delivery to Coorong and avoid reverse flows.

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.

## RIVER VESSEL WASTE DISPOSAL STATIONS

### Lock 3

The Lock 3 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station is currently out of commission due to an infrastructure failure. Investigations are underway to replace the station. In the interim river vessel users can contact Riverland Tank and Drain directly on 0412 839 392 for emptying of black and grey water in the Lock 3 area. Alternatively they can utilise the nearest alternative waste facility located at Waikerie. Normal boat waste (domestic or galley waste) can still be deposited at the Lock 3 facility at the present time.

## 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.

## NATIONAL PARK ACCESS

Due to the higher flows currently in the River there are short term restrictions for some campsites in the Murray River National Park. More information can be found at <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/> or by contacting the Berri Regional Office on 8595 2111.

## 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 22/12/2021 (m AHD)	2016 High Water Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.82	32.72
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.26	28.85
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	24.68	26.85
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	23.35	24.97
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.19	20.19
Renmark	567.4	-	16.39	17.44
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.32	17.05
Lyrup	537.8	-	13.54	15.80
Berri	525.9	-	13.33	15.21
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.18	14.73
Loxton	489.9	-	11.16	13.54
Cobdogla	446.9	-	-	11.59
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.77	10.98
Overland Corner	425.9	-	7.40	10.41
Waikerie	383.6	-	6.52	9.20
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.04	8.32
Cadell	332.6	-	4.06	7.01
Morgan	321.7	-	3.70	6.38
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.08	4.46
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	1.28	3.11
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.95	1.33
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.85	1.04

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

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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:

- [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: [Managing Acid Sulfate Soils Research Project](#)

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](#).

[Katarapko Floodplain](#) site management

[Pike Floodplain](#) site management

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 -20211224
Classification	Public I2 A2
Issued	24 December 2021
Authority	DEW
Master Document Location	R:\Water Group\RMO\WRO\04 Communications\Flow Advices\2020-21
Managed and Maintained by	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Author	Water Infrastructure and Operations Branch
Reviewer	Director, Water Infrastructure and Operations