

River Murray Flow Report and Water Resources Update



Report #27/2022

Issued 10:00 am 15 July 2022

This supersedes the previous Flow Report issued by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 8 July 2022. The next Flow Report will be provided on Friday 22 July 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.

Water resources update

During June 2022, the total River Murray System inflow was approximately 918 GL, which is above the June long-term average of 739 GL. During June 2022, the total Menindee Lakes inflow was approximately 686 GL, which is significantly higher than the June long-term average of 135 GL.

The flow to South Australia during June 2022 was approximately 1 035 GL, which is more than double the June long-term average of 389 GL. The flow comprised of Entitlement Flow (including environmental water on SA licence), environmental water, trades, Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) and unregulated flow.

Management of South Australia's deferred water

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority confirmed that on 1 July 2022 South Australia had 336.2 GL of deferred water held in storage in the Murray-Darling Basin. The following table identifies the storage in which it is held and its purpose. Volumes stored are adjusted for net evaporation losses and spills until delivered to South Australia.

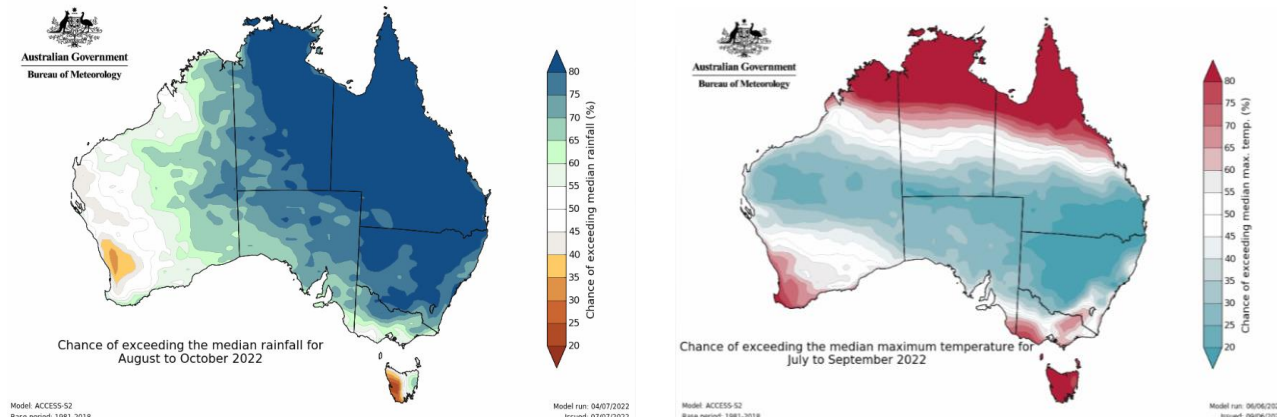
Table 1: South Australia's deferred water storages at 1 July 2022

At 1 July 2022				
Purpose	Lake Victoria (GL)	Hume (GL)	Dartmouth (GL)	Total (GL)
*CHWN	0	0	235.7	235.7
Private Carryover	0	0	100.5	100.5
Total	0	0	336.2	336.2

*Critical Human Water Needs (CHWN)

Rainfall and temperature outlook

As at 7 July 2022, the Bureau of Meteorology weather outlook forecasts that rainfall from July to September 2022 is likely to be above median for the majority of the Murray-Darling Basin. Areas across the Basin will have a 65 – 80 % chance of exceeding the median rainfall depending on location. Temperatures from July to September 2022 are more likely to be below median for the majority of the Murray-Darling Basin.



The climate outlook between July and September 2022 reflects several significant climate influences. These include:

- The likely development of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). Outlooks indicate a negative IOD event is likely for the coming months. A negative IOD increases the chances of above average winter–spring rainfall for large parts of Australia.
- The recent end of the La Niña in the tropical Pacific, and shift to La Niña WATCH. Most model outlooks indicate neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions during winter. However, slightly cooler than average sea-surface temperatures in the central tropical Pacific during July to September are likely to persist. This, combined with warmer ocean temperatures in the western tropical Pacific, would favour average to above average winter rainfall for eastern Australia. In the longer term, around half the models surveyed favour a return to La Niña during spring.

The latest Bureau of Meteorology outlook information can be accessed [here](#).

Storage volumes

Table 2: Murray-Darling Basin Storage volumes

Storage	Full Supply Volume (GL)	14/7/2022 (GL)	14/7/2021 (GL)	Long-term average (end of July) (GL)
Dartmouth	3 856	3 646 (95%)	2 575 (67%)	
Hume	3 005	2 841 (94%)	1 921 (64%)	
Lake Victoria	677	388 (57%)	423 (62%)	
Menindee Lakes	*1 731	1 905 (110%)	1 099 (63%)	
TOTAL	9 289	8 780 (95%)	6 018 (65%)	5 528 (60%)

*Menindee Lakes can be surcharged to 2 015 GL

Water quality - Salinity

A number of targets are identified under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which all Basin jurisdictions must have regard to in managing River Murray flows. The targets for real-time salinity are identified below. Salinity should not exceed these values for 95 % of the time: 580 EC at Lock 6, 800 EC at Morgan, 830 EC at Murray Bridge and 1 000 EC at Milang.

The following graph shows the salinity at these locations and the flow to South Australia (QSA) from July 2021 to July 2022. The dashed-lines identify the Basin Plan (BP) thresholds for the corresponding colour coded location. A spike in salinity above 1 000 EC was recorded at Milang for a short period of time during June due to storm conditions and reverse flows. The BP salinity target for Milang states that salinity should remain below 1 000 EC for 95% of the time. While salinity did spike above 1 000 EC for a short period, it quickly returned to the acceptable range and is therefore unlikely to affect long-term compliance with BP targets. The dashed-lines identify the Basin Plan (BP) thresholds for the corresponding colour coded location.

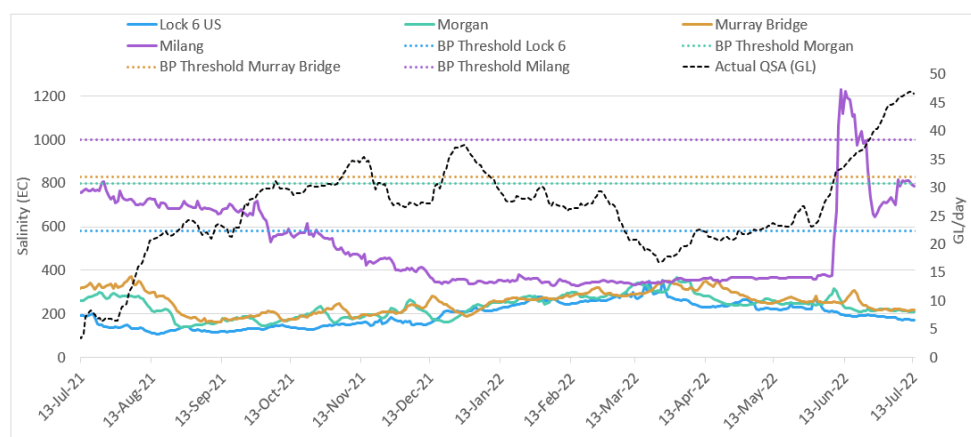
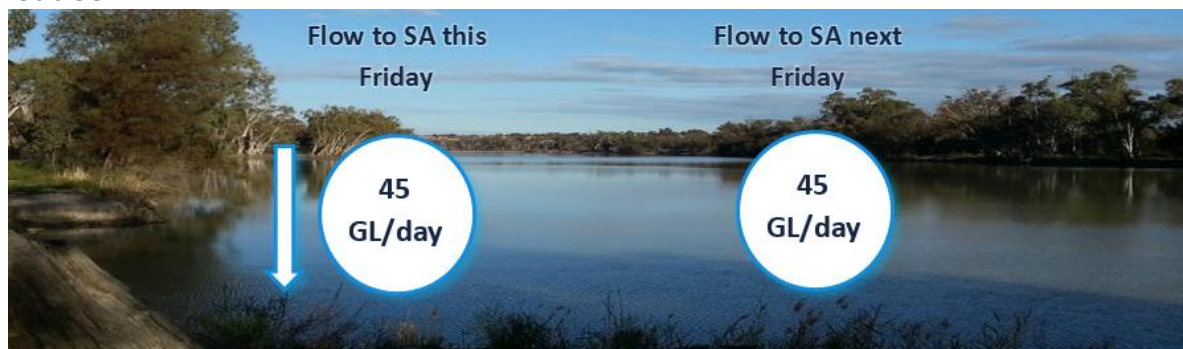


Figure 1: SA River Murray daily average salinity

Flow outlook



The flow at the South Australian border is approximately 45 GL/day and is forecast to remain at around 45 GL/day over the coming week. The current flow at the border comprises:

- full July Entitlement Flow (3.5 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 39 GL/day and will increase to around 40 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.

What is considered a flood in South Australia?

With the flow at the South Australian border increasing it's a timely reminder to remain aware of what is considered a flood in South Australia, even if flood levels are not reached at this point in time.

When the flow at the South Australian border is forecast to exceed 40 GL/day, the Department for Environment and Water will issue a *High Flow Advice*. This is not an emergency warning. A High Flow Advice is intended to inform the community of higher than normal river flow, velocity and water levels, as well as raise awareness and monitoring regarding potential hazards and to prompt the community to consider preventative actions to minimise any potential impacts.

If the flow at the South Australian border is forecast to exceed 60 GL/day, a *Flood Advice – River Murray Shack Areas* is issued by the South Australian State Emergency Service (SA SES) as an official emergency warning product, consistent with the Australian Warning System. The River Murray Shack Areas comprises the shack communities between Cadell and Mannum, excluding the towns. Above 60 GL/day, low lying areas and floodplains become inundated and ground level flooding of the shack areas commences. For the remainder of the River Murray in South Australia, a High Flow Advice remains in place.

When the flow at the border is forecast to exceed 100 GL/day, a *Flood Advice – River Murray* is issued by the SA SES for the River Murray between the SA border and Wellington. Further advice will be issued by the SA SES when the flow reaches 130 GL/day at the border (*Flood Watch and Act – River Murray*) and 200 GL/day at the border (*Flood Emergency Warning – River Murray*).

The most up to date information will continue to be provided in the SA River Murray Flow Report and readers can subscribe [here](#).

High Flow Advice

With flow at the South Australian border above 40 GL/day, the Department for Environment and Water has issued a *High Flow Advice* with this River Murray Flow Report and Water Resources Update. The *High Flow Advice* is also available on the DEW website at the following location: <https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/River-Murray/SitePages/River%20Murray%20Flow%20Reports.aspx>

Quarter 4 meter readings due by 31 July 2022

If you hold a water resource works approval that includes a condition for you to provide quarterly meter readings to the Department for Environment and Water, please be reminded that meter readings for the Quarter 4 accounting period for 2021-22 (which will end on 30 June 2022) must be taken within the first fourteen days of July 2022 and submitted to the department by 31 July 2022.

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

- The online [Meter Reading Form](#); or
- By emailing the Department for Environment and Water at DEW.waterlicensingberri@sa.gov.au

Should you require any assistance in supplying your meter reading, including how to complete the online Meter Reading Form, please contact the Berri Office on (08) 8595 2053 and a Water Licensing Officer will be able to assist you.

Environmental news

Water for the environment and unregulated flows have provided and continue to 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. For example, recent monitoring indicates that flowing conditions in the river since spring may have supported the first major spawning and recruitment event for golden perch in the Lower Murray in a decade;
- providing water to floodplain and wetland areas that have been dry for more than five years;
- allowing fish dispersal and movement into new habitats, including for young golden perch which may have travelled down the Great Darling Anabranch into the Murray in recent months;
- providing for barrage releases to the Coorong to support a productive, food-rich environment for fish and birds and provide salinities and water levels that support healthy populations of keystone native plant *Ruppia tuberosa*. Data on the Coorong *R. tuberosa* population and upstream lamprey migration is being collected this week;
- providing habitat for birds, frogs and threatened small-bodied native fish species in the Lower Lakes;
- 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 the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.



River Murray at sunset near Renmark on 12 July 2022 (Photo credit: W Rex)

Floodplain operations and weir pool raising/lowering in 2022-23

Delivery of water for the environment for the coming winter-spring has begun at one of the Riverland floodplains. The environmental watering actions aim to achieve a range of benefits for vegetation and wildlife across the floodplains, wetlands and along the River.

The Pike floodplain operations have commenced and aim to reach a medium to high level inundation. Associated raising of Lock 5 by up to 50 cm above normal pool level has also commenced. This is important in supporting the flow through the floodplain creeks as water levels are raised and water pushes out onto the floodplain.

At the Chowilla floodplain, a large scale operation of the environmental regulator along with Lock 6 weir raising by up to 62 cm above normal pool level is planned to commence on 21 July 2022.

At Katarapko, given the lower lying nature of this floodplain the higher water levels associated with the current good River Murray flows are already providing watering across significant areas of the floodplain. The timing and scale of any operations to increase the watering across the Katarapko floodplain will depend on the continuing River Murray flow conditions.

Raising of water levels at Lock 2 by up to 55 cm above normal pool level will commence on 19 July 2022. Smaller scale weir pool raising within normal operating range is also planned at Locks 1 and 3.

To ensure you receive updates with further information please email Engagement Officer Ellee Eleftheriadis (ellee.elftheriadis2@sa.gov.au) with your contact details.

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 12 July 2022, a total of approximately 8 409 009 m³ of sand has been removed from the Murray Mouth. Both dredges are fully operational working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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.



Sentinel satellite imagery from 5 July 2022 showing large volumes of water moving from the Lower Lakes out through the Murray Mouth towards the Southern Ocean. Source: [Sentinel Playground | Sentinel Hub \(sentinel-hub.com\)](#)

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 0.60 m AHD and Lake Albert is approximately 0.66 m AHD. The difference is due to wind effects.

As of Tuesday 12 July 2022, the weekly releases were approximately 245 GL. Total daily release volumes from the barrages 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 3.

Table 3: Number of barrage gates open each day for the week ending Tuesday 12 July 2022

Barrage (total number of gates)	6 July 2022	7 July 2022	8 July 2022	9 July 2022	10 July 2022	11 July 2022	12 July 2022	Objective of releases
Goolwa (120)	31→26	26	26	26	26	26→6	6→0	Maintain connectivity between the River Murray channel through to the Murray Mouth to support fish migration.
Mundoo (25)	5*	5*	5*	5*	5*	5*→0	0→5* →0	Provide some localised freshening conditions in the Mundoo channel and support fish passage.
Boundary Creek (5)	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	Provide attractant flow adjacent the fish way to support fish passage.
Ewe Island (110)	56*	56*	56*	56*	56*	56*	56*	Releases will help push fresher water down the Coorong to assist lowering salinity levels and provide habitat diversity.
Tauwitchere (319)	100*	100*	100*	100*	100*	100*	100*	
Fishways	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.

Lock 3 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station

The Lock 3 River Vessel Waste Disposal Station is currently out of commission due to an infrastructure failure. Investigations are currently 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.

River Murray water levels

Table 4. River Murray water levels at a number of locations from Lock 10 to Murray Bridge.

Location	River km	Normal Pool Level (m AHD)	Current Level 13/7/2022 (m AHD)	2016 High Water Level (m AHD)
Lock 10	825.0	30.80	30.85	32.72
Lock 9 Kulnine	764.8	27.40	27.43	28.85
Lock 8 Wangumma	725.7	24.60	25.20	26.85
Lock 7 Rufus River	696.6	22.10	23.77	24.97
Lock 6 Murtho	619.8	19.25	19.28	20.19
Renmark	567.4	-	16.52	17.44
Lock 5	562.4	16.30	16.41	17.05
Lyrup	537.8	-	13.93	15.80
Berri	525.9	-	13.60	15.21
Lock 4	516.2	13.20	13.28	14.73
Loxton	489.9	-	11.91	13.54
Cobdogla	446.9	-	-	11.59
Lock 3	431.4	9.80	9.86	10.98
Overland Corner	425.9	-	8.13	10.41
Waikerie	383.6	-	6.96	9.20
Lock 2	362.1	6.10	6.17	8.32
Cadell	332.6	-	4.90	7.01
Morgan	321.7	-	4.40	6.38
Lock 1 Blanchetown	274.2	3.20	3.24	4.46
Swan Reach	245.0	0.75	1.51	3.11
Mannum PS	149.8	0.75	0.79	1.33
Murray Bridge	115.3	0.75	0.68	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](#).

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