

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 20 December 2000

Our Ref: MDBC:269 :ng:brc

21 December, 2000



Hot and dry conditions prevailed across the southern and western parts of the Basin this week with temperatures exceeding 40° Celsius in the Sunraysia district, the lower Darling region, and parts of South Australia. Rainfall was generally restricted to southern Queensland and north-eastern New South Wales catchments areas, with totals generally less than 50 mm. These falls are not expected to significantly increase inflows to Menindee Lakes.

The hot and dry conditions have resulted in increased irrigation demand and tributary flows continuing to recede. Total diversion via the major gravity diversion systems of the Murray is now exceeding 18 000 ML/day. Consequently, release from Hume Reservoir has been increased, and flow in the Murray at Albury has been maintained at channel capacity this week, and storage in Hume has fallen 0.7 m to 2 624 GL (86% of capacity).

Release from Yarrawonga Weir has been reduced to 13 500 ML/day and will be maintained at about 13 000 ML/day next week to provide suitable water levels for the continuation of bird breeding events in the Barmah-Millewa Forest. After completion of delivery of environmental water for the forest, it is expected that release from Yarrawonga Weir will be reduced at the end of December to the regulated requirement at that time which is likely to be in the range 9 000 to 10 000 ML/day.

Flow in the River Murray at Euston declined from 46 000 to 22 000 ML/day during the week and will continue to decline over late December and early January.

Flow in the Darling River at Bourke is 90 700 ML/day on 21 December and close to the peak. Further downstream, inflow to Menindee Lakes has risen to about 19 000 ML/day, and storage in the Lakes is now 1 614 GL (81% of surcharge capacity), and as there is now sufficient airspace in the Lakes to contain inflows expected over the next 6 weeks or so, the flow at Weir 32 will now be slowly reduced until it reaches 9 000 ML/day (refer to Media Release attached).

Flow in the River Murray at the South Australian border peaked at 63 400 ML/day on 17-18 December. An enhancement of the Murray flow peak by about 9 000 ML/day was achieved by releasing water from Lake Victoria at the time of arrival of the peak from upstream. As a result, it is estimated that about 4 000 hectares or about 25% of the Chowilla Floodplain has been inundated in this event, including filling of Lakes Littra and Limbra.

With higher flows currently passing along the Murray upstream of the Barrages, Mundoo Barrage has been fully opened this week (for the first time since 1996) with the aim of assisting in clearing accumulated sand deposits from the Murray Mouth (see Media Release attached). Goolwa and Tauwichee Barrages are also partly open. SA Water and the SA Department for Water Resources will monitor the situation to gauge the effectiveness of this barrage operation in clearing sand from the Mouth over the next few weeks.

*The Commission, River Murray Water and the staff of the dams, weirs and barrages
wish you a very happy and safe festive season.*

Note: There will be no Weekly Report issued for the week ending 27 December 2000. The next Weekly Report will be issued in the first week of January 2001.

DAVID DOLE
General Manager



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 21 December 2000



Releases from Menindee Lakes to be Reduced

River Murray Water and the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation today announced that releases from Menindee Lakes will be gradually reduced commencing today, Thursday 21 December.

Flow in the Darling River at Bourke is close to its peak today at 90 700 ML/day, and is expected to recede relatively quickly over the next few weeks without further rain.

Inflow to Menindee Lakes is currently about 19 000 ML/day and increasing slowly. Although inflow to the Lakes is expected to peak in mid January at about 30 000 ML/day, there is now sufficient "airspace" in the Lakes to manage these inflows.

Releases from the Lakes have been maintained at 19 500 ML/day (6.2 m gauge height) since 11 December. Storage in Menindee Lakes is now 1 612 000 ML (81% of capacity). Commencing Thursday 21 December, the flow at Weir 32 will be gradually reduced by about 500 ML/day each day until it reaches about 9 000 ML/day (3.3 m gauge height) by about 11 January.

Flow in the Darling River at Burtundy is now about 13 200 ML/day (5.7 m gauge height), and is expected to remain steady until late December, and then slowly recede to about 4.5 m gauge height by about 20 January.

The flow in the Darling River and tributary catchments upstream of Menindee is being monitored closely by the Department of Land and Water Conservation. Further advice will be provided if significant further rainfall results in a change to this release program.

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(Daniel Connell is *not* to be quoted as a spokesperson)

Recorded Information Service, Menindee Tel. (08) 8091 4586

DLWC Website:

<http://waterinfo.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/drr/flood/>



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon Mark Brindal MP

Minister for Water Resources
Minister for Employment & Training
Minister for Youth

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ADELAIDE SA 5000

Tuesday, December 19, 2000

MUNDOO BARRAGE OPENED TO FLUSH MURRAY MOUTH

The Mundoo barrage, near Hindmarsh Island, has been opened with the aim of scouring a wider and deeper channel through the mouth of the River Murray.

Water Resources Minister Mark Brindal says 20,000 megalitres a day will flow via the Mundoo channel to the mouth of the river.

“Earlier this year we managed to avert the real threat of the Murray mouth closing-up for the second time in the recorded history of the river,” says Mr Brindal.

“As the peak flow in the river will reach the Lower Lakes in the first few days of January, opening the barrage now will ensure that we maximise the potential impact of the release to keep the mouth open.

“It is likely that Mundoo will be the last barrage closed in late January as flows return to normal unless further significant rainfall is experienced in the catchment before then.”

The additional flows have been available because of the good rains in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr Brindal says today’s announcement follows the Murray Darling Basin Commission’s decision last week of an increase in flow from 52,000 megalitres per day to about 63,000 megalitres.

“The additional flows offer great environmental benefits to floodplains along with wetlands and the length of the River Murray in South Australia to the mouth,” he says.

Mr Brindal says the Mundoo barrage was last opened more than four years ago.

“Work to detail sediment movement has already been put in place to document the impacts of this water release,” he says.

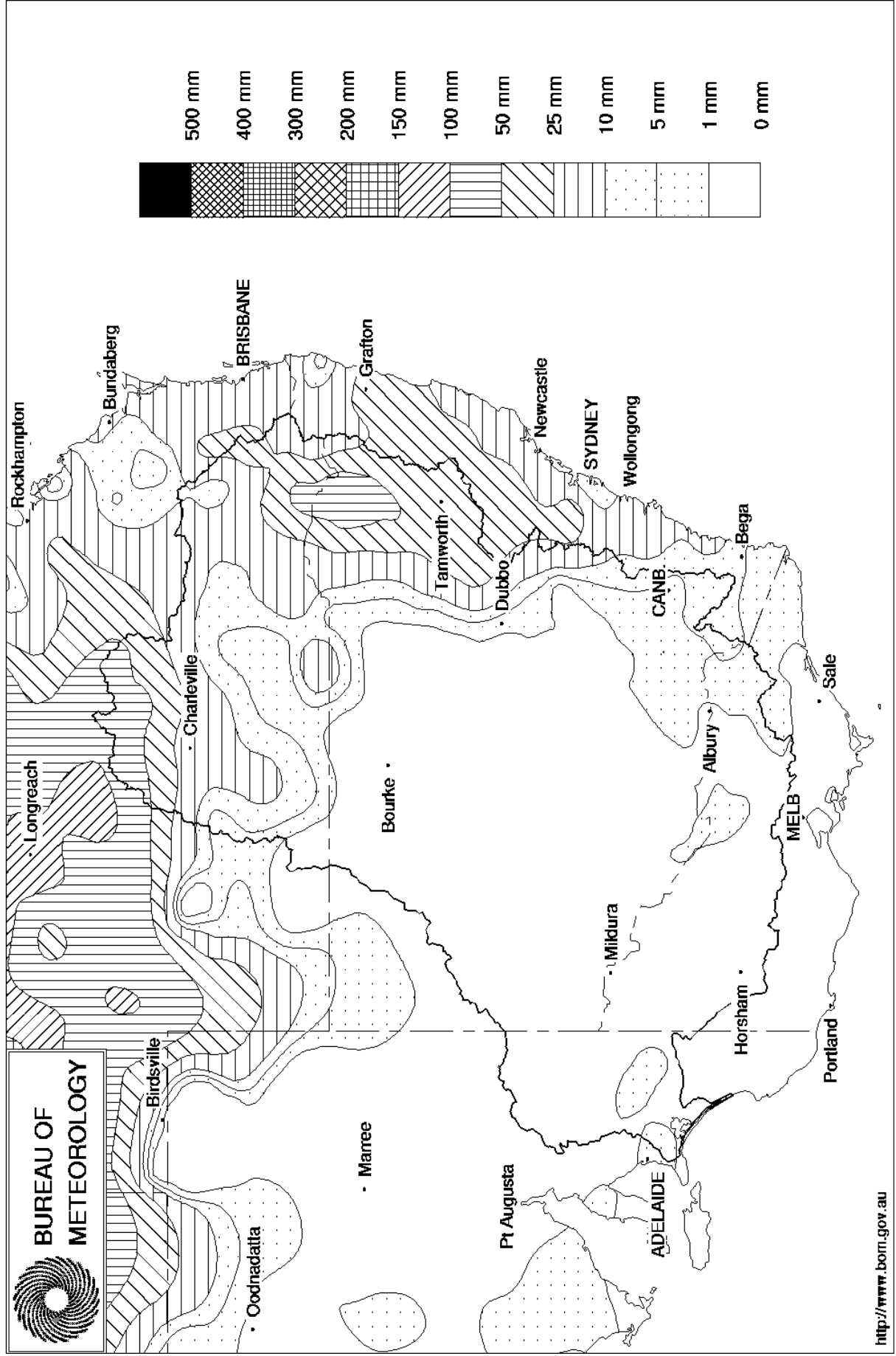
Mr Brindal says this Government is committed to saving the Murray through not only highlighting publicly the need to protect it, but also putting in place plans to save it.

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www.ministers.sa.gov.au

Murray Daring Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 20th December 2000

Product of the National Climate Centre



Week ending 20-Dec-2000

Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level m AHD	Full Supply Capacity GL	Storage Level m AHD	Current Storage		Dead storage GL	Active storage GL	Change for the week GL
				GL	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3906	472.81	3096	79%	80	3016	+6
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3038	189.86	2624	86%	30	2594	-133
Lake Victoria	27.00	680	25.74	541	80%	100	441	-52
Menindee		1682 *		1614	96%	480 #	1134	-57
Total		9306		7876	85%	690	7186	-236

* Menindee surcharge capacity 1999 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **83%**

NSW Menindee Lakes Reserve

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1026		806	79%	3	803	-65
Blowering Reservoir	1631		1273	78%	24	1249	-61
Eildon Reservoir	3390		1728	51%	100	1628	-38

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 19-Dec-2000

Storage (GL)	Current storage	Weekly change	Diversions	This week	From 1st May
Lake Eucumbene - Total	3091	+14	Snowy-Murray	+5	529
Snowy-Murray Component	1539	+6	Tooma-Tumut	+3	290
Target Storage	1510		Nett Diversion	2.2	239
			Murray 1 Release	+8	863

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July	Victoria	This week	From 1 July
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	75.6	661.6	Yarrowonga Main Channel (net)	21.8	164.5
Wakool System loss	0.0	4.4	Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	27.9	309.1
Western Murray Irrig.	1.5	10.6	Sunraysia Pumped Districts	8.4	60.4
Licensed Pumps	11.2	117.8	Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	2.4	15.4
Lower Darling	14.3	165.4	Licensed pumps - SRW	5.0	74.5
TOTAL	102.6	959.7	TOTAL	65.5	623.9

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	217
Flow this week	427.2
Flow so far this month	1078
Flow last month	809

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25 C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August
Swan Hill	160	120	214
Euston	170	170	193
Red Cliffs	180	200	231
Merbein	210	200	193
Burtundy	450	552	435
Lock 9	300	272	224
L. Victoria	290	287	300
Berri	320	303	292
Waikerie	310	310	337
Morgan	310	312	336
Mannum	290	283	333
Murray Bridge	310	294	333
Meningie	1470	1460	1288
Goolwa Barrages	530	500	1445



Week ending 20-Dec-2000

River Levels and Flows

	Minor Flood stage m	Gauge height m	Flow ML/day	Trend	Average flow this week ML/day	Average flow last week ML/day
River Murray						
Khancoban	-	-	2160	F	1500	1310
Jingellic	4.0	1.68	4740	R	4160	4730
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.60	1320	F	1380	1590
Heywoods	5.5	3.65	23460	R	22950	19770
Doctors Point	5.5	3.91	25400	R	25030	22270
Albury	4.3	2.99	-	F	-	-
Corowa	7.0	4.25	25300	S	24430	24340
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	2.17	13500	S	14710	17100
Tocumwal	6.4	2.89	14941	F	15890	18300
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.40	7196	F	8360	14150
Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	1.57	1520	F	1693	2920
Swan Hill	4.5	1.53	7790	F	9560	17880
Wakool Junction	8.8	4.60	15664	F	23000	39720
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	3.52	22050	F	32690	48990
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	5.42	45500	F	53740	55940
Rufus Junction	-	7.11	55045	F	61020	54800
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	n/a	F	-10	36860
Tributaries						
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	1.22	1030	R	1020	1380
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	8.38	1597	R	1770	2640
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.26	535	F	590	640
Edward at Liewah	-	2.49	1990	F	2810	5310
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	1.17	2830	F	5370	14370
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.59	300	F	480	480
Darling at Bourke	-	12.24	89500	R	79300	48560
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	5.73	13200	R	12590	10240
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.22	90	R	70	3760

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	6100	7470
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Weirs and Locks

Pool levels above or below design level

Murray	FSL (M AHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (M AHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrowonga	124.90	-0.06	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+1.99	-28.25
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.41	+3.02
No. 15 Euston	47.60	-0.02	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.18	+2.78
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.05	+1.75	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.70	+3.81
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	-0.01	+2.78	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.07	+2.92
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.24	+2.27	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.30	+3.00
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.83	+3.24	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	-0.02	+2.02

Murrumbidgee	FSL (M AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht. metres	Flow ML/day
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.48	0.68	360
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.07	0.24	353

Barrages

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.68	40
Mundoo	26 openings	0.60	26
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwichee	322 gates	0.72	20

