

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 25 February 2004

Our Ref : RMW305/01/01/prs
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27 February, 2004



Rainfall

Widespread rain was recorded across the Murray-Darling Basin during the week. Whilst there were only light falls in the south, falls in excess of 25 mm were recorded in southern Queensland and across central and northern NSW. Isolated heavy falls of up to 150 mm in the upper Castlereagh and Namoi catchments are not expected to result in significant flows entering the Darling River.

Darling River flows

Flow in the Darling River at Wilcannia is currently peaking at about 16 000 ML/day. A total of about 350 GL is expected to flow into Menindee Lakes.

NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) has gradually increased release from Lake Wetherell to the lower Darling River from 700 to 2 500 ML/day (*see Media Release attached*). The purpose of this release is to provide an environmental flushing flow to improve water quality and the general river environment and the salinity of water currently being released has fallen to below 400 EC.

River Murray Water advised on Wednesday that salinity levels in the Lower Darling River and the River Murray downstream of Wentworth are expected to temporarily rise in coming weeks as flow from the lower Darling River resumes (*see Media Release attached*). The largest impacts will be in the lower Darling River and the Darling arm of the Wentworth Weir pool. Salinity levels will progressively diminish as the flow moves downstream and mixes with low salinity water in the River Murray. River Murray Water is working with agencies in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales with the common aim of minimising the impact of higher salinity water on river users.

Upper Murray flow and storages

The volume in Dartmouth Reservoir is currently 1 850 GL (47% of storage capacity) and the volume in Hume Reservoir is 1 080 GL (35% of storage capacity). The average release rate from Hume Reservoir for the week has been 17 000 ML/day, resulting in a reduction in storage volume of approximately one half of a percentage point per day. Storage in Hume will fall to low levels by the end of the irrigation season if conditions remain dry.

Hume Reservoir Algal Alert

The Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee has issued an algal alert for Lake Hume (*see Media Release attached*).

DAVID DREVERMAN
General Manager

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 25 February 2004

INCREASED SALINITY LEVELS EXPECTED IN RIVER MURRAY FROM DARLING RIVER



River Murray Water advised today that salinity levels in the River Murray near Wentworth and further downstream are expected to temporarily rise in coming weeks as flow from the lower Darling River resumes.

Higher flows are in transit to Menindee Lakes following rainfall events in the upper Darling River System. In anticipation of this, NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources re-commenced release from Menindee Lakes in late January for water quality and stock and domestic purposes in the lower Darling River. After water quality in Lake Wetherell had improved, further increases in release were recently made by 23 February for water quality and environmental purposes in the lower Darling.

The flow front in the lower Darling River passed Pooncarie on 21 February, and is expected to begin to reach the River Murray by early to mid March. Salt from Menindee Lakes and the river bed and residual pools of water in the lower Darling is expected to be mobilised by the increased flow. Whilst the initial flow will be of high salinity, it will be followed by low salinity water.

The recent period without flow in the lower Darling was implemented by NSW to conserve resources in Menindee Lakes particularly for town water supply in Menindee and Broken Hill. This is the first time flow in the lower Darling has ceased since construction of the Menindee Lakes scheme commenced in the 1950's.

New South Wales is continuing to closely monitor flow and salinity levels in the lower Darling, and this information is being utilised by River Murray Water to estimate the impact on salinity in the River Murray. However, currently it is not possible to accurately forecast peak salinity levels in the River Murray, as the extent of the initial saline input from the lower Darling cannot easily be predicted. Revised forecasts can be made as more information becomes available, particularly when the flow peak reaches Burtundy on the lower Darling.

River Murray Water is liaising with agencies in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales on operational matters as the salinity event progresses along the Darling and into the Murray. All agencies are working toward the common aim of minimising the impact of higher salinity water on river users.

Preliminary indications are that salinity in the River Murray at Wentworth (currently about 140 EC units) may approach or exceed 1 000 EC for a short period of time in mid March. As much water as possible will be passed through Lake Victoria with the aim of mitigating rises in salinity in South Australia. However, rises in river salinity arising from this event are expected to gradually progress along the Murray in South Australia, although it will be much less than the rise expected at Wentworth.

Further media releases will be issued when more information and revised forecasts become available.

River pumpers are advised to take into account forecast rises in river salinity in the River Murray when pumping from the river.

For further information contact:

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Manager Communication

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(Lawrie Kirk is not to be quoted as a spokesperson)



Department of
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

Media Release - Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Murray Regional Office

Deniliquin: 20 February 2004

INCREASED FLOWS IN DARLING TO START IMMEDIATELY

Regional Director of the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), David Harriss, today announced an immediate increase in flows from Lake Wetherell into the Darling River from 700 to 2500 Megalitres per day

This flow will be increased to 1600ML on Saturday reaching 2500ML by Monday evening.

These increased flows are due to the need to provide an environmental flushing flow that will water quality and general river environment.

“Inflows from Queensland and northern NSW have now mixed adequately with the remaining pool in Lake Wetherell and diluted it to a level suitable for water users downstream.”

“DIPNR staff will be closely monitoring water quality conditions within Lake Wetherell and the Darling River. We also continuing to work with NSW Fisheries and the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Laboratory regarding fish management and river environmental issues.”

Landholders are advised to check the locations of pumps and move them to higher ground if necessary. Predicted gauge maximum gauge heights are 1.97m at Weir 32 and 1.40m at Burtundy.

Mr Harriss said that an Information Paper providing detail of water management of the Menindee Lakes had been released and was available from the Buronga office or on line at <http://www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au/>

Meetings to discuss proposed water management will be held on Tuesday 24th at Menindee 10am; Pooncarie 11.30am; Old Burtundy 1.30pm and Ellerslie 3.30pm.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee
Media Release

27th February 2004

Hume Dam Blue-green Algae Update HIGH ALERT

Chairman of the Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (MRACC), Mr Alastair Buchan today advised that algal concentrations in Hume Dam are increasing throughout most of the storage.

A **high alert** is issued for people drinking untreated water from the dam and for those swimming, skiing, showering or bathing in untreated water. A **medium alert** is current for boaters, fisherman and livestock owners on the dam.

Councils are aware of the issue and are treating town supplies, or preparing to provide alternative water, to ensure good quality water is delivered to townships.

Mr Buchan advised that boiling the water does not remove algal toxins, and reminded people entering the dam to look out for bright green areas which may have sawdust or paint like appearance, or a musty odour. Areas of visible algae should be avoided. Algae may be present in very high concentrations at some downwind sections of the foreshore in sheltered areas.

Characteristic signs of algae contact are skin rashes or itchiness, sore eyes, ears and nose, or if swallowed gastroenteritis, nausea or vomiting. Symptoms of algal contact can be minimised by reducing the amount of time in contact with affected water. People with sensitive skin or allergies are at a higher risk.

Animals may also be at risk from the algae at current concentrations, so where possible alternative stockwater supplies should be sought.

For further information please contact the algae hotline on 1800 088 510, by phoning Alastair Buchan in the DIPNR Albury office on 6043 0159 , or the MRACC website, www.murraybluegreenalgae.com .

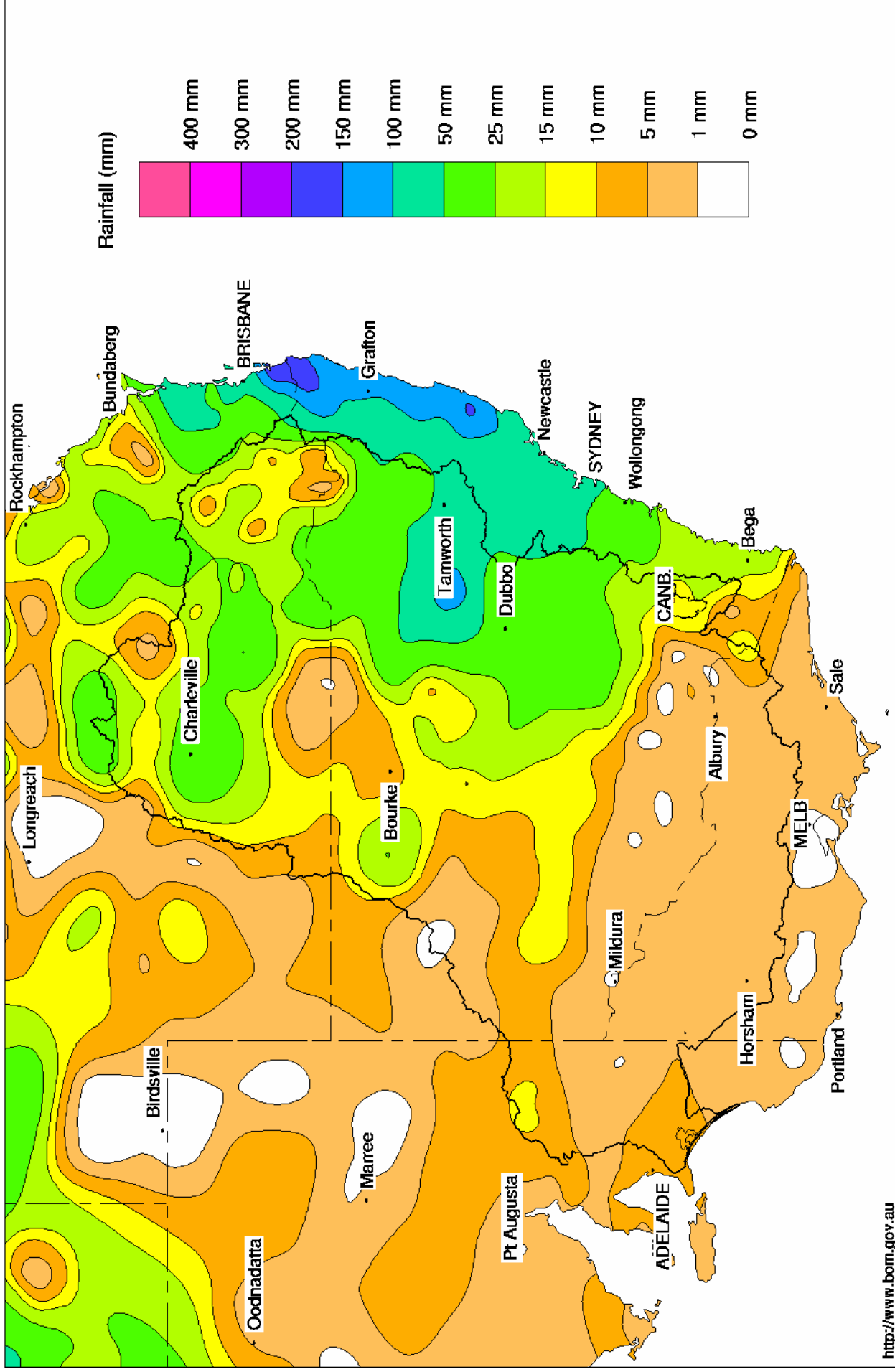
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Media Contact:

Bunty Driver DIPNR 0407403234 or at Deniliquin Office 03-58819210

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 25th February 2004

Product of the National Climate Centre



Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	447.63	1 846	47%	80	1 766	-5
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	179.55	1 106	36%	30	1 076	-103
Lake Victoria	27.00	680	23.84	345	51%	100	245	-22
Menindee Lakes		1 603 *		177	11%	640 #	0	+89
Total		9 227		3 473	38%	850	3 086	-42

* Menindee surcharge capacity 1916 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **37%**

NSW Menindee Lakes Reserve

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026		444	43%	3	441	-6
Blowering Reservoir	1 631		453	28%	24	429	-35
Eildon Reservoir	3 390		1 023	30%	100	923	-55

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 24-Feb-2004

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2003
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1 847	-12	Snowy-Murray	+14	596
Snowy-Murray Component	1 068	-	Tooma-Tumut	+1	260
Target Storage	1 460		Nett Diversion	13.1	336
			Murray 1 Release	+13	921

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2003
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	25.0	561.9
Wakool System loss	1.8	25.9
Western Murray Irrig.	1.2	22.2
Licensed Pumps	9.3	164.4
Lower Darling	0.3	8.3
TOTAL	37.6	782.6

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2003
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	12.7	250
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	0.0	416
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	5.5	119
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.7	25
Licensed pumps - SRW	4.8	154
TOTAL	24.7	964

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	194	
Flow this week	48.4	(6 900 ML/day)
Flow so far this month	173	
Flow last month	224	

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2003
Swan Hill	80	80	110
Euston	100	90	120
Red Cliffs	110	110	130
Merbein	130	140	140
Burtundy (Darling)	4 470	4 420	2 420
Lock 9	160	160	170
Lake Victoria	240	230	230
Berri	260	260	270
Waikerie	-	-	390
Morgan	360	350	410
Mannum	440	440	440
Murray Bridge	480	480	490
Milang (Lake Alex.)	1 180	1 230	1 120
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	730	1 070	1 110
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	2 010	2 040	1 580
Goolwa Barrages	1 900	1 960	2 170



River Levels and Flows

	Minor Flood stage (m)	Gauge height		Flow (ML/day)	Trend	Average flow this week (ML/day)	Average flow last week (ML/day)
		local (m)	(m AHD)				
River Murray							
Khancoban	-	-	-	2 170	F	2 160	2 580
Jingellic	4.0	1.42	207.94	2 780	F	2 680	3 290
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.37	218.26	680	F	1 330	3 470
Heywoods	5.5	3.10	156.73	16 660	F	17 160	16 730
Doctors Point	5.5	3.23	151.70	16 800	S	17 790	17 690
Albury	4.3	2.26	149.70	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	3.38	129.40	18 300	F	18 730	18 270
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.80	116.84	10 300	S	10 300	10 310
Tocumwal	6.4	2.30	106.14	10 770	S	10 660	10 660
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.03	80.58	5 900	R	5 990	6 140
Swan Hill	4.5	1.16	64.08	5 320	S	5 330	5 390
Wakool Junction	8.8	2.85	51.97	7 420	R	7 330	7 260
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	1.42	43.26	6 590	R	6 530	6 380
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	30.95	5 550	F	5 180	4 670
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.89	27.65	4 500	R	4 180	3 560
Rufus Junction	-	3.50	20.43	6 750	R	6 540	6 660
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	-	3 630	R	3 430	3 760
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.80	154.03	400	F	740	1 080
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.79	145.47	386	R	350	430
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.69	93.11	1 231	R	1 130	1 170
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	2 290	S	2 340	2 410
Edward at Liewah	-	2.66	58.04	2 180	S	2 160	2 010
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.39	54.88	287	S	320	350
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.52	56.48	210	R	210	220
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.45	-	610	F	770	1 130
Darling at Bourke	-	4.58	-	4 244	F	14 510	23 350
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.24	-	0	F	0	0

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	1 580	1 320
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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	-0.15	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.08	+1.19
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.07	+0.12
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.02	+0.16
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.03	+0.15	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.02	+0.64
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.06	+0.25	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.00	+0.20
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.03	+0.00	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.05	+0.12
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.00	+0.10	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.04	-0.08

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.85	0.8	70.15	520
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.93	0.19	61.49	305

Barrages

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.64	All closed
Mundoo	26 openings	0.68	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwicheere	322 gates	0.61	All closed



AHD = Level relative to Australian Height Datum, i.e. height above sea level