REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 23 February 2005

River Murray Water
A Business Unit of MDBC

Our Ref : M2005/00066/prs, jm **24 February, 2005**
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Rainfall and Inflows

The eastern part of the Basin received further good falls of rain early this week, with up to 25 mm in the Upper Murray catchment and heavier falls further north (*see attached map*). This resulted in only minor increases in tributary inflows across the Upper Murray.

River Murray Operation

Release from Dartmouth Dam was reduced slightly this week, from 800 ML/day to 600 ML/day, to further conserve resources in the upper-most storage. This reduction, combined with the slight increase in inflows from the rain, led to a small 2 GL increase in the storage level in Dartmouth this week, however total MDBC storage levels fell by 13 GL.

Flows from the heavy rainfall in early February, are slowly progressing downstream. The flow in the River Murray peaked at about 18 500 ML/day at Euston on 19 February, and at about 14 500 ML/day at Wentworth on 23 February. The Euston, Mildura and Wentworth weir pools were partially drawn down to mitigate the flow peak and conserve resources, however these weir pools have now been reinstated to full supply level.

The storage in Lake Victoria has increased from about 506 GL (or 75% of capacity) on 13 February to about 545 GL (80% of capacity) on 23 February, and current estimates indicate that the storage may rise to about 580 GL (86% of capacity) by early March. As the inflow to Lake Victoria is currently restricted by construction works at Lock 9, current flows in the river are now likely to result in a small surplus flow of about 2 GL of above entitlement flow to South Australia.

As a result of the increase in storage in Lake Victoria, the transfer of water from Hume Reservoir to Lake Victoria is no longer required for the remainder of the season. Accordingly, the release from Yarrawonga Weir has been gradually reduced from 10 000 ML/day to 8 500 ML/day. If it stays dry, the release from Yarrawonga Weir for the remainder of the season will be adjusted to the minimum level required to meet demands and losses from Yarrawonga to Lock 7, and the resources in Lake Victoria will be used to provide the entitlement flow to South Australia.

The transfer of water to Lake Victoria via the Edward-Wakool system has also been gradually reduced, resulting in the flow downstream of Stevens Weir reducing from 2 900 ML/day to about 1 300 ML/day on 23 February. This flow will be further gradually reduced to about 500 ML/day over the coming week.

'Blackwater' Update

Monitoring of water temperature, salinity, acidity (pH) and dissolved oxygen levels has been undertaken over the past week as 'tea' coloured floodwaters, known as *blackwater* (*see attached media release*), returned to the River Murray and the Edward-Wakool Rivers from the nearby forests. Some low dissolved oxygen levels (<5 mg/L) were reported mid last week, however these levels are now slowly improving and are now not expected to pose significant problems to fish health, although some smaller creeks within the forests may still have poorer water quality.

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News release

Department of
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

MURRAY-MURRUMBIDGEE REGION

23/02/05

Blackwater from our backwaters

You may have noticed a change in the watercolour of the some of our local rivers and lagoons. The natural phenomenon is called a “blackwater event”, and may be visible in the Murray River downstream of Picnic point and along the Edward and Wakool River System over the coming weeks, it has also been reported in the lower Broken Creek in Victoria.

The recent heavy rain that fell in the first week of February is part of the cause. Some areas in the Ovens catchments received over 250 mm of rain in three days. The rainfall resulted in significant increases in inflow from the Kiewa, Ovens, and Goulburn Rivers.

The peak inflow from the Ovens was more than double the previous highest February record!

Alastair Buchan from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources said “As this flow has moved through the Barmah -Millewa Forest and back to the rivers it is picking up tannins from fallen leaf litter. This is a natural process, which gives the water a dark colour. “

“The drought over the past few years has resulted in a build up of leaf litter on the floodplain with no significant recent leaching by floods.”

“The occurrence of the flood in February, coinciding with warmer temperatures, has probably exacerbated the 'blackwater event’. The 'short' nature of the flood also means that there will not be a subsequent high flow to dilute it.”

While this is a natural event, River Murray Water (RMW), in consultation with state agencies, are exploring operational options that might be required to mitigate any emerging problems from the blackwater along the River Murray and Edward/Wakool River system**.**

In severe cases, extensive fish kills can occur and yabbies will leave the water.

The Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources, Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre are undertaking intensive monitoring to gain a better understanding of the causes of these events.

The monitoring will also assist with improving our predictions of blackwater events in the future and identify options to minimise their impacts in rivers and streams throughout the basin.

Ends

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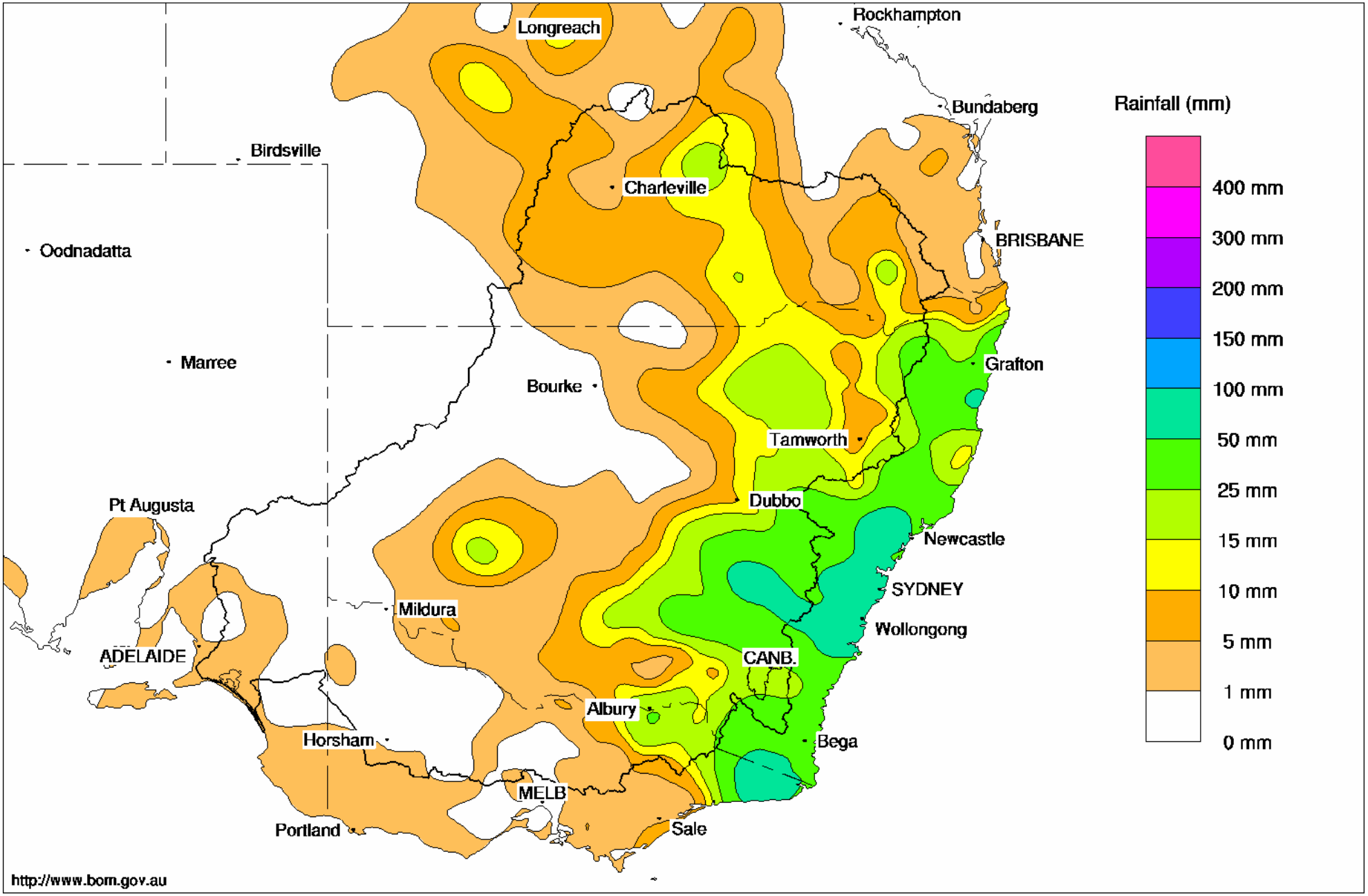
Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 23rd February 2005

Product of the National Climate Centre



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Week ending Wednesday 23 Feb 2005

Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage (GL)	Current Storage %	Dead Storage (GL)	MDBC Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	444.65	1 723	44%	80	1 643	+2
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	179.45	1 093	36%	30	1 063	-41
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	25.88	545	80%	100	445	+34
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		411	24%	(- -) #	0	-7
Total		**9 352**		**3 772**	**40%**	**- -**	**3 151**	**-13**

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL % of Total Active MDBC Storage = **37%**

\# NSW takes control of Menindee Lakes when storage falls below 480 GL, and control reverts to MDBC when storage next reaches 640 GL

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026		251	24%	3	248	+0
Blowering Reservoir	1 631		383	23%	24	359	+4
Eildon Reservoir	3 390		1 265	37%	100	1 165	-24

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 22-Feb-2005

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2004
Lake Eucumbene - Total	2 523	n/a	Snowy-Murray	+15	434
Snowy-Murray Component	1 193	-	Tooma-Tumut	+5	271
Target Storage	1 460		Nett Diversion	10.0	164
			Murray 1 Release	+22	784

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2004
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	22.0	521.0
Wakool System loss	0.8	11.2
Western Murray Irrig.	1.1	24.0
Licensed Pumps	7.2	194.5
Lower Darling	2.1	22.3
TOTAL	**33.3**	**773.0**

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2004
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	11.9	244
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	15.1	411
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	4.9	122
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.3	25
Licensed pumps - SRW	7.3	198
TOTAL	**40.4**	**1 000**

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	194
Flow this week	50.9
Flow so far this month	160
Flow last month	225

(7 300 ML/day)

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2004
Swan Hill	120	150	110
Euston	150	170	120
Red Cliffs	200	170	110
Merbein	170	130	120
Burtundy (Darling)	680	680	520
Lock 9	110	130	140
Lake Victoria	180	190	180
Berri	210	210	240
Waikerie	310	310	370
Morgan	320	320	390
Mannum	400	400	480
Murray Bridge	380	380	530
Milang (Lake Alex.)	1 400	1 360	1 300
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	1 350	1 320	1 040
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	-	2 280	2 110
Goolwa Barrages	2 130	2 160	1 920

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River Levels and Flows

River Murray	Minor Flood stage (m)	Gauge height local (m)	Gauge height (m AHD)	Flow (ML/day)	Trend	Average flow this week (ML/day)	Average flow last week (ML/day)
Khancoban	-	-	-	6 170	F	3 050	1 120
Jingellic	4.0	1.98	208.50	7 250	R	3 830	3 750
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.58	218.47	1 130	F	1 290	1 440
Heywoods	5.5	2.57	156.20	10 020	F	10 380	9 190
Doctors Point	5.5	2.73	151.20	11 000	F	11 110	10 260
Albury	4.3	1.74	149.18	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	2.60	128.62	12 100	F	11 770	9 080
Yarrawonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.55	116.59	8 500	F	9 230	11 810
Tocumwal	6.4	2.15	105.99	9 300	F	9 840	15 010
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.74	81.29	8 480	F	9 240	15 930
Swan Hill	4.5	1.62	64.54	8 340	F	10 690	16 020
Wakool Junction	8.8	4.03	53.15	13 250	F	16 210	15 440
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	2.71	44.55	15 600	F	17 560	13 050
Mildura Weir (d/s)		-	31.54	-	F	13 810	9 140
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	3.48	28.24	14 420	R	13 050	8 320
Rufus Junction	-	3.53	20.46	6 930	S	6 840	6 310
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	-	4 390	S	4 430	4 650
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	1.41	154.64	1 230	R	880	1 030
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	8.24	145.92	1 405	F	1 580	2 750
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.40	92.82	755	F	820	4 900
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	1 210	F	2 340	2 890
Edward at Liewah	-	3.18	58.56	2 960	F	2 940	2 470
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.66	55.15	858	S	920	690
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	1.50	57.46	1 210	F	2 180	1 340
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.22	-	90	R	70	80
Darling at Bourke	-	4.13	-	552	F	720	960
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.75	-	176	R	140	180

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	3 960	6 910

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
Yarrawonga	124.90	-0.05	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.12	+1.23
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.06	+0.17
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.01	+0.20
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.10	+0.74	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.02	+0.70
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.07	+0.84	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.01	+0.18
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.07	+0.11	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.01	+0.10
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.03	+0.33	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.01	-0.10

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht. local (m)	d/s gauge ht. (m AHD)	Flow (ML/day)
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.11	0.59	69.94	287
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	+0.04	0.31	61.61	426

Barrages

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.74	All closed
Mundoo	26 openings	0.72	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwitchere	322 gates	-	All closed

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

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