

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 3 September 2008

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5 September, 2008



Rainfall and Inflows

Rain blanketed the Basin this week with falls of 25 to 50 mm recorded across the upper Murray tributaries. Mt Buffalo, in the Ovens River catchment, received the highest rainfall total of 101 mm. The lower Murray in South Australia received some light falls of 5 to 15 mm.

The rain has provided a welcome boost to Murray inflows, increasing these by about the same amount as did the rain in late July (approximately 100 GL). Flow increased in the Ovens River at Wangaratta from 2 200 to 6 300 ML/day and in the Murray at Biggara from 430 to 7 500 ML/day - the highest observed since September 2005. However, flows at these sites have since started to recede. The recent rain will ensure that September inflows will be above the minimum experienced in 2006 (123 GL).

August 2008 Summary

Rain over August was below the long term average across large areas of the Basin including the upper Murray (see decile map). Murray System inflows for August totalled 275 GL - above the minimum experienced in 2006 (100 GL) but still very much below the long term August average of 1 550 GL. Total MDBC Active storage (which is Hume, Dartmouth, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes) increased by around 200 GL during August to 1 700 GL (20 % capacity). For a more comprehensive update on system inflows and the extended dry period over the last seven years, see the attached drought update.

River Operations

Increased inflows saw storage rise in Dartmouth Reservoir (from 760 to 770 GL or 20% of capacity) and Hume Reservoir (from 800 to 840 GL or 28% of capacity). Higher flows in the Kiewa River caused the flow at Doctors Point (near Albury) to rise from 1 000 to a temporary peak of 3 000 ML/day.

Higher inflows from the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers has allowed Lake Mulwala to be gradually raised to 124.45 m AHD (Australian Height Datum). Release from Yarrawonga Weir has risen from 3 000 to 4 500 ML/day and, depending on stream flows, may be increased further over the coming week.

Torrumbarry Weir pool has been gradually raised from 85.85 to 85.92 m AHD (13 cm below FSL) as part of an operation to increase variability in the stream levels between Echuca and Torrumbarry. Where possible, and without impacting on water accessibility, Torrumbarry weir pool will be gradually varied over the coming months to assist in reducing notch erosion in the river banks and improve river health generally.

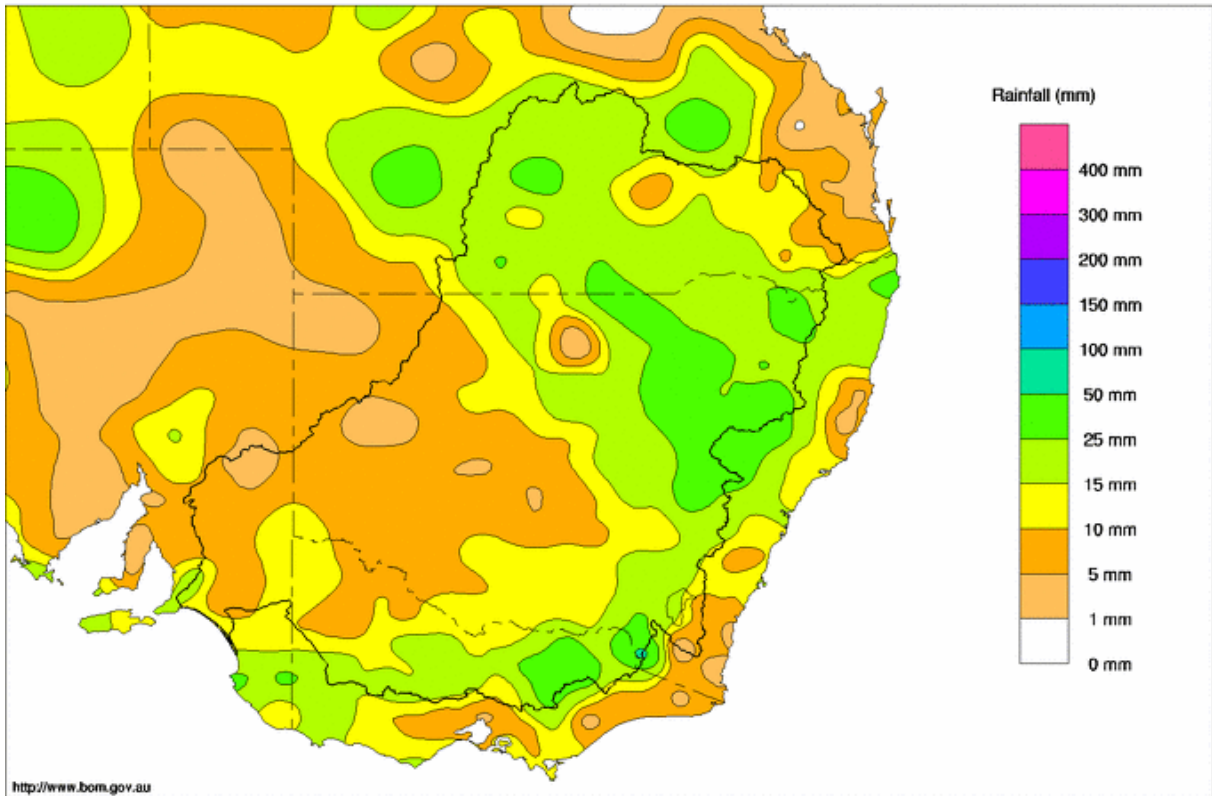
Mildura and Wentworth Weirs are currently being held at just above FSL (34.43 and 30.84 m AHD respectively). Flow at Mildura has increased from 2 800 to 3 300 ML/day over the past week. Wentworth's Lock 10 will re-open in October after being closed since May this year (See media release attached).

Flow to South Australia remained at around 2 000 ML/day. Consequently, the pool levels of Weirs 3 to 6 remained steady at FSL and Weirs 1 and 2, also steady, are currently 6 cm above FSL. The release from Blanchetown Weir (Lock 1) continues to average around 1 800 ML/day. The level of Lake Alexandrina has gradually risen over the past few weeks and is currently -0.25 m AHD. The rise is due to localised rain, a small increase in release from Lock 1 and inflows from tributaries.

For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone, phone 0407 006 332

DAVID DREVERMAN
General Manager

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 3rd September 2008
 Product of the National Climate Centre



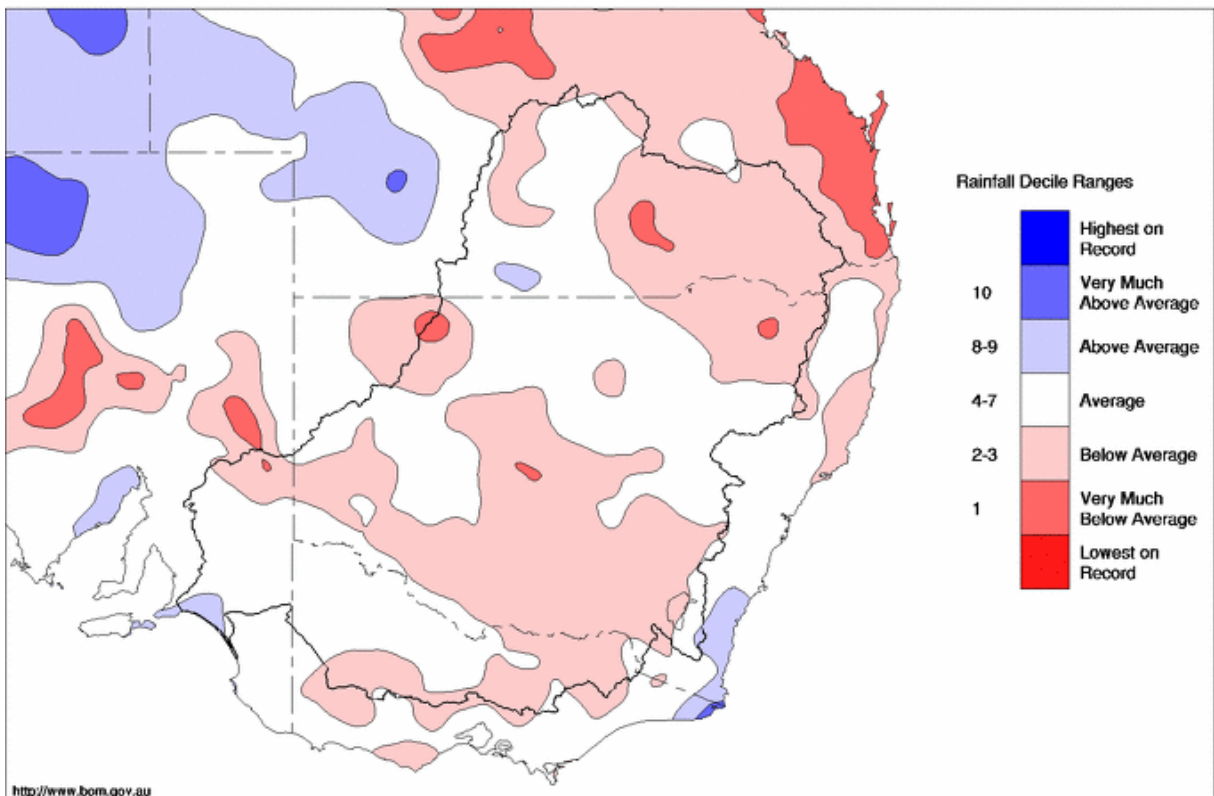
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Issued: 03/09/2008

Murray Darling Rainfall Deciles August 2008

Distribution Based on Gridded Data
 Product of the National Climate Centre



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Issued: 01/09/2008

Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	MDBC Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	414.75	769	20%	80	689	+12
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	177.10	842	28%	30	812	+41
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	23.70	314	46%	100	214	+4
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		509	29%	(- -) #	0	-3
Total		9 352		2 435	26%	--	1 716	+54

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **20%**

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	468	46%	3	465	+6
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	805	49%	24	781	-6
Eildon Reservoir	3 390	724	21%	100	624	+23

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 02-Sep-2008

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2008
Lake Eucumbene - Total	232	+51	Snowy-Murray	+1	296
Snowy-Murray Component	136	+19	Tooma-Tumut	+10	83
Target Storage	1 240		Nett Diversion	-8.8	213
			Murray 1 Release	+15	361

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2008
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	2.9	26.2
Wakool System loss	0.0	.1
Western Murray Irrig.	0.1	.6
Licensed Pumps	0.5	4.1
Lower Darling	0.0	.4
TOTAL	3.6	31.4

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2008
Yarrowonga Main Channel (net)	2.2	4
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	0.3	
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	0.7	3
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	0.1	1
Licensed pumps - LMW	0.1	2
TOTAL	3.4	10 *

* Please note that these values do not include Millewa pumping figures.

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	135 *	(2 000 ML/day)
Flow this week	14.1	
Flow so far this month	6	
Flow last month	64	

* Reduced to approx. 60 GL during September drought contingency operations

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2008
Swan Hill	70	70	90
Euston	90	100	90
Red Cliffs	-	-	-
Merbein	130	130	140
Burtundy (Darling)	350	350	340
Lock 9	160	160	220
Lake Victoria	260	230	240
Berri	450	450	460
Waikerie	520	520	460
Morgan	530	500	490
Mannum	490	500	510
Murray Bridge	570	560	590
Milang (Lake Alex.)	3 560	3 420	3 510
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	2 730	3 040	3 120
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	5 040	5 090	5 040
Goolwa Barrages	16 050	15 230	19 700



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	-	-	-	4 290	F	3 440	3 440
Jingellic	4.0	2.12	208.64	8 230	F	5 350	5 160
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.60	218.49	1 080	S	880	660
Heywoods	5.5	1.12	154.75	460	S	460	460
Doctors Point	5.5	1.69	150.16	2 120	F	1 460	1 190
Albury	4.3	0.84	148.28	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	0.45	126.47	1 190	R	1 070	1 150
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	0.61	115.65	3 010	S	3 060	4 050
Tocumwal	6.4	1.04	104.88	3 100	F	3 310	4 450
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.11	79.66	2 730	F	3 340	3 950
Swan Hill	4.5	0.81	63.73	3 460	F	3 750	3 520
Wakool Junction	8.8	1.97	51.09	4 050	F	4 000	3 350
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	0.91	42.75	4 270	S	3 810	3 390
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	3 330	F	2 980	2 730
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.84	27.60	3 070	R	2 690	2 590
Rufus Junction	-	2.61	19.54	1 650	R	1 530	1 530
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-0.16	-	1 840	S	1 810	1 770
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	1.81	155.04	1 910	F	1 230	950
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	9.48	147.16	5 447	F	3 550	2 940
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.13	92.55	389	R	360	370
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	0.91	80.68	640	F	680	820
Edward at Liewah	-	1.26	56.64	618	R	460	170
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.89	54.38	0	F	0	0
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.35	56.31	132	S	140	140
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.11	-	-	F	-	-
Darling at Bourke	-	3.95	-	14	S	10	20
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.70	-	52	S	40	10

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	8 330	4 530
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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	-0.43	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	-0.12	+0.30
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	-0.13	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	-0.01	-0.03
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.02	+0.08
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.03	+0.08	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.02	+0.20
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.04	+0.20	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	-0.01	+0.16
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.02	-0.02	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.07	+0.17
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.02	-0.09	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.06	-0.91

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-3.76	0.545	69.895	202
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.23	0.026	61.326	173.33



Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

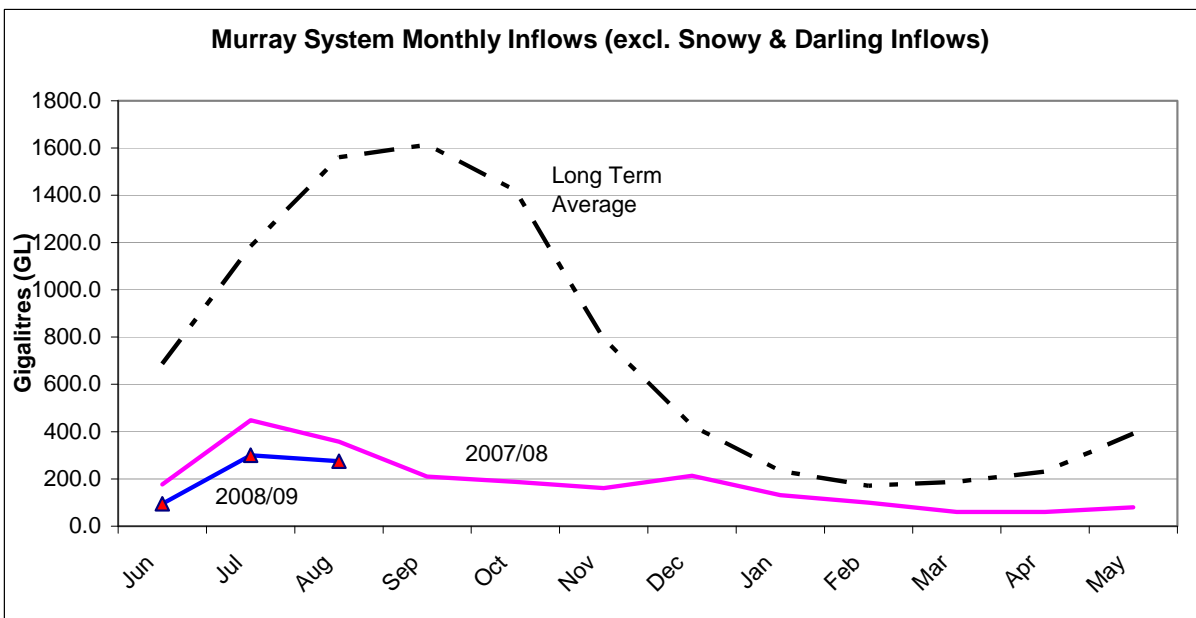
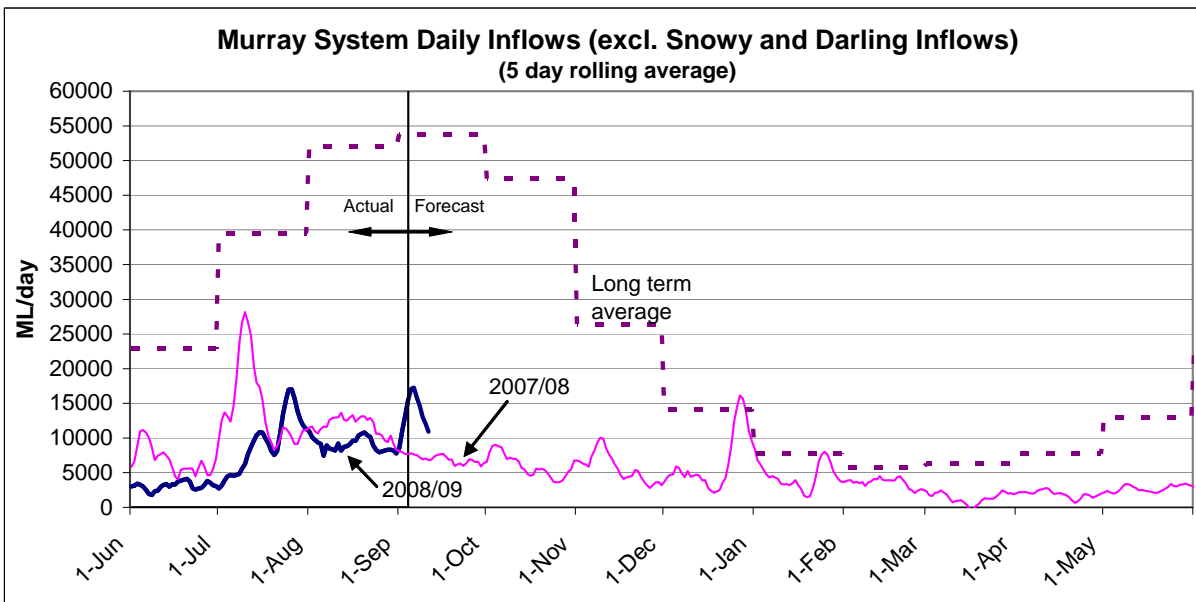
	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	-0.27

Barrages

Fishways @ Barrages

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertical Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	-0.15	All closed	-	Closed
Mundoo	26 openings	-0.18	All closed	-	-
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed	-	-
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed	-	-
Tauwichee	322 gates	-	All closed	Closed	Closed

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



State Allocations (as at 3rd September 2008)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	25%
General security	0%

NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	60%
General security	0%

NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	0%

Victoria - Murray Valley

high reliability	0%
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Victoria - Goulburn Valley

high reliability	0%
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South Australia - Murray Valley

irrigation allocation	6%
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NSW : http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/water/state_mm_murr_water_quality.shtml#alloc
 VIC : <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp>
 SA : <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html>



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 4 September 2008

Wentworth's Lock 10 to re-open in October



Lock 10 at Wentworth which closed in May this year for major refurbishment will re-open to boat navigation the week beginning 27 October.

Murray-Darling Basin Commission Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik said the works were part of planned, necessary maintenance and upgrading of structures along the Murray.

“Some components of the lock had been in place since it was built in 1929 and were nearing the end of their useful life.

“The work has included emptying the lock, removing and repainting the gates and refurbishing the valves

“The four lock gates, each measuring 9 by 7.5 metres and weighing more than 18 tonnes, are being grit blasted and completely repainted to ensure long life,” Dr Craik said.

“The twelve main valves, each measuring 2 by 1 metres and weighing about a tonne, are being replaced.

“Quite a number of other components are also being reconditioned or replaced.

“We and State Water, who are carrying out the work, chose this time of year as it is the quietest period for tourist craft, the main users of the river,” Dr Craik said.”

Dr Craik said the works had not had any impact on the water levels in the adjacent weir pools.

State Water will advise local councils, visitor centres, boating associations, boat hire companies and registered owners of houseboats in the area likely to be affected of the re-opening date.

“With these major works done, the lock will be in top operating condition for decades to come,” Dr Craik said.

For more information on Murray navigation and boating inquiries contact NSW Maritime's Infoline on (02) 9563 8557.

Media contact: Sam Leone 0407 006 332

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MURRAY SYSTEM

Drought Update

ISSUE 15: SEPTEMBER 2008

IN BRIEF

System inflows remain critically low. August rainfall was below average and the monthly system inflow of 275 GL was less than a fifth of the long term average of 1,550 GL. The combined inflow for the three winter months (of 670 GL) was the equal 5th lowest in 117 years of records.

In the two years ending August 2008, Murray system inflows were 3,540 GL which is just over half of the previous two year minimum prior to this drought (6,800 GL in 1943-45).

Storage levels also remain extremely low. Active storage in the Murray system is only 1,690 GL (or 20 % of capacity), which is well below the August long term average of 5,600 GL (or 62 % capacity).

A persistent rainfall deficiency during the past 7 years, particularly in the alpine areas, has been the main cause for the record low inflows to the Murray system. Above average temperatures have exacerbated the situation.

A target flow of 900 ML/day along the Murray past Wellington, combined with local rainfall and reduced evaporative losses during the winter months, has allowed the water level in Lake Alexandrina to gradually rise to its current level of -0.26 m AHD (or 1.0 m below Full Supply Level). This has provided some short term relief and has delayed the potential for acidification. However, with the arrival of warmer weather in spring, evaporative losses will start to increase, and the water level is expected to start falling again.

The outlook for the Murray system remains very serious. Critical human needs can now be met through to next winter but water available for irrigation remains very low. Prospects for the coming season are dependent on rainfall and run-off that is yet to happen. Water use is likely to be well below average and similar to the last two years.

Even with above average rainfall in the coming months, inflows would likely remain well below average. Recovery of the system is likely to take several years of above average rainfall.

RAINFALL AND SYSTEM INFLOWS

After a very dry autumn and a record low inflow in June, rainfall in the upper Murray and its tributaries was slightly above average for July. However, due to the very dry catchments, the July system inflow of 300 GL remained well below the long term July average of 1,180 GL (see Figure 1). August rainfall was once again below average and the monthly inflow decreased to 275 GL which is less than a fifth of the long term average of 1,550 GL. The three monthly inflow for winter (of 670 GL) was the equal 5th lowest in 117 years of records.

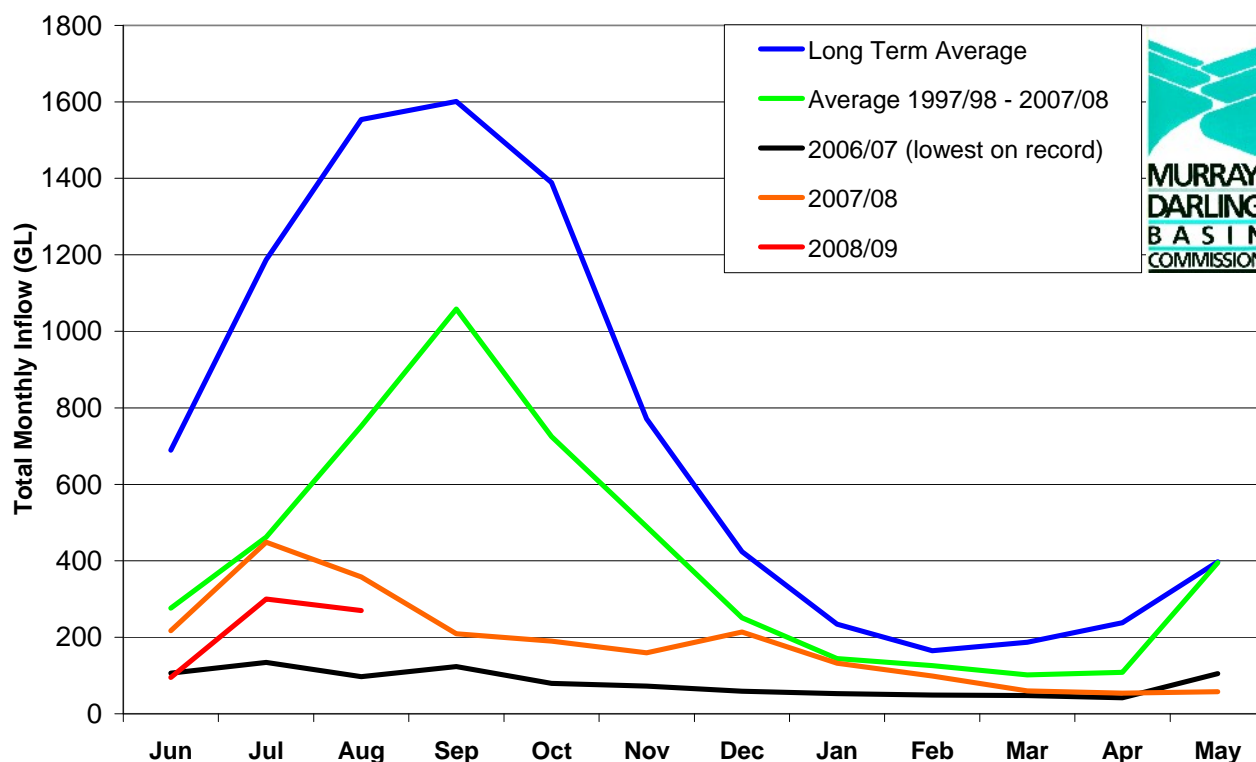


Figure 1. Murray system monthly inflows (excluding Darling inflows and Snowy releases)

SYSTEM STORAGE

The current volume of active storage in the Murray system (Hume Reservoir, Dartmouth Reservoir and Lake Victoria), is 1,690 GL or 20 % of capacity (Figure 2). This is similar to the storage level of 1,710 GL at the end of August 2007 but well below the August long term average of 5,600 GL (or 62 % capacity). There is an additional 500 GL in Menindee Lakes (which remains under control of NSW) some of which (about 220 GL) NSW plans to release into the Murray system between September and December 2008.

All the water currently in storage and under Commission control is fully committed for critical human needs, individual carryover, announced allocations, and the river and storage losses that will occur while supplying this water. A total of 990 GL is currently committed to South Australia, of which about 350 GL is expected to pass through to the Lower Lakes. However, as this is only about half the net annual evaporation for the Lower Lakes, it is expected that the water level in the Lower Lakes will continue to fall if extreme dry conditions persist.

Elsewhere in the Basin, storage levels are also very low. The total volume of water in all Basin storages managed by the MDBC and State governments, is about 5,300 GL, or 23 % of capacity. In most valleys, the small volumes of water held in government storages are already earmarked for town water, stock and domestic supplies, carryover or to meet system losses. Storages in the Snowy Mountains (which are managed by Snowy Hydro) also remain at record low levels, similar to this time last year.

Current storage levels across the Basin are publicly available at the following websites;

MDBC storages; http://www.mdbc.gov.au/subs/rmw_backup/riverdata/imagemaps/default.htm

NSW storages; <http://www.waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/>

Victorian storages; <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/storage-levels/>

Queensland storages; http://www.sunwater.com.au/water_store.htm

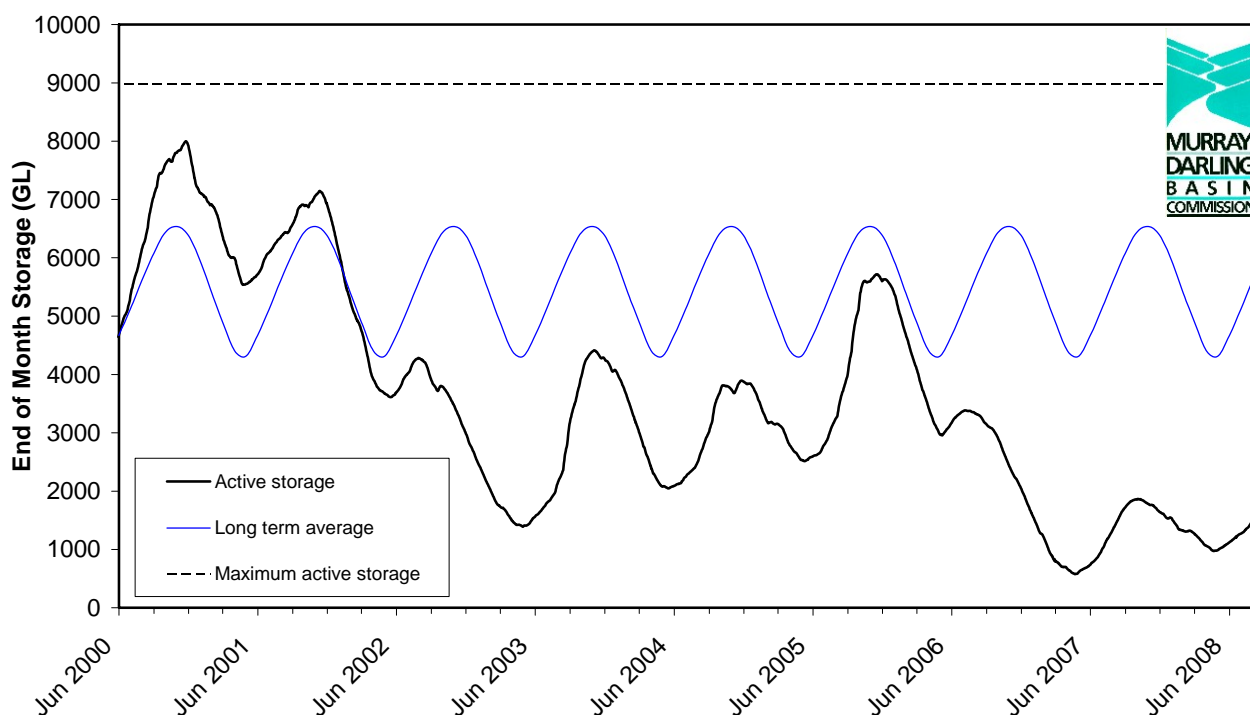


Figure 2. MDBC active storage, June 2000 to August 2008.

THE CURRENT DROUGHT

For large parts of southern and eastern Australia, dry conditions have persisted since October 1996, a total of almost 12 years. During the last 7 years in particular, the Murray-Darling Basin has experienced severe rainfall deficiencies, and from September 2001 to August 2008 was the 2nd driest seven-year period (the driest was from 1939 to 1946). This rainfall deficiency, particularly in the alpine areas, has been the main cause for the record low inflows to the Murray system.

Other factors that have a potential impact on inflows include the 2003 bushfires, the increased number of farm dams, groundwater extraction and the increasing area of plantation forestry. Initial evidence however, suggests that these have had much less impact than the severe rainfall deficit combined with increased temperatures.

The current dry period and low water availability can be put into perspective by comparisons with similar extended droughts in the early and mid twentieth century. The average annual inflow of 3,800 GL/yr during the current drought (2002 to 2008) is lower than that experienced in the previous worst two droughts on record; 4,900 GL/yr in 1897 to 1904, and 5,600 GL/yr in 1938 to 1946. The current drought has also recorded the lowest inflows for virtually all periods from one month to ten years. In particular, for the two years ending August 2008, Murray system inflows were 3,540 GL which is almost half the previous two year minimum prior to this drought (of 6,800 GL in 1943-45).

MURRAY FLOODS AND DROUGHTS – AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Australia's inland rivers, including those in the Murray-Darling Basin, can have highly variable flows from one year to the next, as a result of highly erratic rainfall patterns. Floods and droughts are the extremes of this variability, and both occur along the Murray and its tributaries. In 1956, major floods in both the Murray and the Darling arrived at Wentworth simultaneously, resulting in a very large flood downstream. Other major flood years for the Murray include 1867, 1870, 1917, 1931, 1974, and 1975. Droughts are more difficult to define and, unlike flooding, the onset can be very gradual. Dry periods which resulted in abnormally low flows along the Murray include 1897-04, 1914-15, 1938-46, 1967-68, 1982-83 and 2002-08. Extended dry periods are a recurring event and communities along the river have dealt with such episodes in the past (Figure 3). However, this current period of record low inflows, combined with the level of water entitlements, has placed unprecedented stress on communities, agricultural enterprises and the environment.

DID THE MURRAY EVER STOP FLOWING?

Yes. It was reported to have stopped flowing between Tocumwal and Moama in 1850, and in 1902 during the Federation drought it stopped flowing for about 6 months. Again in the 1914-1915 drought, flows in the Murray reached very low levels (see Figure 3).

Modelling has also been used to simulate flows in the Murray under natural conditions; in other words if all dams and weirs did not exist and no water was extracted from the system. This modelling demonstrates that under natural conditions the Murray would have ceased flowing during the more severe droughts, including the current dry period. In the last couple of years a continuous flow along the length of the Murray has been maintained by drawing upon water stored upstream, particularly in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs when other tributary inflows are low.



Figure 3. Murray River at Wentworth, NSW during the 1914 drought. (Photo courtesy of the State Library of South Australia)

THE ENVIRONMENT

The prolonged dry period across the southern half of the Basin continues to severely impact on wetland and floodplain ecosystems. Whilst portions of the Barmah-Millewa Forest have received limited flooding as recently as 2005, the last significant flooding of the mid and lower floodplains of the Murray downstream of Euston was 12 years ago (see Figure 4). Floodplain vegetation is under severe stress. The 2007 Living Murray Icon Site condition report indicates that up to 80 % of River Red Gums are declining or dead at significant wetlands along the Murray, such as Koondrook-Perricoota Forest and the Chowilla floodplain.

In November 2007, aerial surveys of waterbirds along the Murray indicated that the drought had greatly reduced the availability of wetland and floodplain habitat and this had a severe impact on waterbird abundance and breeding. The greatest number of birds was recorded in the Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth where a total of about 250,000 birds and 42 species were observed. Most of the other Living Murray icon sites supported low numbers and very little breeding.

In May 2008 a small volume of environmental water (7.7 GL) was delivered to Gunbower Forest and this has stimulated an encouraging response from plant and animal life. Monitoring teams have reported that tortoises are breeding, frogs are spawning and ducks have arrived to feed. This response emphasizes the importance of using the small volumes of environmental water available, to maintain drought refuges along the river and avoid loss of threatened species.

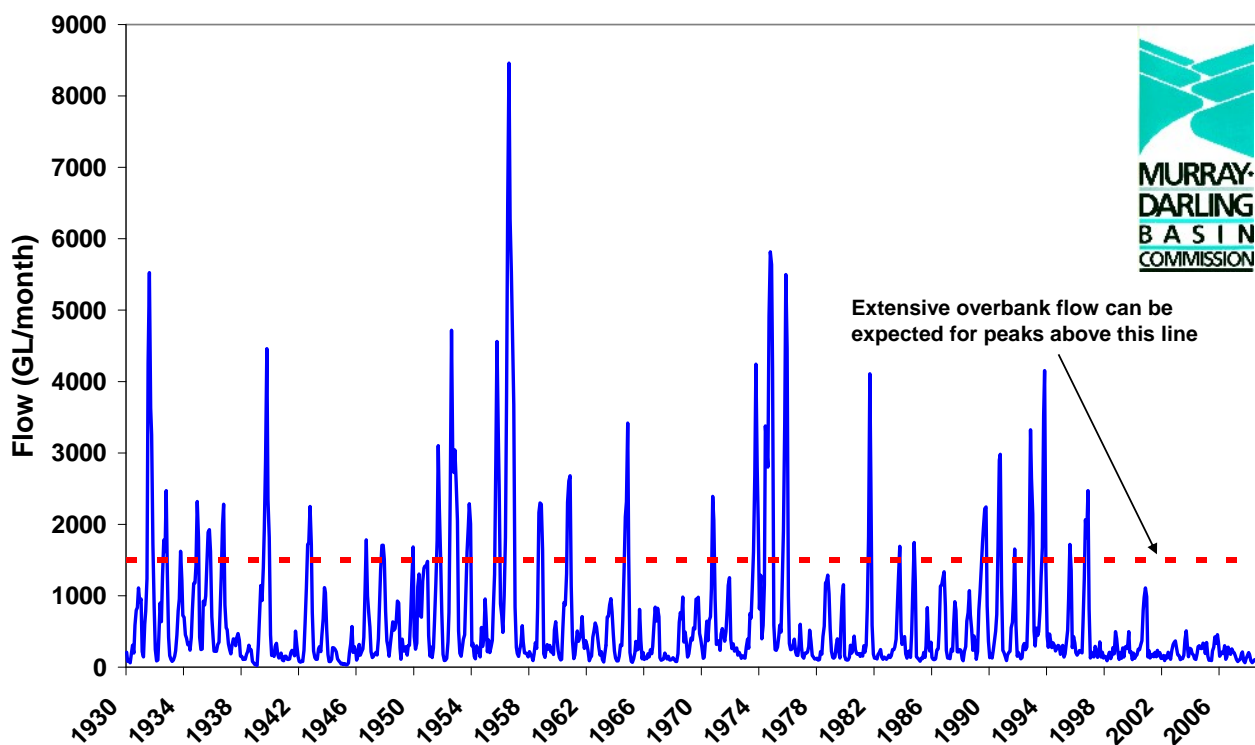


Figure 4. Monthly flows past Euston in the mid-Murray, indicating that extensive overbank flow last occurred in 1996

Overall, however, the riverine environments across the southern and central regions of the Basin are in severe decline and this is not expected to improve until there is a very significant improvement in rainfall and system inflows.

In the northern Basin, the benefits of good summer rainfall and associated flooding are still evident at some sites. For instance, at Narran Lakes it has been estimated that over 80,000 chicks (mostly Straw-necked Ibis) have successfully fledged, and although the water is receding, the lakes are now dominated by thousands of

ducks and teal. Most wetlands and lakes along the Warrego and Paroo Rivers are also drying up, but those still containing some water are supporting large concentrations of waterbirds.

BASIN-WIDE DIVERSIONS

Figure 5 shows Basin-wide diversions for 1997-98 to 2007-08. Total Basin diversions for 2007-08 were only 3,910 GL which is the lowest in the past 11 years, and well below the average of 8,870 GL.

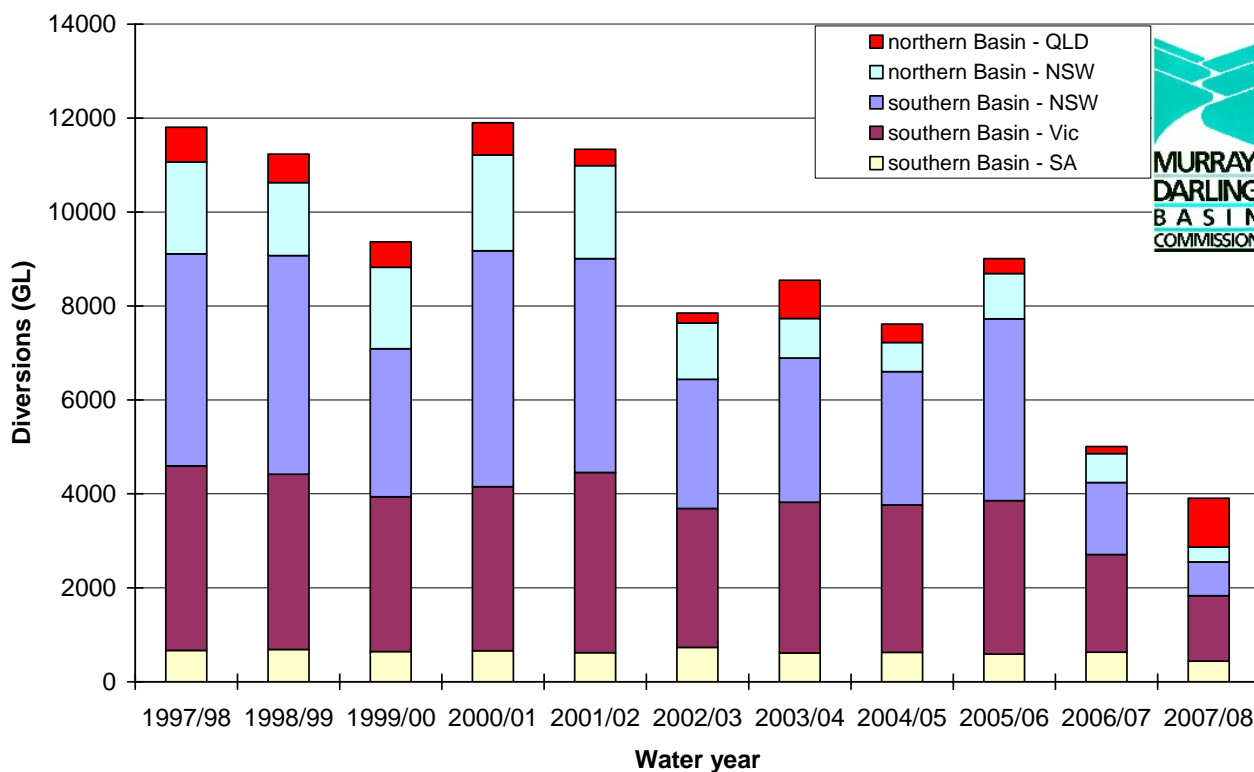


Figure 5. Basin-wide diversions for the years 1997-98 to 2007-08.

THE LOWER LAKES

The flow over Blanchetown Weir (Lock 1) is being carefully managed to maintain the water quality at the major urban pumping stations between Blanchetown and Wellington. Also, a target flow of 900 ML/day is passing downstream to Wellington and into the Lower Lakes. This flow, along with local rainfall and reduced evaporative losses during the winter months, has allowed the water level in Lake Alexandrina to gradually rise from its record low of -0.5 m AHD in April 2008 to its current level of -0.26 m AHD. This has provided some short term relief and has delayed the potential for acidification in Lake Alexandrina. To reduce the risk of acidification in Lake Albert, water continues to be pumped from Lake Alexandrina, and this has resulted in Lake Albert's water level increasing from about -0.6 m AHD in April 2008 to about -0.20 m AHD.

However, with the arrival of warmer weather in spring, evaporative losses will start to increase, and the level of Lake Alexandrina is expected to start falling again. This will be closely monitored while short and longer term management strategies are developed to maintain Lakes Alexandrina and Albert above acidification thresholds.

OUTLOOK

The Bureau of Meteorology's latest outlook for total spring (September to November) rainfall is neutral for much of south-eastern Australia, but there are moderate trends in the odds towards below normal rainfall in an area covering eastern South Australia and far south-western NSW (Figure 6).

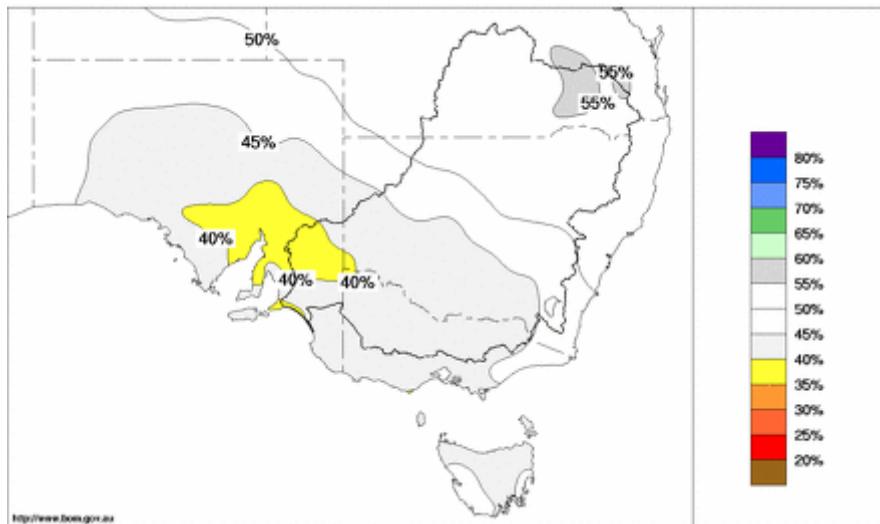


Figure 6. Chance of exceeding the median rainfall: September to November 2008. (source; Bureau of Meteorology)

The prospect for improved water availability in the Murray system is dependent on inflows during spring, which typically accounts for a large proportion of the annual total. However, the protracted nature of this current dry period, and the consistent above average temperatures, have dried out catchments and reduced base flows from groundwater systems to rivers. Analysis of the past 117 years of records indicates that there is a strong correlation between dry periods from April to June and continuing low inflows for the remainder of the water year. It can be expected, therefore, that even with above average rainfall in the coming months, inflows could remain well below average. Recovery of the system is likely to take several years of above average rainfall.

Figure 7 uses historical data to provide a forecast for the remainder of the 2008-09 water year.

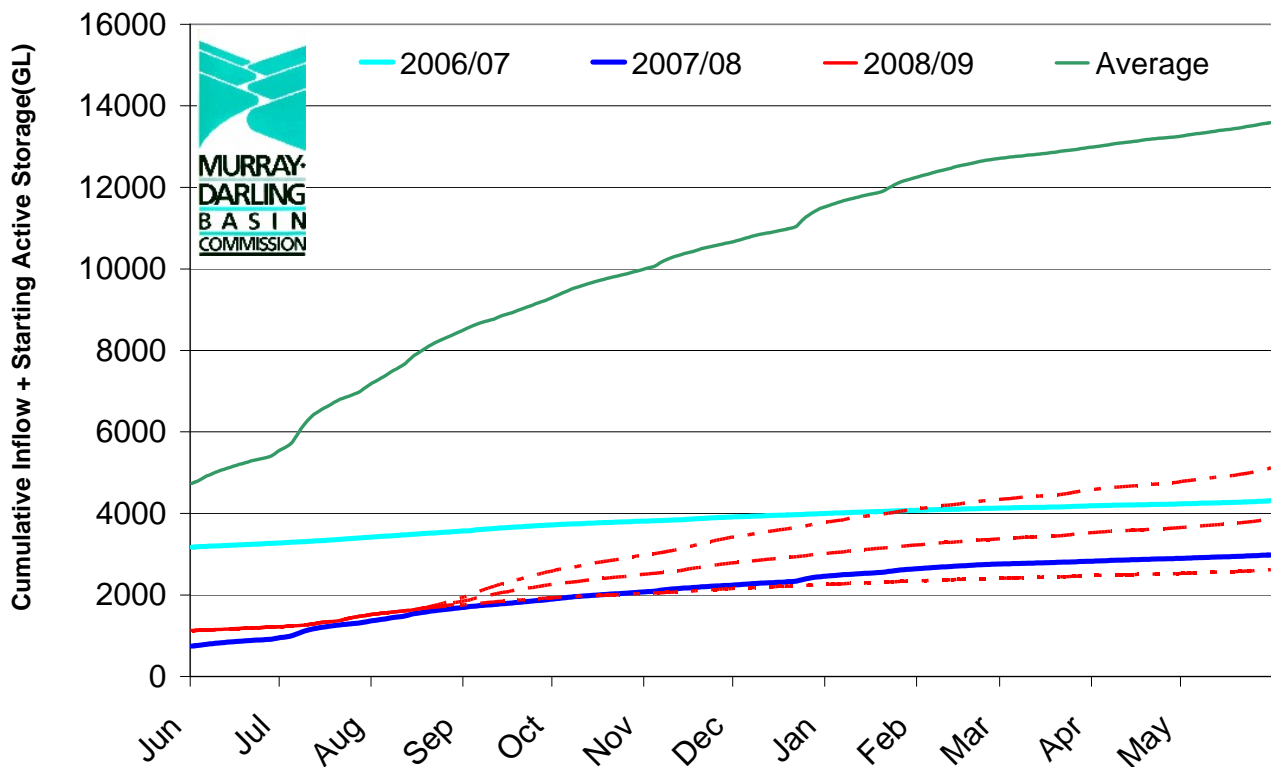


Figure 7. Cumulative System Inflows for selected years, and forecast for 2008-09 (excluding Snowy releases and Darling inflows)

It shows opening storage levels plus cumulative inflow and is a good indicator of likely water availability during very dry years. An average year would start at 4,700 GL and rise to about 13,500 GL. The 2006-07 water year started with about 3,200 GL in storage, and although inflows were at a record low, there was still more water available than in 2007-08. This year (2008-09) started with a little more water in storage than last year, due mainly to prudent management by the States to set aside water for critical human needs, and irrigators who carried over water from last year to underpin this year's watering, particularly of permanent horticulture. The dotted lines show the lower, median and upper range for future improvements, based on data from years following the driest 20 winters on record. As can be seen, the outlook for the Murray system remains very serious, with prospects for the coming season being almost entirely dependent on rainfall and run-off that is yet to happen. Water use is likely to be well below the long term average and similar to the last two years.

Critical human needs can now be met through to next winter but water available for irrigation remains very low. Further details about allocations and access to carryover are available on the following State water authority websites:

NSW; www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/water/state_mm_murr_water_quality.shtml#alloc

VIC; www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp

SA; www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MDBC will provide further drought updates in the coming months. Additional information is available at www.mdbc.gov.au also from the relevant Australian and State Government Agencies. For media interviews with MDBC personnel, please contact Sam Leone, MDBC Media Liaison, telephone 0407 006 332.

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