

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 26 November 2008

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28 November, 2008



Rainfall and Inflows

There have been good falls of rain across eastern Australia during the past week (see Map). The highest falls were in the coastal catchments near Brisbane, but up to 100 mm was also recorded further west in the Darling Downs. Likewise, heavy rain was recorded in the coastal catchments of Gippsland in eastern Victoria, and this extended into the Victorian Alps and Snowy Mountains where up to 100 mm of rain and snow was recorded. November rainfall to date has been above average across much of the Basin, with the exception of the lower Murray region in South Australia.

Despite the good rain in the north of the Basin, rises in streamflows have generally been small. The best response was in the Macintyre River along the NSW-QLD border, which peaked at 15 000 ML/day at Boggabilla but has now receded to 2 000 ML/day.

In the south of the Basin, rises in streamflow were also small. The best responses were in the Mitta Mitta River (2 000 ML/day at Hinnomunjie) and the upper Murray (3 100 ML/day at Biggara). Murray system inflows for November are likely to be about 140 – 160 GL which is well below the long term average of 780 GL.

River Operations

MDBC active storage decreased by 12 GL to 1 850 GL (22 % capacity). In addition, there is a total of 240 GL in Menindee Lakes which remains under NSW control.

Dartmouth release was temporarily increased to 3 000 ML/day on the 22nd November and then reduced back to 300 ML/day over the next few days. This transferred additional water to Hume Reservoir and also increased the variability of flow along the Mitta Mitta River, which should benefit the riverine environment. Further transfers from Dartmouth Reservoir are planned in the coming months. The flow at Doctors Point (downstream of Hume Reservoir and the Kiewa River) is steady at 7 600 ML/day.

The water level in Lake Mulwala is steady at 124.7 m AHD (20 cm below full supply level) and the release from Yarrawonga Weir is steady at 7 500 ML/day. NSW State Water has successfully delivered a 30 GL stock and domestic replenishment flow to the majority of landholders in the Wakool System, with all supplying regulators now closed. Flows were delivered to the Wakool, Yallakool, Colligen, Niemur and Merran systems, with a portion of the Niemur River receiving water for the first time in two years. The environmental benefits of this flow are expected to continue throughout the coming year due to significant watering of the riparian zone along these streams. As the first flush of water from the Wakool system reached the Murray, the salinity at Wakool Junction has risen from 110 to 370 EC. The increased salinity has been slowly moving downstream and the salinity at Euston Weir has increased from 70 to 170 EC. The magnitude of this event is no different to other years when a rise in salinity has been associated with the first flush of water from the Wakool System.

The water level at Torrumbarry is 85.88 m AHD (17 cm below FSL) and is being gradually raised towards the full supply level of 86.05 m AHD. The release at Torrumbarry is 6 400 ML/day and should remain fairly steady during the coming week. Further downstream, the release from Euston Weir is higher (at 8 100 ML/day) due to the additional flows from the Edward-Wakool system and the inter-valley trade water which is being delivered from the Murrumbidgee River.

The release from Menindee Lakes is currently 2 900 ML/day and will gradually decline over the coming weeks as the water level in Lake Pamamaroo continues to fall. The storage in Lake Victoria (which is currently 280 GL or 41 % capacity) has been gradually increasing since early November as a

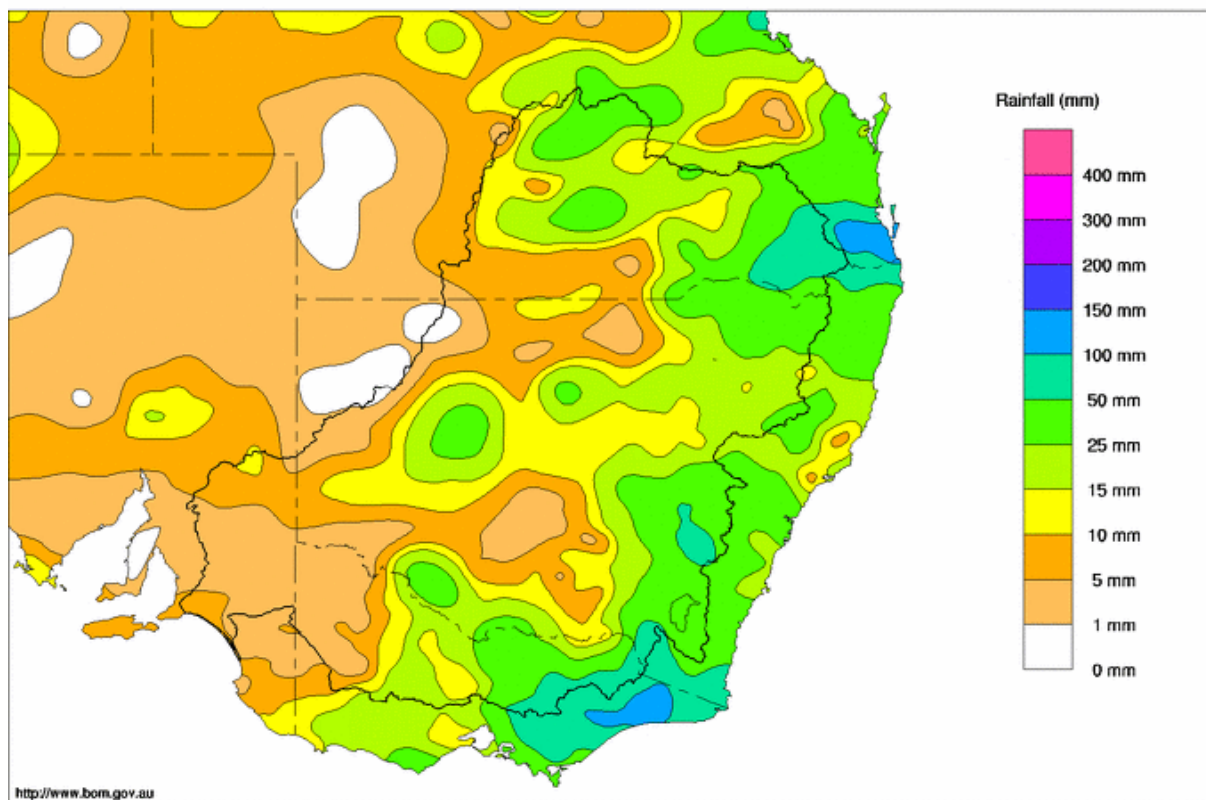
result of the increased flows along both the lower Darling and the Murray. The flow to South Australia is steady at 4 000 ML/day and the weir pools of Locks 1 to 6 are all close to full supply level. Since early November, the salinity at Morgan (between Locks 1 and 2) has decreased from 600 to 500 EC, while the salinity at Wellington (downstream of Lock 1) has been steady at about 600 EC. The water level in Lake Alexandrina is -0.45 m AHD (or 1.2 m below FSL), compared with a level of +0.07 m AHD at this time last year.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission has started releasing small volumes of environmental water to protect critical drought refuges in South Australia and Victoria and to prevent irreversible damage to the environment (see attached media release).

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

DAVID DREVERMAN
General Manager

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 26th November 2008
Product of the National Climate Centre



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Issued: 26/11/2008

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	418.86	873	22%	80	793	+1
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	177.74	908	30%	30	878	-29
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	23.35	280	41%	100	180	+16
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		242	14%	(- -) #	0	-27
Total		9 352		2 302	25%	--	1 850	-39

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **22%**

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	501	49%	3	498	+3
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	671	41%	24	647	-22
Eildon Reservoir	3 390	750	22%	100	650	+10

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 25-Nov-2008

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversions (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2008
Lake Eucumbene - Total	665	+20	Snowy-Murray	+0	355
Snowy-Murray Component	361	+22	Tooma-Tumut	+7	165
Target Storage	1 450		Nett Diversion	-7.4	190
			Murray 1 Release	+2	532

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL) *

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2008
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	1.5	52.6
Wakool System loss	0.7	22.5
Western Murray Irrig.	0.7	6.5
Licensed Pumps	3.5	33.8
Lower Darling	0.4	3.4
TOTAL	6.8	118.8

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2008
Yarrowonga Main Channel (net)	.3	39
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	3.2	56
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	3.3	31
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	0.1	4
Licensed pumps - LMW	0.0	2
TOTAL	6.9	131

* Figures derived from Estimates and Monthly Data. Please note that not all data may have been available at the time of creating this report.

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	180 *	(4 100 ML/day)
Flow this week	28.6	
Flow so far this month	108	
Flow last month	111	

* Reduced to approx. 126 GL during November drought contingency operations

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2008
Swan Hill	60	60	70
Euston	180	160	90
Red Cliffs	90	100	120
Merbein	100	110	130
Burtundy (Darling)	370	370	370
Lock 9	250	260	210
Lake Victoria	250	270	240
Berri	320	320	390
Waikerie	440	440	530
Morgan	510	510	550
Mannum	650	640	540
Murray Bridge	600	570	550
Milang (Lake Alex.)	4 170	4 150	3 780
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	3 970	3 880	3 320
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	5 920	5 950	5 250
Goolwa Barrages	18 140	18 180	17 130



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	-	-	-	780	F	530	1 140
Jingellic	4.0	1.49	208.01	3 070	F	1 900	2 010
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.51	218.40	670	F	1 260	480
Heywoods	5.5	2.18	155.81	6 600	R	6 250	7 130
Doctors Point	5.5	2.40	150.87	7 740	R	6 960	7 860
Albury	4.3	1.36	148.80	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	1.74	127.76	6 390	R	6 530	6 780
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.33	116.37	7 510	R	7 500	6 500
Tocumwal	6.4	1.82	105.66	7 360	S	7 270	6 420
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.16	80.71	6 440	R	6 100	5 430
Swan Hill	4.5	1.19	64.11	5 830	R	5 600	5 070
Wakool Junction	8.8	2.51	51.63	6 200	R	6 010	5 200
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	1.59	43.43	8 080	R	7 520	6 170
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	5 650	F	5 360	4 250
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	3.11	27.87	7 460	R	6 870	6 000
Rufus Junction	-	2.97	19.90	3 610	R	3 550	3 660
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-0.30	-	2 040	R	1 900	1 980
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	1.28	154.51	972	F	680	480
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	8.16	145.84	1 276	R	1 080	550
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.14	92.56	386	F	440	340
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	0.96	80.73	690	F	700	920
Edward at Liewah	-	1.58	56.96	882	R	780	580
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	1.24	54.73	138	F	150	90
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	1.83	57.79	1 348	F	1 570	1 600
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.34	-	303	R	100	10
Darling at Bourke	-	3.99	-	49	R	30	20
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	1.93	-	3 100	F	3 160	3 210

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	4 170	1 980
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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	-0.20	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	-0.05	+0.67
No. 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	-0.17	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	-0.07	-0.01
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.00	+0.06
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.02	+0.12	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	-0.03	+0.33
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.03	+0.47	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	-0.04	+0.13
No. 9 Kulline	27.40	+0.05	+0.01	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.02	+0.14
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.04	+0.10	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.06	-1.05

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-4.28	1.307	70.657	1291
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.02	1.262	62.562	1578.15



Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

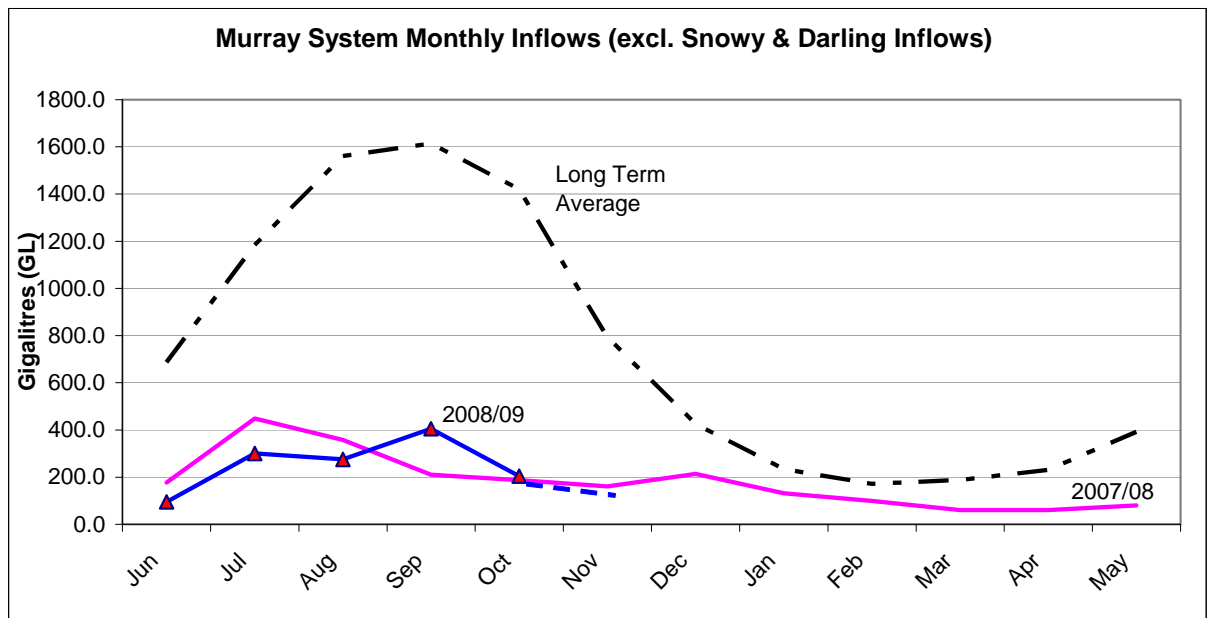
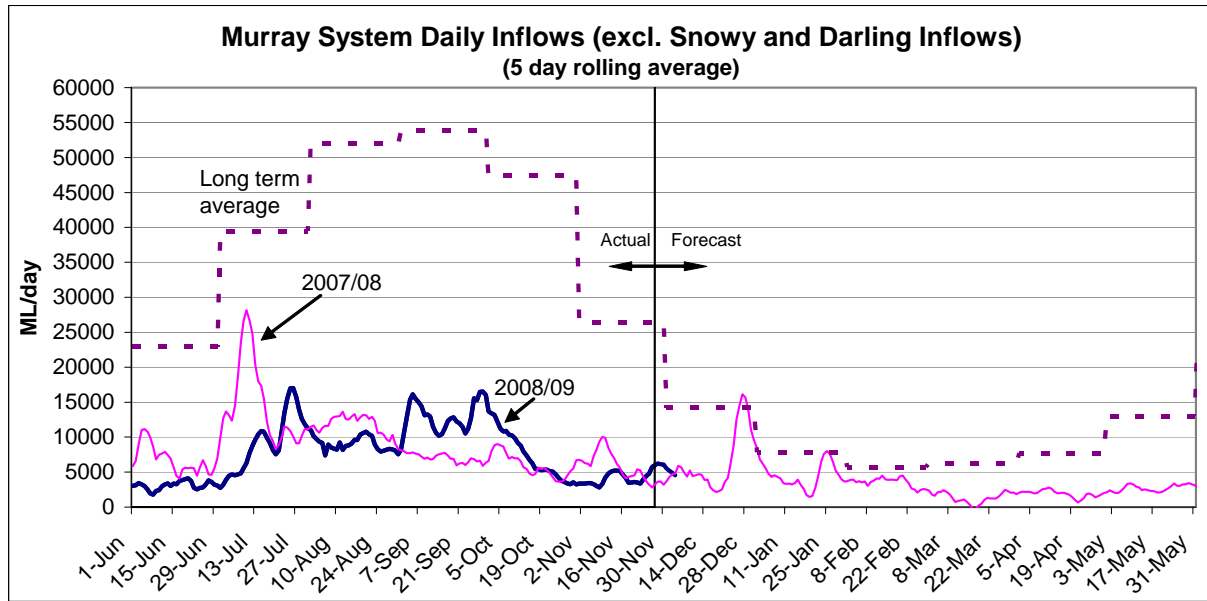
	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	-0.45

Barrages

Fishways @ Barrages

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertical Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	-0.37	All closed	-	Closed
Mundoo	26 openings	-0.38	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 26 November 2008)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	95%
General security	2%

NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	95%
General security	9%

NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	30%

Victoria - Murray Valley

high reliability	21%
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Victoria - Goulburn Valley

high reliability	18%
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South Australia - Murray Valley

High security	15%
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NSW : http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currnr.html
 VIC : <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp>
 SA : <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html>



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 19 November 2008

Water released to protect critical drought refuges in South Australia and Victoria

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission has started releasing up to 1.395 GL of environmental water to protect critical drought refuges in South Australia and Victoria and to prevent irreversible damage to the environment.

Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM said critical refuge areas on the Chowilla Floodplain, one of the icon sites of The Living Murray program, would receive 895 ML.

Another 500 ML would go to protecting critical drought refuges in Barmah Forest, also one of The Living Murray icon sites.

“This water is available through the MDBC’s Living Murray program,” Dr Craik said. “It consists of Living Murray water allocation on the Environmental Water Register and some small carry-over from last year.

“This water is not available for irrigation use and will not impact on the availability of water for other users.

“The MDBC partner governments agree these are among the highest priority sites for use of the very small volume of environmental water available in the River Murray system this season.”

Dr Craik said six high priority sites, which have received water in previous years, will be watered on the Chowilla Floodplain.

Since 2004 environmental water has been provided to 24 sites across the Chowilla Floodplain to halt the decline in health of floodplain vegetation, including river red gums. Monitoring has shown that follow-up watering in previously watered areas is important to protect the benefits of watering and sustaining tree health.

“The river red gums, black box and many other species that occur in this system are threatened by these prolonged drought conditions and need some respite,” Dr Craik said.

Maintaining these drought refuges is critical for the recovery of wildlife and vegetation at Chowilla, including nationally threatened species such as the Southern Bell Frog.

Dr Craik said that the water for Barmah Forest, which can be delivered under current flow conditions, will replenish the last remaining freshwater pools to maintain critical refuges in Gulf Creek for native fish, including the southern pygmy perch and dwarf flat headed gudgeons, and turtles.

Without water, the pools will dry out this year, most likely in early summer. This top-up watering will provide habitat at a single refuge site in Barmah Forest and will link a suite of deep pools that cover an areas of at least 3 km. The pools should maintain water until next winter, thanks to the top-up watering.

“Unfortunately there will still be large areas of Living Murray icon sites that will continue to decline through lack of water,” said Dr Craik. “But we hope the small areas of Chowilla Floodplain and Barmah Forest receiving top-up water will provide a vital life support for important species.”

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