



# RIVER MURRAY WEEKLY REPORT

## FOR THE WEEK ENDING WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2009

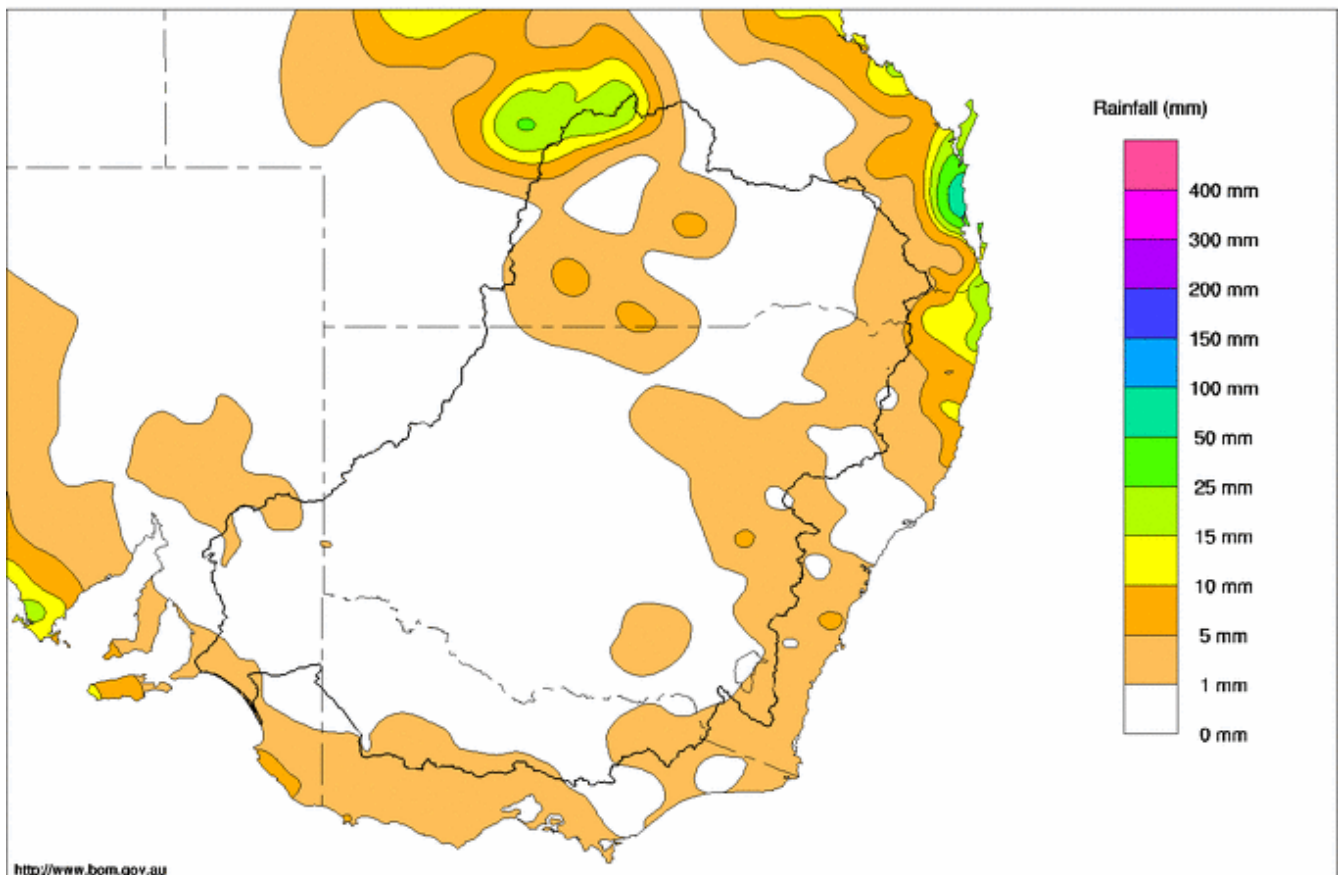
Trim Ref: D09/3600

26 March, 2009

### Rainfall and Inflows

During the past week, very little rain was recorded across the Murray-Darling Basin (see Map). Dry conditions have persisted throughout March and this has caused a steady recession of inflows in both the Murray and Darling River systems. In the Murray, monthly inflows for March 2009 continue to track towards the record low of about 50 GL recorded in March 2007. At Bourke, on the Darling River, flows have receded from a peak of 9 700 ML/day in early March to 650 ML/day. Further upstream at Mungindi on the Barwon River, the flow has receded to 80 ML/day.

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 25th March 2009  
Product of the National Climate Centre



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Issued: 25/03/2009



## Algal Blooms

In recent weeks, red alerts have been issued for blue-green algae in Hume Reservoir and Lake Mulwala. These have now spread further downstream and the Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee has now issued a red alert for blue-green algae covering the Murray from Hume Dam to Torrumbarry Weir (see attached media release). This indicates that waters are unsuitable for recreational use or primary contact by domestic users and may also pose a threat to livestock. However, town water supply for all towns in this reach of the Murray is being treated and is safe for human consumption. Further information can be obtained from the Regional Algal Coordinating Committee's freecall hotline on 1800 999 457.

## River Operations

MDBA active storage continues to decline, and is currently at 971 GL (or 11 % capacity), which is slightly lower than this time last year (1 085 GL). There is an additional 257 GL in Menindee Lakes, which remains under NSW control.

Storage in Hume Reservoir decreased by 46 GL to 155 GL (5 % capacity), and storage in Dartmouth Reservoir remained fairly steady at 855 GL (22 % capacity). If conditions remain dry, a small volume of water will need to be transferred, possibly as early as next week, from Dartmouth Reservoir to prevent the water level in Hume Reservoir from dropping too low. The flow at Doctors Point has been averaging about 8 400 ML/day and is likely to gradually decrease over the coming weeks as irrigation diversions along the Murray are steadily reduced.

In early March, the release from Yarrowonga Weir was 9 500 ML/day, and since then, has been steadily reduced to 5 000 ML/day in response to reduced downstream water demands. Further reductions are likely to occur in the coming weeks. In response, flows past Torrumbarry Weir and through the Sunraysia District are now steadily decreasing. For instance, during the past week the flow past Euston Weir has fallen from 5 200 to 4 000 ML/day and, if it remains fairly dry, is likely to continue falling to about 3 000 ML/day in the coming week.

The small volume of water (about 12 GL) released from Menindee Lakes is now arriving at Wentworth Weir on the Murray, and should help maintain the flow past Wentworth at about 4 500 ML/day during the coming week. Storage in Lake Victoria has increased by 3 GL to 172 GL (or 25 %) and should remain fairly steady during the coming week.

In South Australia, all weir pool levels are close to, or slightly above, full supply level (FSL) except for Lock 4 which remains 6 cm below FSL. The flow past Lock 1 has been averaging 1 800 ML/day. The water level in Lake Alexandrina is currently -0.94 m AHD or 1.69 m below Full Supply Level.

The Commonwealth and South Australian Governments have announced that the first release of Commonwealth water for the environment is commencing at wetlands in South Australia, to be followed by further releases at other sites around the Basin over coming months. South Australia will commence delivering 1 GL of water to four sites; Chowilla floodplain (which will also receive water provided by the SA Government), Paiwalla Wetland between Mannum and Murray Bridge, Carpark Lagoons near Berri, and Rocky Gully near Murray Bridge. More information about the sites receiving water, and about the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, is available at: [www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh/index.html)

**For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone on 02 6279 0141**

DAVID DREVERMAN  
Executive Director, River Murray



**Week ending Wednesday 25 Mar 2009**

**Water in Storage**

MDBA Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	MDBA Active Storage (GL)	Change in Total Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	418.16	855	22%	80	775	-4
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	167.44	155	5%	30	125	-46
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	22.18	172	25%	100	72	+3
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		257	15%	(- -) #	0	+10
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 352</b>		<b>1 438</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>-37</b>

\* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBA Storage = **11%**

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

**Major State Storages**

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026	478	47%	3	475	-18
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	491	30%	24	467	-4
Eildon Reservoir	3 390	464	14%	100	364	-29

**Snowy Mountains Scheme**

Snowy diversions for week ending 24-Mar-2009

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversions (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2008
Lake Eucumbene - Total	527	n/a	Snowy-Murray	+18	588
Snowy-Murray Component	221	-	Tooma-Tumut	+1	220
Target Storage	1 410		Nett Diversion	16.4	368
			Murray 1 Release	+18	793

**Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL) \***

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2008
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	11.9	122.1
Wakool System loss	0.7	31.3
Western Murray Irrig.	0.5	22.5
Licensed Pumps	3.3	98.4
Lower Darling	0.1	10.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>284.4</b>

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2008
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	8.3	103
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	10.8	207
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	2.0	93
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	0.6	11
Licensed pumps - LMW	6.2	127
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>541</b>

\* 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	186 *	
Flow this week	29.2	(4 200 ML/day)
Flow so far this month	101	
Flow last month	142	

\* Reduced to approx. 125 GL during March drought contingency operations

**Salinity (EC)**

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2008
Swan Hill	50	50	70
Euston	70	70	90
Red Cliffs	110	120	130
Merbein	120	120	130
Burtundy (Darling)	720	670	440
Lock 9	110	100	210
Lake Victoria	300	280	260
Berri	350	350	370
Waikerie	-	-	490
Morgan	490	470	520
Mannum	640	640	620
Murray Bridge	700	710	630
Milang (Lake Alex.)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	5 420	5 340	4 020
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	10 930	10 820	6 830
Goolwa Barrages	28 590	29 450	21 890



**Week ending Wednesday 25 Mar 2009**

**River Levels and Flows**

River Murray	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)				
Khancoban	-	-	-	4 770	F	2 380	1 830
Jingellic	4.0	1.64	208.16	4 330	R	1 790	2 050
Tallandoon ( Mitta Mitta River )	4.2	1.40	218.29	480	S	500	520
Heywoods	5.5	2.47	156.10	8 040	S	8 140	9 740
Doctors Point	5.5	2.44	150.91	8 190	F	8 350	10 050
Albury	4.3	1.44	148.88	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	1.96	127.98	7 730	F	8 040	9 460
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	0.96	116.00	4 920	F	5 510	6 920
Tocumwal	6.4	1.48	105.32	5 460	F	5 910	7 090
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.33	79.88	3 530	F	4 120	5 380
Swan Hill	4.5	0.88	63.80	3 890	F	4 390	5 530
Wakool Junction	8.8	2.14	51.26	4 740	F	5 260	6 290
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	1.13	42.97	4 080	R	4 550	5 580
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	4 490	F	5 550	6 020
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.96	27.72	4 470	R	4 660	5 260
Rufus Junction	-	2.93	19.86	3 420	F	3 410	3 350
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-0.72	-	1 890	R	1 790	1 790
<b>Tributaries</b>							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.61	153.84	140	S	150	140
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.54	145.22	80	F	140	200
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.09	92.51	330	F	360	370
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	0.97	80.75	710	F	840	1 010
Edward at Liewah	-	1.72	57.10	1 020	F	1 060	1 120
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.99	54.48	10	S	10	10
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.43	56.39	190	F	200	250
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.23	-	90	S	130	240
Darling at Bourke	-	4.16	-	640	F	850	1 430
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	1.02	-	1 020	R	500	80

<b>Natural Inflow to Hume</b> (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	670	350
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**Weirs and Locks**

**Pool levels above or below Full Supply Level (FSL)**

Murray	FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrowonga	124.90	-0.16	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.00	+0.67
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.01	-0.04
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	-0.02	+0.03
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.02	+0.12	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	-0.06	+0.34
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.04	+0.32	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.00	+0.09
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.09	+0.09	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	-0.01	+0.13
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.09	+0.56	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.05	-1.47

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-3.75	0.567	69.917	220
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-2.86	0.127	61.427	250

**Lower Lakes**

**FSL = 0.75 m AHD**

	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	-0.94

**Barrages**

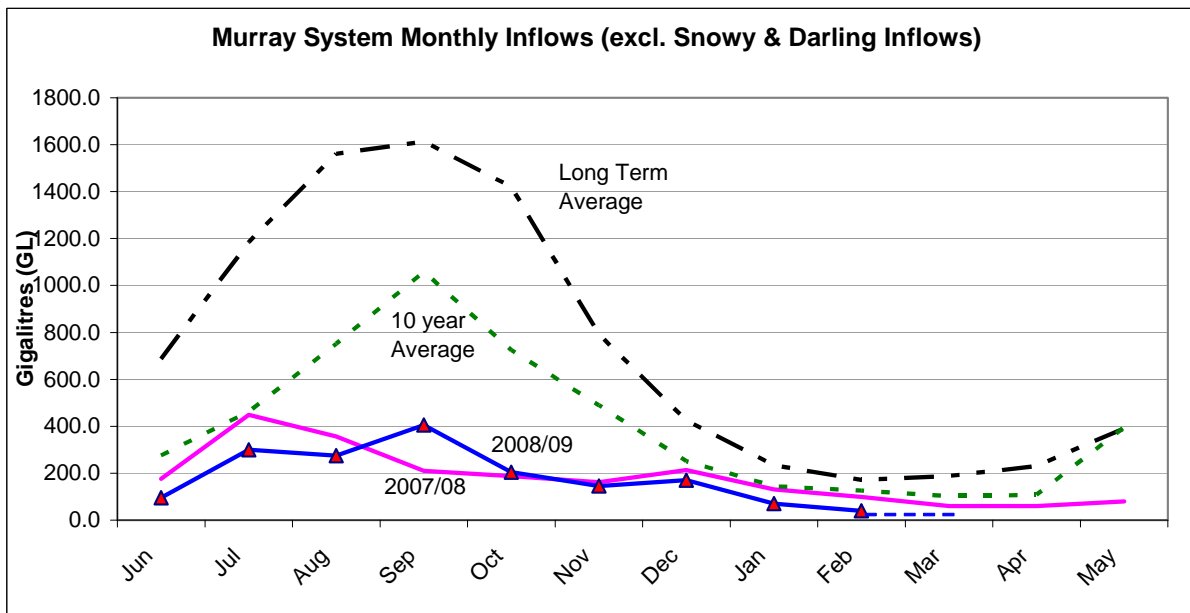
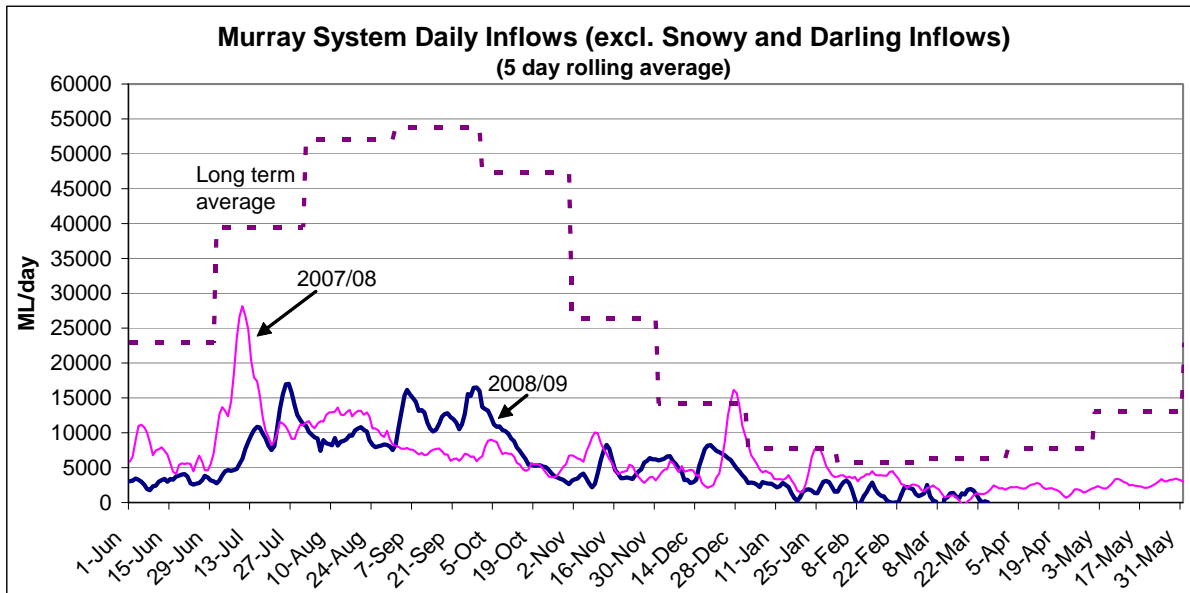
**Fishways @ Barrages**

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertical Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	-0.98	All closed	-	Closed
Mundoo	26 openings	-0.58	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



Week ending Wednesday 25th March 2009



State Allocations (as at 25th March 2009)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	95%
General security	9%

Victoria - Murray Valley

high reliability	35%
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NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	95%
General security	21%

Victoria - Goulburn Valley

high reliability	32%
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NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	50%

South Australia - Murray Valley

High security	18%
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NSW : [http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr\\_toc\\_currnr.html](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>

## Algal Alert Bulletin

# Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

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26 March, 2009

### RED ALERT FROM HUME TO TORRUMBARRY

The Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (RACC) today issued a **red alert level** warning for blue-green algae from Hume Dam to Torrumbarry Weir.

Murray RACC Chairman, Richard Scott said that a red alert level bloom was detected in Lake Mulwala at Yarrowonga on 13 March and a further bloom in the Hume Dam on 16 March 2009.

"These blooms have now spread into the river downstream of these reservoirs covering approximately 400 kilometers," Mr Scott said.

Town water supply for all towns in this reach of the Murray is being treated and is safe for human consumption.

This includes the border towns of Albury-Wodonga, Cobram-Barooga and Echuca-Moama, however residents who are supplied by channel systems are advised to contact their water supply authority.

"This red alert level warning indicates that waters are unsuitable for recreational use or primary contact by domestic users and may also pose a threat to livestock.

"Residents are advised to avoid contact with the raw water supply too," Mr Scott said.

The species of blue-green algae identified are potentially toxic and may cause gastroenteritis in humans if consumed and skin and eye irritations after contact. Boiling the water does **not** inactivate algal toxins.

People are advised not to enter the water, not to drink untreated water or bathe in water drawn from the river while this red alert level warning is in place.

Livestock owners are reminded to continue to check stock water supplies for blue-green algae and to remove stock from foreshores where surface scum is visible or blue-green algae are suspected.

People should not eat mussels or crayfish from red level warning areas. Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

Information updates about blue-green algae blooms and red level warning areas can be obtained from the Regional Algal Coordinating Committee freecall Algal Information Hotline on 1800 999 457.