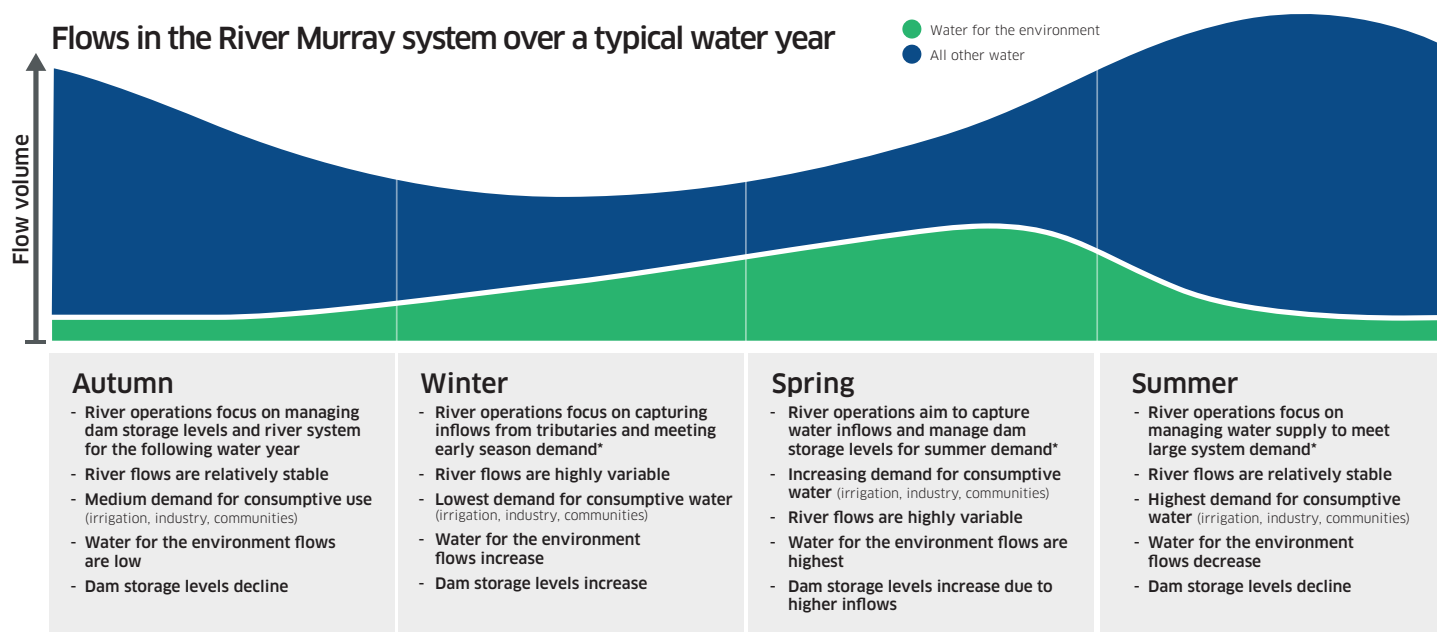


Flows in the River Murray System – January 2021

Flows in the River Murray System vary widely depending on a range of factors, including rainfall, inflows, evaporation, and demand for water for human use.

At any given time, water flowing through the river is destined for various uses, including irrigation, industry, communities, the environment, and meeting South Australia's flow entitlement. The exact mix of these flow components is determined by demand and water availability, amongst other factors.

The graphic below is indicative of how water flow is managed throughout the seasons across a typical year.



* including meeting South Australia's flow entitlement

Water for the environment

Overall, water for the environment is a small percentage of the total water used in the Murray-Darling Basin.

The volume of water for the environment used under water entitlements has increased slightly over the past five years, as more water became available. The average use over this period was 20.4 per cent of the total water used in the Basin.

Importantly, water held for the environment uses the same entitlement framework as consumptive users. In any given year the amount of water available for delivery to key environmental sites is determined based on the same rules that apply to all other consumptive water uses.

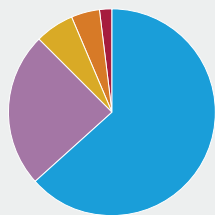
Types of water for the environment

Water for the environment can be categorised as:

- 'Planned' environmental water – water that flows through the river system that is typically managed through rules outlined in state water resource plans and is used to improve the health of the environment.
- 'Held' environmental water – is water that is held by government agencies and is delivered where and when it is needed in the river system. It is water that is allocated to relevant government agencies through water licenses for environmental use.

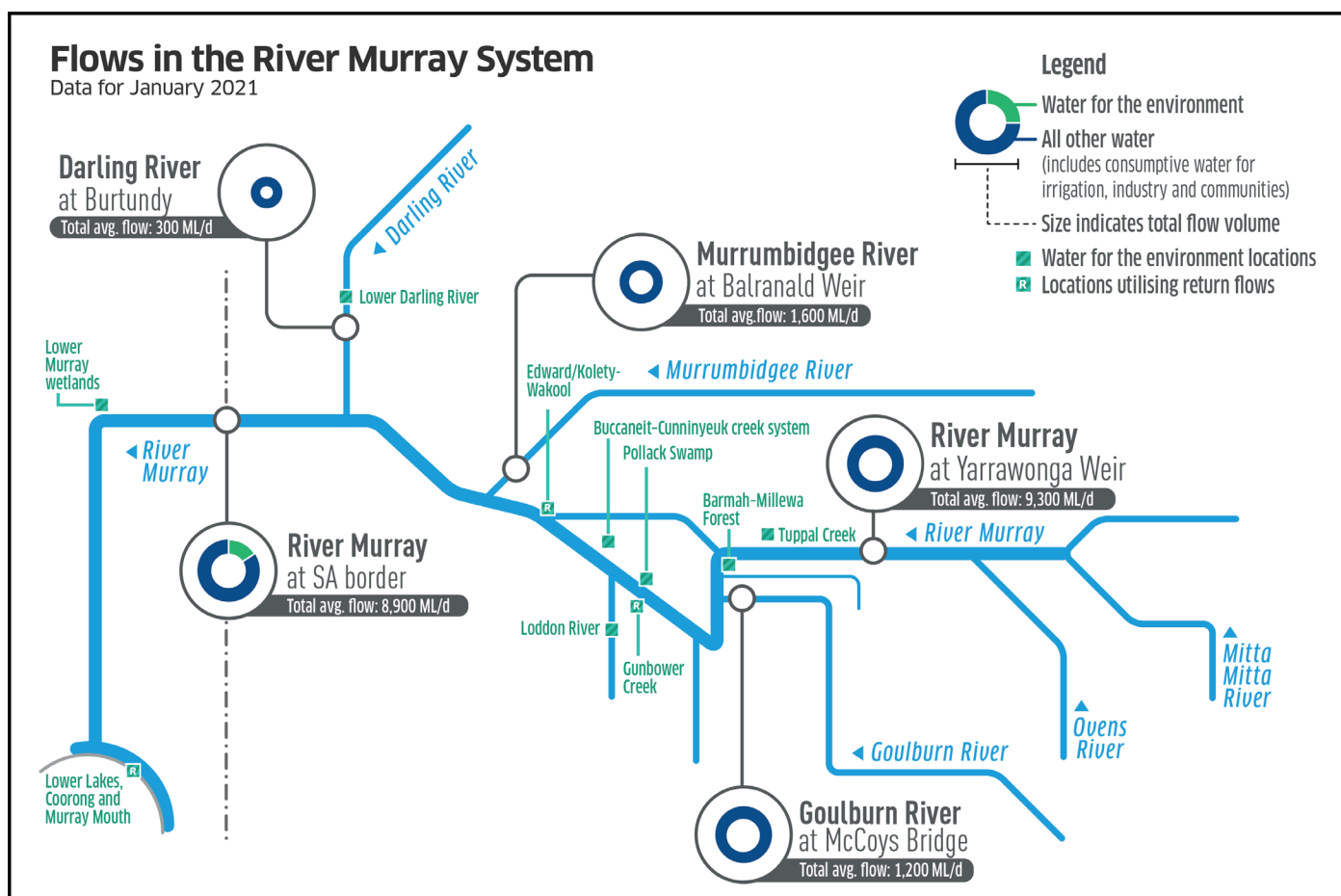
Who holds and manages water for the environment

(based on entitlement volume at June 2019)



Water manager	% of total
Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder	66%
Jointly held	23%
New South Wales	4%
Victoria	5%
South Australia	2%

Source: Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee Annual Report



Information in the figure above is for the month of January 2021 and may not include recent rainfall or delivery of water for the environment in the Murray system. Information in this figure is an average estimate over the past month and formal accounts from Basin state governments may vary. Water for the environment in the figure above represents water that is held by environmental water holders, through entitlements. Other water that flows through the river can also achieve environmental outcomes.

River flow information

The January flow to South Australia comprised of water for South Australia's entitlement, as well as traded volumes and water for the environment. Delivery of water for the environment consisted of 40 GL ordered at the South Australian border and an additional small volume delivered from the Loddon River.

In the Lower Darling River, water was released past Weir 32 on behalf of environmental water holders, however the additional flow past Burtundy and entering the Murray was used to meet Murray system demands and so is not identified in the graphic.

For the latest information on water for the environment see the [River Murray weekly report](#).

Intended environmental outcomes

Water for the environment takes time to move through the system. While no further water for the environment is being delivered from storages, water from past watering events is still moving through the River Murray. Environmental water holders can also use water for the environment by extracting allocations directly from the river. These allocations are often used for small-scale watering events rather than having water delivered from a storage.

Location	Return flows used	Intended environmental outcome(s)
Barmah-Millewa Forest	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• support wetland habitat and waterbird nesting including ibis, spoonbills and the threatened Australasian bitterns
Edward/Kolety-Wakoo	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide higher flows through the creek system to support native fish and native vegetation• improve connectivity
Gunbower Creek	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain breeding habitats and food resources for native fish such as Murray cod
Pollack Swamp	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide critical wetland refuge habitat for a range of native plants and animals
Buccaneit-Cunninyeuk creek system	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide habitat to increase native fish numbers• maintain river red gum health
Tuppall Creek	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain water quality and improve connectivity• maintain riparian vegetation health
Loddon River	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain an adequate depth in pools for aquatic plants and to provide habitat for waterbugs, fish and rakali (water rats)• provide continuous flow through the reach, to maintain water quality
Lower Darling River	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• small increase to baseflows to improve the condition of the Lower Darling (Baaka)• assist native fish recovery by supporting Murray cod breeding (and potentially golden perch and silver perch breeding)
Lower Murray wetlands	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide healthy wetlands refuge habitat for a range of native plants and animals
Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• summer barrage releases for fish migration and black bream recruitment• improve water quality and diversity of habitat in the Coorong and Lower Lakes

More information on river flows and water for the environment

Live River Data

riverdata.mdba.gov.au

River Murray Weekly Report

mdba.gov.au/river-information/weekly-reports

Water sharing in the River Murray

www.mdba.gov.au/river-information/water-sharing

Water use in catchments

www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment

FLOW Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

flow-mer.org.au

Delivering water for the environment

mdba.gov.au/managing-water/water-for-environment/water-over-time