River Murray Weekly Report

For the week ending Wednesday, 15 Jan 2025

Trim Ref: D25/713

Rainfall and inflows

Moderate rainfall totals were recorded across the eastern flank of the Basin this week. In Queensland, Pratten, on the Condamine River, recorded a weekly rainfall total of 130.4 mm. Garah (Delvin) in northern New South Wales (NSW) recorded a weekly total of 114.8 mm and Mount Ginini on the border of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory recorded 98.8 mm. In Victoria, Hume Reservoir recorded a weekly total of 59.8 mm. In South Australia, basin conditions were dry.

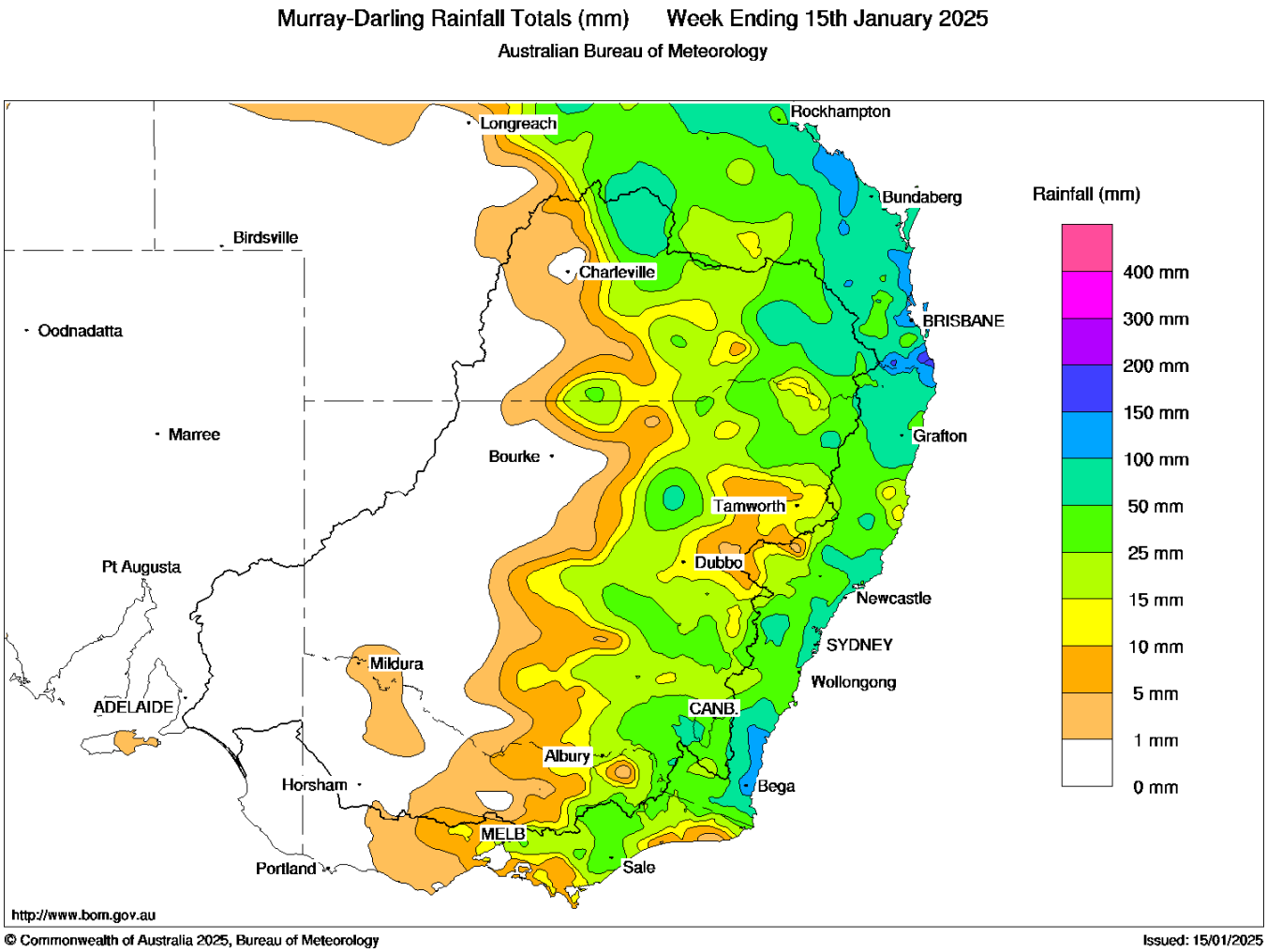

Figure 1: Rainfall totals across the Murray –Darling Basin for the week ending 15 January 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau))

The Bureau forecasts rainfall (including storm activity) for the evening of Wednesday 15 January 2025. After Wednesday, the Bureau's 8-day rainfall forecast is relatively dry with rainfall ranges between 1 – 10 mm across the Basin.

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River operations

- MDBA are calling from Menindee Lakes and the Goulburn IVT to ensure summer demands are met
- MDBA increased call on water from the Menindee Lakes to target 1,500 ML/day at Weir 32
- Risk of delivery shortfall remains low for the coming week

River Murray System update

Despite moderate rainfall totals across the upper Murray catchments over the last week, conditions have remained hot with sustained high demands. Consequently, the releases from Hume Reservoir have remained steady, targeting between 12,500 ML/day and 15,000 ML/day this week. This release supports channel capacity flow rates downstream of Yarrawonga and transfers via the Murray Irrigations Limited (MIL) network to the Edward River. This is part of the MDBA's strategy to meet demands in the River Murray and reduce the risk of a delivery shortfall. The MDBA have also resumed calling water from the Menindee Lakes at Weir 32, as well as calling Inter Valley Transfers (IVT) from the Goulburn to manage system demands throughout summer and autumn.

Figure 2: Storm passing over Tallangatta lookout 15 January 2025 (source: Amber Hardge)

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) reminds river users that River Murray levels downstream of Hume Dam to South Australia may vary. Stakeholders are encouraged to review our River Data page and the weekly report to keep up to date with current flows and river levels over the coming weeks.

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Water demand

The MDBA continues to actively monitor shortfall risks. A shortfall occurs when water cannot be delivered to users when and where it is needed. A ***delivery shortfall*** occurs when actual water use downstream is higher than it was forecast to be when river water was released from storages, weeks earlier, to meet the forecast needs for irrigation and environmental water. A ***system shortfall*** occurs when the combined capacity of the system is unable to supply all downstream requirements over the full season. More information about shortfalls can be found at Water demand and shortfalls | Murray–Darling Basin Authority (mdba.gov.au).

The risk of a ***delivery shortfall*** in the River Murray between Wakool Junction and the SA border over the coming week is low. The MDBA is continuing to monitor weather conditions and forecast demands and will continue to actively manage the risk of delivery shortfall across the high demand summer-autumn period as conditions evolve.

The risk of a ***system shortfall*** is currently negligible as there is shared resource available in Menindee Lakes.

The MDBA, Basin state governments and their agencies have different roles and responsibilities in managing delivery shortfalls. Read more information on delivery shortfall risks for Victorian water licence holders.

Water Quality

Inflows from the northern Basin are currently bringing poor quality water with low levels of dissolved oxygen into the Menindee Lakes. While management options are limited, agencies are working together to best manage these flows to maintain water quality.

WaterNSW advises red alerts for blue-green algae (BGA) along the Darling River at Wilcannia. Most sites in the Menindee Lakes are under various amber/green alerts with a red alert in Lake Wetherell (Site 2). A red alert is in place at Burtundy, with all other sites in the lower Darling at amber alert levels. The Great Darling Anabranch is under red alert at Silver City Highway.

In the River Murray, there are numerous BGA amber or green alerts from Lake Hume to the SA border, with most sites in the Edward-Wakool at amber or green alert levels.

Victoria's Goulburn-Murray Water has issued BGA warnings at Lake Eildon, Torgannah Lagoon, Murray Valley Irrigation Area 3-5 Channel/spurs, Hepburns Lagoon and Gum Lagoon near Gunbower. There are no current BGA alerts in SA (SA Health).

Parts of the lower Darling-Baaka are also experiencing elevated salinity.

Further general information is available at Water quality threats | Murray–Darling Basin Authority (mdba.gov.au).

River operations

Over the last week **MDBA active storage volume** reduced to 5,639 GL, or 66% capacity.

At **Dartmouth Reservoir**, the storage remained steady near 3,400 GL (88% capacity) over the week. The release, measured at the Colemans gauge, reduced from 2,400 ML/day to around 1,100 ML/day and will gradually reduce back to approximately 830 ML/day over the coming week. This is the recession from a small managed pulse in the Mitta Mitta River. Pulses of higher flow rates help improve water quality in the river, while managing the volume of water transferred to Hume Dam.

Hume Reservoir storage reduced by 60 GL to 1,486 GL (49% capacity). The release from Hume Dam is currently 15,000 ML/day. The release from Hume Dam may increase over the coming week in response to warm and dry conditions.

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Along the Ovens River, there was a minor streamflow response to a small rainfall event earlier in the week. Inflow from Ovens River to the River Murray, measured at **Peechelba,** increased to around 970 ML/day before decreasing back to around 680 ML/day. Inflow from the Ovens River is expected to increase slightly over the coming days due to further forecast rainfall. **Lake Mulwala** level remains within the normal operating range (124.6 to 124.9 m AHD) and is currently 124.78 m AHD. The water level is expected to remain within the normal operating range over the coming week.

At **Yarrawonga Weir**, despite rainfall, irrigation demands remained relatively steady across the week. At Mulwala Canal, demands averaged around 5,500 ML/day and Yarrawonga Main Channel increased slightly from around 1,200 ML/day to 1,300 ML/day. Releases from Yarrawonga Weir targeted 8,800 ML/day throughout the week to assist in meeting downstream demands over the summer period.

Downstream on the River Murray, the regulators through the **Barmah-Millewa Forest** are now all closed. Flow remained relatively steady over the week through the **Kolety** (pronounced Kol-etch)/**Edward River offtake,** around 1,500 ML/day, and flow through the **Gulpa Creek** offtake remained around 400 ML/day.

Downstream at **Steven's Weir**, flows remained steady throughout the week at around 2,000 ML/day. The flow may vary over the coming week depending on weather conditions and irrigation demand.

Inflow to the Murray from the **Goulburn River**, measured at McCoy's Bridge, reduced from 2,700 ML/day to 1,550 ML/day and is expected to return to a steady flow of approximately 900 ML/day. This is the conclusion of an IVT pulse that forms part of the MDBA's call of water from the Goulburn River to assist in meeting River Murray demands. Information regarding opportunities for allocation trade between the Goulburn and Murray systems is available at the Victorian Water Register website and the Goulburn-Murray Water website.

The flow downstream of **Torrumbarry Weir** increased from around 6,500 ML/day to approximately 7,000 ML/day mid-week, before returning to near 6,500 ML/day at the end of the week. The diversion to **National Channel** increased from 1,700 ML/day to 2,200 ML/day to fill Ghow Swamp as part of the MDBA's delivery shortfall mitigation strategy. Diversions are expected reduce once Ghow Swamp is filled. Across the week, the IVT pulse from the Goulburn River travelled further down the River Murray, resulting in an increase at **Swan Hill** from 5,400 ML/day to around 6,300 ML/day. Flows at Swan Hill are forecast to reduce again over the coming week.

On the **Murrumbidgee River**, the flow at Balranald receded from near 700 ML/day to around 450 ML/day. Trade to the Murrumbidgee is closed, with the Murrumbidgee IVT account balance currently 0.6 GL. Trade to the Murray from the Murrumbidgee is open.

The flow downstream of **Euston Weir** remained around 5,800 ML/day the week and is forecast to increase as the IVT pulse from the Goulburn travels further down the River Murray.

Storage in the **Menindee Lakes** increased to 858 GL (50% capacity). Inflows from rainfall in the northern Basin continue to arrive at the Menindee Lakes. Approximately 308 GL had arrived up to 15 January 2025 with WaterNSW forecasting an additional 30 – 80 GL of inflows to arrive by end of February 2025.

The release from the Menindee Lakes, measured at **Weir 32**, increased during the week from a target of 750 ML/day to target 1,500 ML/day. The MDBA resumed its call on water at Weir 32 to help meet demands in the River Murray. It is possible that if hot and dry conditions persist MDBA will continue to call on water stored in the Menindee Lakes in summer and autumn.

The MDBA continues to work with WaterNSW, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and NSW DPI Fisheries to support active management of the lakes until they reach the 480 GL storage trigger. At the current time it is anticipated this could occur in autumn 2025, depending on demands and inflows. More information can be found in WaterNSW Community Updates.

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The storage at **Lake Victoria** decreased by 33 GL over the last week to around 575 GL (85% capacity). Storage volume and operations at Lake Victoria are being managed in accordance with the Lake Victoria Operating Strategy (LVOS) as specified in the Objectives and Outcomes for River Operations in the River Murray System.

The **flow to South Australia** targeted around 8,500 ML/day over the last week and is expected to remain around this flow rate over the coming weeks.

Figure 3: Two bridges over River Murray at Murray Bridge (source: Marnie Huxley)

The **Lower Lakes** 5-day average water level is approximately 0.69 m AHD. For further information about water levels, flow rates and barrage operations along the River Murray in South Australia see the South Australian Department for Environment and Water weekly River Murray Flow Report and the Water Data SA website.

For media inquiries contact the Media Officer on 02 6279 0141

TOM ZOUCH
Senior Director, River Management

Australian Government | Murray–Darling Basin Authority

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Water in Storage

Week ending Wednesday 15 Jan 2025

MDBA Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage (GL)	Current Storage %	Dead Storage (GL)	Active Storage (GL)	Change in Total Storage for the Week (GL)
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 856	479	3399	88%	71	3328	-6
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	183	1486	49%	23	1463	-60
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	26	575	85%	100	470	-33
Menindee Lakes		1 731*		858	50%	(480) #	378	24
Total		**9 269**		**6332**	**68%**	- -	**5639**	**-61**
Total Active MDBA Storage							**66%^**	

* Menindee surcharge capacity – 2050 GL ** All Data is rounded to nearest GL **

\# NSW has sole access to water when the storage falls below 480 GL. MDBA regains access to water when the storage next reaches 640 GL.

^ % of total active MDBA storage

Major State Storages

NSW: https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/dam-levels

VIC: https://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storages

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling.

NSW: WaterInsights - WaterNSW

VIC: Water Measurement Information System

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 14 Jan 2025

Storage	Active Storage (GL)	Weekly Change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This Week	From 1 May 2024
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1849	-6	Snowy-Murray	18	615
Snowy-Murray Component	679	-15	Tooma-Tumut	7	134
Target Storage	1520		Net Diversion	11	481
			Murray 1 Release	23	744

Flow to South Australia (GL)

* Flow to SA will be greater than normal entitlement for this month due to environmental flows.

Entitlement this month	217.0*
Flow this week	59.3
Flow so far this month	129.2
Flow last month	336.3

(8,500 ML/day)

Salinity (EC)

List view | River Murray data (mdba.gov.au)

River Levels and Flows

List view | River Murray data (mdba.gov.au)

SA Water – River Murray reports

https://www.sawater.com.au/water-and-the-environment/south-australias-water-sources/river-sources/river-reports-daily-flow

Water Data SA – Barrage flow summary

https://water.data.sa.gov.au/Data/Dashboard/41

State Allocations (as at 15 Jan 2025)

NSW State Allocations (%)

Location	High Security	General Security
Murray Valley	97	58
Murrumbidgee Valley	95	35
Lower Darling	100	100

VIC State Allocations (%)

Location	High Reliability	Low Reliability
Murray Valley	100	0
Goulburn Valley	100	0

SA State Allocations (%)

Location	High Security
Murray Valley	100

NSW: https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/summary

VIC: http://nvrm.net.au/seasonal-determinations/current

SA: https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/water-allocation

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