River Murray Weekly Report

For the week ending Wednesday, 19 Mar 2025

Trim Ref: D25/4757

Rainfall and inflows

There was light rainfall observed at the top of Victorian catchments this week with notable totals of 53mm at Mt. Buller and 35mm at Hotham. There was very little rain observed across the northern Basin through the week.

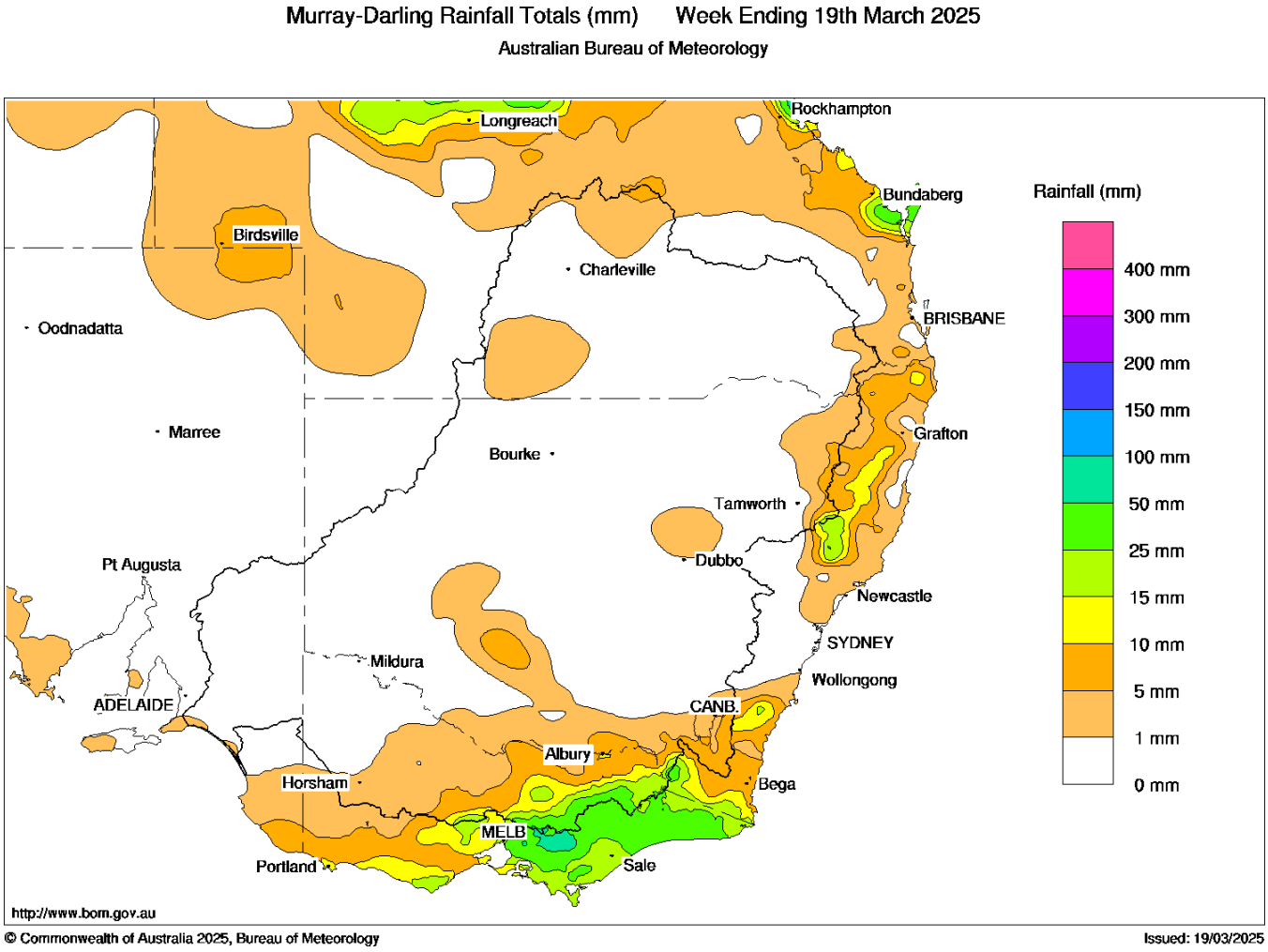

Figure 1 - Rainfall totals across the Murray-Darling Basin for the week ending 19 March 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology)

Flows across the upper River Murray remained relatively low this week, with dry catchments showing little response to the light rainfall.

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River operations

- Bulk Transfers from Dartmouth to Hume continue
- Releases from Hume continue to meet autumn irrigation demands
- Releases from Lake Victoria continue to supplement flow to South Australia

River Murray System update

Murray System inflows for the 2024-25 water year continue to track below the long-term average. To help meet River Murray system demands, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) is:

- Transferring water from Dartmouth to Hume Dam (transfers are expected to continue during autumn and winter if conditions remain dry)
- Delivering water downstream of Yarrawonga Weir at or close to the channel capacity of the Barmah–Millewa reach
- Transferring water around the Barmah–Millewa reach at modest rates via Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL) infrastructure to the Kolety/ Edward River
- Calling Inter Valley Transfers (IVT) from the Goulburn system
- Calling water from the Menindee Lakes.

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

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 negligible. The MDBA is continuing to monitor weather conditions and forecast demands and will continue to actively manage the risk of delivery shortfall 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.

As shortfall risk is historically low in late March and for the remainder of the irrigation season, this is expected to be the final update on shortfall risk this season unless conditions change.

Water Quality

WaterNSW advises blue-green algae (BGA) red alerts for Lake Menindee outlet and the Great Darling Anabranch (Silver City Hwy). Various other Menindee Lakes and lower Darling–Baaka sites are under BGA amber/green alerts, with some sites experiencing reduced (but above ecological thresholds) dissolved oxygen levels.

In the River Murray, there remain numerous BGA amber/green alerts from Lake Hume to the SA border.

Multiple sites on the Edward–Wakool system are at BGA amber/green alerts.

Victoria's Goulburn–Murray Water has issued BGA alerts for Hepburns Lagoons, Newlyn/Tullaroop/Laanecoorie/ Cairn Curran Reservoirs, and the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area's Gum Lagoon.

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There are no current BGA alerts within the SA Basin (SA Health).

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

River operations

At **Dartmouth Dam**, the storage decreased by 29 gigalitres over the week to 3,217 GL (83% capacity). Releases, measured at the Colemans gauge, are currently around 4,500 megalitres/day and are expected to increase over the coming week as MDBA transfers more water to Hume. Flows are being varied to better mimic natural variability in the Mitta Mitta River while transferring sufficient volume to Hume Dam to meet downstream demands for the following season.

Hume Dam storage reduced by 75 GL to 826 GL (27 % capacity). Releases from Hume Dam varied in response to downstream demands and climatic conditions, but largely reduced from the peak of the flows last week. The release from Hume Dam is expected to continue to vary over the next week.

At **Lake Mulwala**, diversions at the major irrigation off-takes varied throughout this week, peaking at 6,200 ML/day at Mulwala Canal and around 1,650 ML/day at Yarrawonga Main Channel. If conditions remain dry, diversions at the irrigation off-takes are expected to remain relatively high for the remainder of March and into April. The release from Yarrawonga Weir is currently around 8,900 ML/day to target close to channel capacity through the Barmah–Millewa reach (figures 2 & 3).

Figure 2 and 3 - River Murray at the Barmah Narrows (Credit: Joe Banks)

Flow through the **Kolety** (pronounced Kol-etch)/**Edward River offtake** and **Gulpa Creek offtake** remained steady around their maximum regulated capacities. Significant volumes are being delivered via Edward Escape to help meet demands in the Kolety/Edward–Wakool system and to transfer more water around the Barmah–Millewa reach to help meet demands downstream in the River Murray. Over the coming week, diversions into Yallakool and Colligen Creeks are expected to remain relatively high as WaterNSW deliver flow pulses or 'freshes' on behalf of environmental water holders. These freshes aim to help improve the condition of native fish populations by improving water quality and productivity (inundating benches and riverbanks to provide more food) and also providing opportunities for dispersal. Downstream on the Kolety at **Steven's Weir**, flows averaged 1,360 ML/day.

Inflow to the Murray from the **Goulburn River**, measured at McCoy's Bridge, rose from around 1,100 ML/day up to 4,200 ML/day. Upstream on the Goulburn River, delivery of an autumn pulse downstream of Goulburn Weir commenced last week (figure 4). Higher flows at McCoys Bridge are expected to peak near 6,000 ML/day in the coming week before slowly receding back to around 900 ML/day. The pulse includes IVT to help meet Murray system demands and water delivered on behalf of environmental water holders to benefit native vegetation along the banks of the lower Goulburn River. Water delivered on behalf of environmental water holders will be delivered

to South Australia to help sustain water levels in the lower lakes. 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.

Figure 4 - Goulburn River at Murchison as the Autumn fresh comes through. A mix of water for the environment and IVT (Credit: Joe Banks)

At **Torrumbarry Weir,** the diversion to **National Channel** increased to around 2,700 ML/day through the week and is expected remain around this level for the coming week. The flow downstream of **Torrumbarry Weir** increased to around 6,000 ML/day and is forecast to continue to increase in the coming week as the Goulburn fresh reaches the Murray.

On the **Murrumbidgee River**, the flow at Balranald averaged around 350 ML/day and is expected to recede over the coming weeks toward the end-of-system target of 180 ML/day. Trade to the Murrumbidgee is closed. The Murrumbidgee IVT account balance increased slightly this week to 10.2 GL. Trade to the Murray from the Murrumbidgee is open.

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Figure 4 and 5 – Upper Murrumbidgee, not far downstream from the source. (Credit: Ros Harper)

With the risk of a delivery shortfall in the River Murray between Wakool Junction and the SA border negligible, the pool level at **Euston Weir** is being gradually lowered to 30 cm below full supply level (FSL) to supplement flows downstream. Over much of summer, the weir pool was surcharged to around 20 cm above FSL to store additional water. This volume was kept in reserve to help meet any periods of particularly higher demand and to reduce the likelihood of a delivery shortfall.

Storage in the **Menindee Lakes** reduced to 634 GL (37 % capacity). Inflows to Menindee Lakes are persisting at low rates, with the flow at Wilcannia receding to 440 ML/day during the week. The release from the Menindee Lakes, measured at **Weir 32**, is steady at around 1,200 ML/day. Transfers to the River Murray will continue in some capacity during autumn while conditions remain dry (see the WaterNSW website for operational updates).

Operational releases from Lake Cawndilla to the River Murray via the Great Darling Anabranch (GDA) are continuing at around 700 ML/day. The additional loss associated with delivering water to the Murray via the GDA compared with delivering it to the Murray via Weir 32 and the lower Baaka is being debited from environmental water holder entitlements. Delivering operational water via the GDA benefits native fish and maximises use of water stored in Lake Cawndilla/Menindee that may otherwise be stranded now that the storage water level is limiting the release to the lower Baaka.

The MDBA continues to work with WaterNSW, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) and NSW DPI Fisheries to support active management of the lakes until they reach the 480 GL storage trigger. NSW agencies indicate that having at least 195 GL of active storage in the upper lakes (Lakes Wetherell, Tandure and Pamamaroo) when Menindee Lakes reach this trigger will help extend supply for Menindee township and the lower Baaka. Current forecasts indicate the Lakes could reach the 480 GL trigger in winter 2025 but depends on future demands and inflows. More information can be found in WaterNSW Community Updates.

The storage at **Lake Victoria** decreased by 38 GL over the last week to 241 GL (36 % capacity). Throughout the week, inflows to the Lake were maintained around 470 ML/day, while the outflow reduced from around 6,600 ML/day to 4,730 ML/day to meet requirements at the South Australian border. The storage volume and operations at Lake

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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.

At **Lock 7**, the weir pool level is being gradually lowered to 50 cm below FSL to supplement flows downstream. Following the lowering the weir pool will be varied between 5 to 20cm below FSL. Varying pool levels aims to help restore a more natural wetting and drying cycle to riverbanks and adjacent wetlands within the influence of the weir pool.

The **flow to South Australia** averaged 7,700 ML/day over the past week. The release is expected to be around 7,500 ML/day over the coming week with water continuing to be delivered on behalf of environmental water holders.

The **Lower Lakes** 5-day average water level is approximately 0.56 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

JACQUI HICKEY
Executive Director, River Management

Australian Government | Murray–Darling Basin Authority

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Water in Storage

Week ending Wednesday 19 Mar 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	475.71	3217	83%	71	3146	-29
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	177.15	826	27%	23	803	-75
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	22.94	241	36%	100	141	-38
Menindee Lakes		1 731*		634	37%	(480) #	154	-27
Total		**9 269**		**4918**	**53%**	- -	**4244**	**-169**
Total Active MDBA Storage							**49%^**	

* 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 18 Mar 2025

Storage	Active Storage (GL)	Weekly Change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This Week	From 1 May 2024
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1689	-34	Snowy–Murray	15	737
Snowy–Murray Component	561	-16	Tooma–Tumut	0	149
Target Storage	1410		Net Diversion	15	588
			Murray 1 Release	16	870

Flow to South Australia (GL)

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

Entitlement this month	186.0*
Flow this week	54.1
Flow so far this month	152.3
Flow last month	220.4

(7,700 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 19 Mar 2025)

NSW State Allocations (%)

Location	High Security	General Security
Murray Valley	100	110
Murrumbidgee Valley	95	39
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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