River Murray Weekly Report

For the week ending Wednesday, 22 Jan 2025

Trim Ref: D25/1325

Rainfall and inflows

Rainfall for the week was confined to the Great Dividing Range. Bowning in the Murrumbidgee catchment of New South Wales (NSW) recorded a weekly total of 49 mm, while Khancoban in the upper Murray recorded 20 mm. In Victoria, Dartmouth Reservoir recorded a weekly total of 42 mm. In Queensland and South Australia, basin conditions were mostly dry.

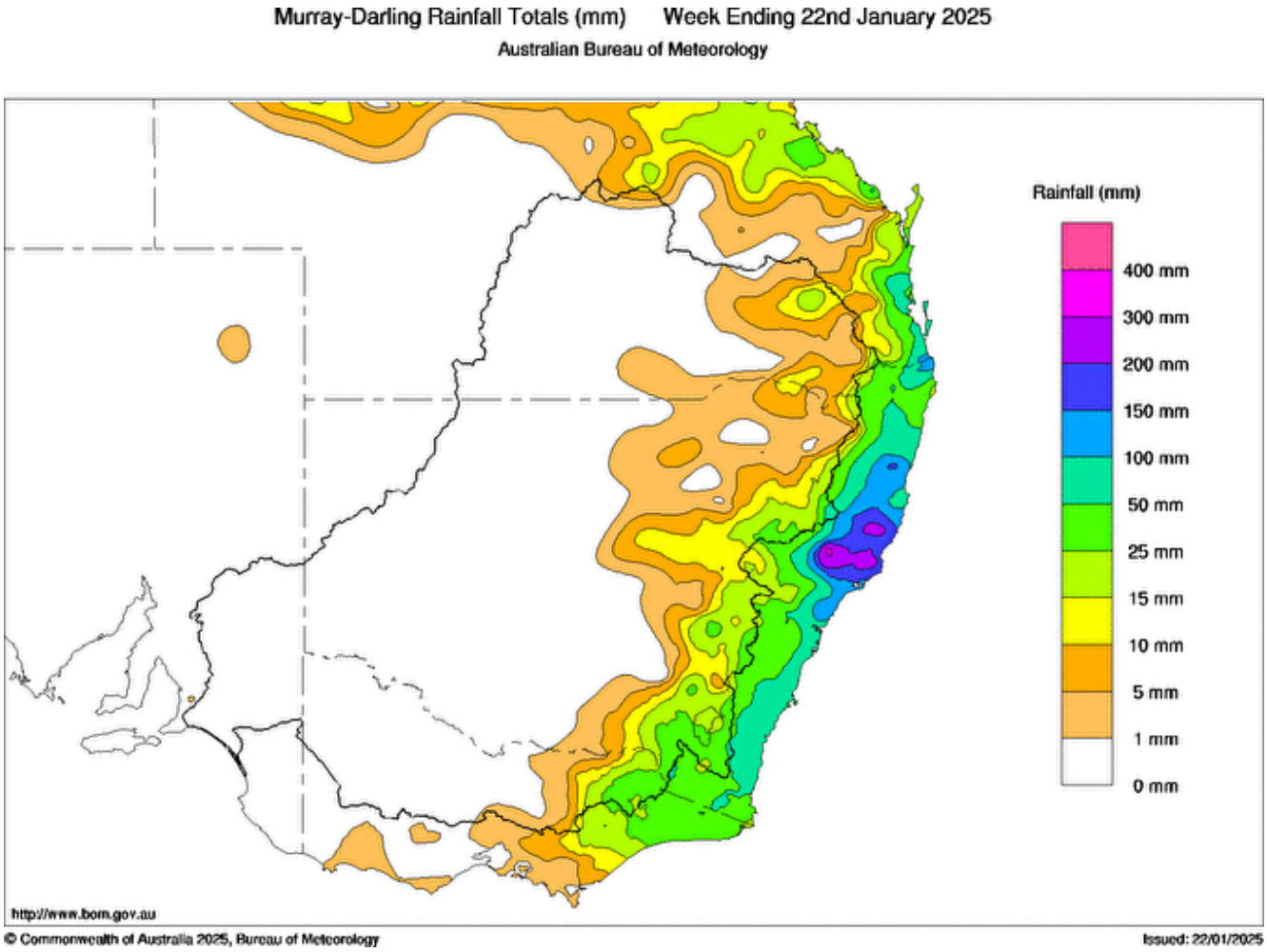

Figure 1: Rainfall totals across the Murray-Darling Basin for the week ending 22 January 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau))

The Bureau's 8-day rainfall forecast is relatively dry with rainfall ranges between 1 – 10 mm across the Basin, with high temperatures forecast early next week.

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River operations

- MDBA continues calling water from Menindee Lakes and the Goulburn System to meet demands
- Releases from the Menindee Lakes continue to target 1,500 ML/day at Weir 32
- Risk of delivery shortfall remains low for the coming week

River Murray System update

Temperatures were very much above average across most of the southern connected system last week (Bureau). Coinciding with these warm and dry conditions were increases in demands. Consequently, the release from Hume Reservoir increased from 15,000 ML/day to 22,000 ML/day, and increased releases from Dartmouth planned for next week.

Further down in the system, Lake Victoria storage levels remain healthy for this time of year, resulting in minor reductions in bulk transfers through the MIL system.

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) have continued calling water from the Menindee Lakes at Weir 32, as well as calling Inter Valley Transfers (IVT) from the Goulburn at modest rates to manage system demands throughout summer and autumn.

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 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 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 poorer quality low dissolved oxygen water into Menindee Lakes. Management options are limited, and agencies continue to collaborate to best manage flows to maintain water quality.

WaterNSW advises red alerts for blue-green algae (BGA) along the Darling-Baaka at Wilcannia. Most sites in Menindee Lakes are under various BGA alerts, with red alerts at Lake Wetherell (Site 2) and Lake Menindee (Site 19 & Outlet Reg). Burtundy is under BGA red alert, with all other lower Darling-Baaka sites at amber alert. The Great Darling Anabranch is under BGA red alert at Silver City Highway.

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

Victoria's Goulburn-Murray Water has issued BGA alerts for Lake Eildon, Torgannah Lagoon, Murray Valley Irrigation Area 3-5 Channel, Hepburns Lagoon, and Torrumbarry Irrigation Area Gum/No.2 Lagoons.

There are no current BGA alerts in SA (SA Health), however a marine algal bloom (non-BGA) is evident in the south Coorong.

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 5,473 GL, or 64% capacity.

At **Dartmouth Reservoir**, the storage remained steady near 3,400 GL (88% capacity) over the week. The release, measured at the Colemans gauge, remained around 850 ML/day for the week. Into next week flows will gradually increase to approximately 1,500 ML/day to transfer additional water to Hume Dam.

Hume Reservoir storage reduced by 92 GL to 1,394 GL (46% capacity). The release from Hume Dam is currently 22,000 ML/day. The release from Hume Dam will vary over the coming week in response to conditions.

Figure 2: Rocky Valley Dam at Falls Creek (source: C Todhunter)

Inflow from the Ovens River to the River Murray, measured at **Peechelba,** decreased slowly to around 600 ML/day and is forecast to continue to recede. **Lake Mulwala** level remains within the normal operating range (124.6 to 124.9 m AHD) and is currently 124.70 m AHD. The water level is expected to remain within the normal operating range over the coming week.

At **Yarrawonga Weir**, irrigation demands increased across the week. At Mulwala Canal, demands increased from around 5,500 ML/day to near 6,200 ML/day, while Yarrawonga Main Channel increased from around 1,200 ML/day to 1,500 ML/day. Releases from Yarrawonga Weir averaged 8,800 ML/day throughout the week to assist in meeting

downstream demands over the summer period. Into the coming weeks, flow may vary slightly to manage the Yarrawonga pool level and demands downstream.

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 reduced to around 250 ML/day. During the week, bulk transfers using the Perricotta, Finley and Wakool escapes were ceased.

Downstream at **Steven's Weir**, flows reduced slightly throughout the week to around 1,800 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 1,100 ML/day to a steady flow of 850 ML/day. Flows are forecast to remain around this for the coming week. 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** reduced from around 6,500 ML/day to approximately 5,400 ML/day during the week and forecast to remain near to this over the coming week. The diversion to **National Channel** remained around 2,200 ML/day.

On the **Murrumbidgee River**, the flow at Balranald varied between 700 ML/day and 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** averaged around 6,100 ML/day across the week and forecast to reduce in the coming week to near 5,000 ML/day.

Storage in the **Menindee Lakes** reduced to 837 GL (48% 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.

Figure 3: Lower Baaka (Darling) River (source: T Milne)

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Figure 4: River Murray at Kulkurna Cliffs near the SA border (source: T Milne)

The release from the Menindee Lakes, measured at **Weir 32**, continued to target 1,500 ML/day. In mid-January the MDBA resumed its call on water at Weir 32 to help meet demands in the River Murray. It is likely transfers from Menindee will continue while conditions remain hot and dry.

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.

The storage at **Lake Victoria** decreased by 42 GL over the last week to around 528 GL (78% 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** averaged around 8,500 ML/day over the last week and is expected to increase slightly over the coming week, before reducing in February.

The **Lower Lakes** 5-day average water level is approximately 0.68 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 22 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	3395	88%	71	3324	-4
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	182	1394	46%	23	1371	-92
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	26	528	78%	100	421	-42
Menindee Lakes		1 731*		837	48%	(480) #	357	-21
Total		**9 269**		**6154**	**67%**	- -	**5473**	**-159**
Total Active MDBA Storage							**64%^**	

* 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 21 Jan 2025

Storage	Active Storage (GL)	Weekly Change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This Week	From 1 May 2024
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1839	-9	Snowy-Murray	14	630
Snowy-Murray Component	667	-11	Tooma-Tumut	5	139
Target Storage	1520		Net Diversion	9	491
			Murray 1 Release	15	760

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	188.5
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 22 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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