

For the week ending Wednesday, 26 Feb 2025

# Trim Ref: D25/3739 Rainfall and inflows

This week conditions were dry across much of the Murray–Darling Basin (Figure 1). Patchy rainfall was observed with the highest totals recorded over the Victorian Alps.



Murray-Darling Rainfall Totals (mm) Week Ending 26th February 2025 Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Figure 1 Rainfall totals across the Murray–Darling Basin for the week ending 26 February 2025. (<u>Bureau of</u> <u>Meteorology</u>)

Flows in upper Murray tributaries continued at relatively low rates this week. Of note, drier conditions over recent months in the Ovens River catchment have resulted in flows, measured at Wangaratta, reducing to the lowest rate since early March 2020.





# **River operations**

- Bulk Transfers from Dartmouth to Hume expected to continue in March
- Releases from Menindee Lakes continue
- Risk of delivery shortfall remains low for the coming week

## **River Murray System update**

Murray System inflows for the 2024-25 water year continue to track well 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 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 <u>River Murray Data</u> 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 <u>Water</u> <u>demand and shortfalls</u> | <u>Murray–Darling Basin Authority (mdba.gov.au)</u>.

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 <u>delivery shortfall risks for Victorian water licence holders</u>.

## Water Quality

Following extended Northern Basin inflows into the Menindee Lakes, some water quality conditions have improved with dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity and salinity levels generally stable.

<u>WaterNSW</u> advises BGA red alerts for Lake Menindee and the Great Darling Anabranch (Silver City Hwy), with all lower Darling-Baaka sites at BGA amber/green alerts.

In the River Murray, there are 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 <u>Goulburn-Murray Water</u> has issued BGA alerts for Torgannah/Hepburns Lagoons, Newlyn & Cairn Curran Reservoirs, Murray Valley Irrigation Area Ch 4 (d/s Lorenz Rd), and Torrumbarry Irrigation Area's Gum/No.2 Lagoons.

There are no current BGA alerts in South Australia (SA Health).







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

### **River operations**

At **Dartmouth Dam**, the <u>storage</u> decreased by 26 gigalitres (GL) over the week to 3,300 GL (86% capacity). Releases, measured at the Colemans gauge, are currently around 3,000 megalitres per day (ML/day) and are expected to continue at higher rates during March. 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.

**Hume Dam** storage reduced by 61 GL to 1,051 GL (35% capacity) and is at a relatively low level compared with recent wetter years (Figure 2). Hume unregulated inflows to-date for the 2024-25 water year are tracking around 90% annual exceedance probability (ie recorded inflow volumes in 90% of years in the historic record have exceeded the 2024-25 volume). The unregulated inflow volume recorded in 2024-25 is similar to the volume recorded for the same period in 2018-19 and slightly lower than 2019-20 when Hume storage volume was at 827 GL and 505 GL respectively. Note that, in addition to unregulated inflows, transfers from Dartmouth Dam, releases from Snowy Hydro for hydro-electric power generation and releases from Hume to meet downstream demands also influence the storage volume in Hume Dam.





At **Yarrawonga Weir**, diversions at the major irrigation off-takes were similar to last week, averaging around 3,400 ML/day at Mulwala Canal and 1,150 ML/day at Yarrawonga Main Channel. Demands in the irrigation areas are expected to increase in March as autumn watering commences. The release from Yarrawonga Weir is currently around 8,900 ML/day to target close to channel capacity through the Barmah-Millewa reach.

Flow through the **Kolety** (pronounced Kol-etch)/**Edward River offtake** and **Gulpa Creek offtake** remain steady around their maximum regulated capacities. Flow in the Kolety is being supplemented by releases from Edward Escape.

Diversions at the **Wakool River** and **Yallakool** and **Colligen Creek** regulators are being managed at higher levels as WaterNSW delivers elevated flows on behalf of environmental water holders. These flows aim to help improve the condition of native fish populations by improving water quality and providing opportunities for dispersal. Downstream on the Kolety at **Steven's Weir**, flows remained around 1,100 ML/day but will increase over the coming week to target around 1,600 ML/day.

Inflow to the Murray from the **Goulburn River**, measured at McCoy's Bridge, averaged around 1,100 ML/day. Flows are forecast to remain around this rate into next week. Information regarding opportunities for allocation trade





between the Goulburn and Murray systems is available at the Victorian Water Register <u>website</u> and the <u>Goulburn-Murray Water website</u>.

At **Torrumbarry Weir**, the <u>diversion</u> to **National Channel** remained around 1,700 ML/day through the week and is also expected to increase in March when autumn watering commences. The flow downstream of **Torrumbarry Weir** averaged around 6,000 ML/day and is forecast to remain around this rate over the coming week, unless demand at National Channel increases.

On the **Murrumbidgee River**, the flow at <u>Balranald</u> increased to around 2,000 ML/day. This inflow pulse, due to a rainfall rejection event upstream on the Murrumbidgee earlier in February, was boosted by WaterNSW using environmental water holder entitlements. Much of the volume arriving into the River Murray will be debited from environmental water holder accounts and delivered to South Australia to help sustain the level of the lower lakes. Trade to the Murrumbidgee is closed, with the <u>Murrumbidgee IVT</u> account balance currently 0.7 GL. Trade to the Murray from the Murrumbidgee is open.

Storage in the **Menindee Lakes** reduced to 703 GL (41% capacity). Inflows to Menindee Lakes are persisting at low rates, with the flow at Wilcannia receding below 1,000 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 <u>WaterNSW</u> 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 Menindee outlet is currently fully open and the release to the Baaka is around 100 ML/day and receding).

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 <u>WaterNSW Community Updates</u>.



Figure 3 Menindee Lakes total storage volume and upper lakes active storage volume







The <u>storage</u> at **Lake Victoria** decreased by 32 GL over the last week to 343 GL (51% capacity). Storage volume and operations at Lake Victoria are being managed in accordance with the Lake Victoria Operating Strategy (LVOS) as specified in the <u>Objectives and Outcomes for River Operations in the River Murray System</u>.

The **flow to South Australia** averaged around 8,000 ML/day over the past week and will decrease slightly for the remainder of February.

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 <u>River Murray Flow Report</u> and the <u>Water Data SA</u> website.

### For media inquiries contact the Media Officer on 02 6279 0141

WILL LUCARDIE A/g Senior Director, River Operations



Australian Government









#### Water in Storage

### Week ending Wednesday 26 Feb 2025

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MDBA Storages	Full Supply Level	Full Supply Volume	Current Storage Level	Current	Storage	Dead Storage	Active Storage	Change in Total Storage for the Week
	(m AHD)	(GL)	(m AHD)	(GL)	%	(GL)	(GL)	(GL)
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 856	477.11	3300	86%	71	3228	-26
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	179.28	1051	35%	23	1028	-61
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	-999.00	343	51%	100	243	-32
Menindee Lakes		1 731*		703	41%	(480) #	223	-27
Total		9 269		5397	58%		4722	-145
Total Active MDBA Storage 55%^								

\* 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 25 Feb 2025

Storage	Active Storage (GL)	Weekly Change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This Week	From 1 May 2024
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1773	-19	Snowy-Murray	16	694
Snowy-Murray Component	609	-16	Tooma-Tumut	0	149
Target Storage	1460		Net Diversion	16	545
			Murray 1 Release	14	824

### Flow to South Australia (GL)

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

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	Entitlement this month	194.0*	
	Flow this week	55.9	(8,000 ML/day)
	Flow so far this month	205.0	
	Flow last month	269.2	

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 26 Feb 2025)

Location	High Security	General Security
Murray Valley	100	110
Murrumbidgee Valley	95	37
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	

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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### Week ending Wednesday 26 Feb 2025



Murray System Monthly Inflows (excl. Snowy, Darling, inter-valley trade and environmental inflows)





