River Murray Weekly Report

For the week ending Wednesday, 05 Feb 2025

Trim Ref: D25/2224

January 2025 summary

According to the Bureau, rainfall for January was around average across most of the Basin's upland catchments. Large parts of western New South Wales, however, saw rainfall very much below average to lowest on record, while South Australia and parts of Victoria also recorded below average rainfall (Figure 1).

The Bureau reports a monthly area-average rainfall total for the Murray–Darling Basin of 28.3 mm. This is 50% below the long-term average for January.

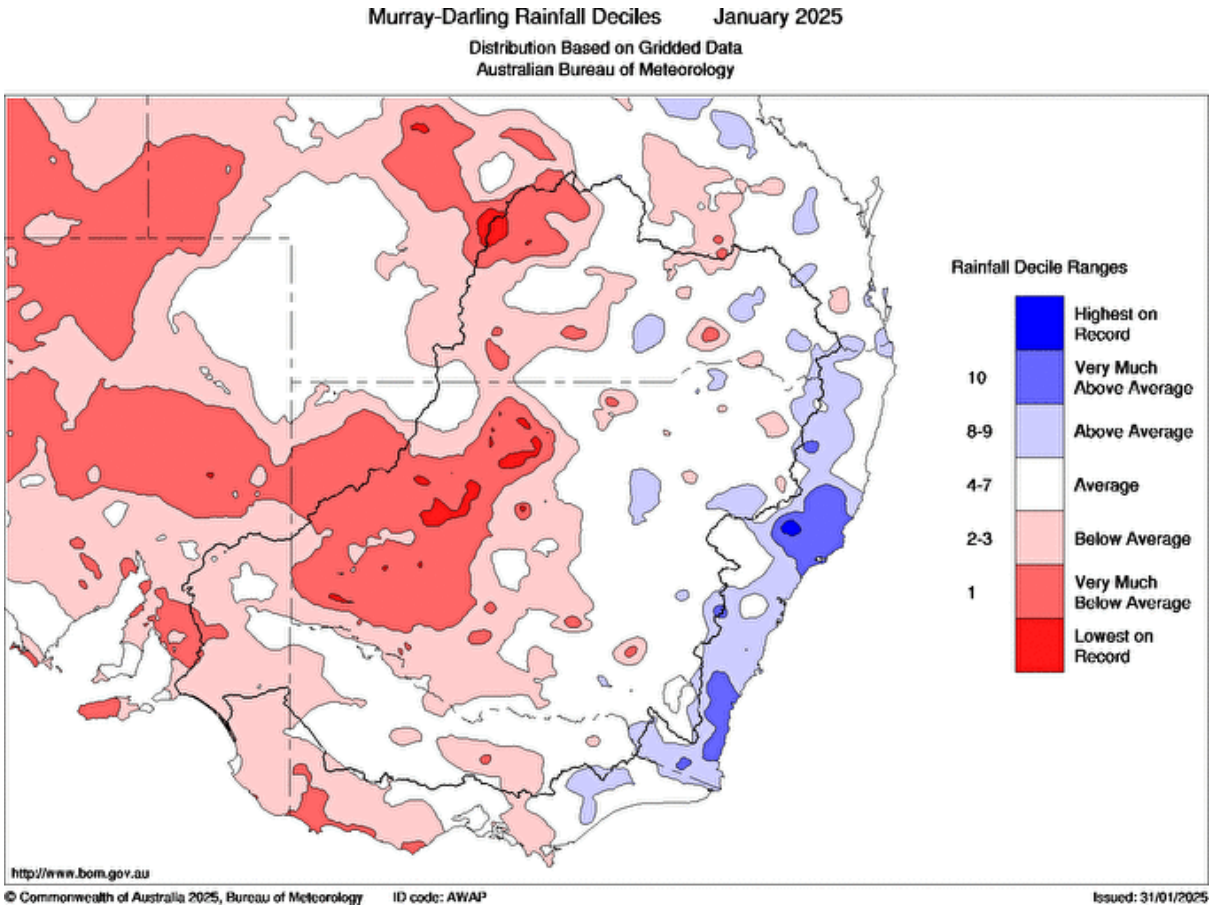

Figure 1: Murray–Darling Basin rainfall deciles for January 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

River Murray System inflows for January (excluding Snowy, Darling, IVT and environmental inflows) were approximately 142 GL, which is below the long-term average for January of 259 GL. In comparison with the historical record since 1896, 69% of previous monthly January totals have been higher than the inflows observed in January 2025.

The Bureau reports that Australia's national area-average mean temperature for January was 2.15°C above the long-term (1961–1990) average – the second warmest January on record for Australia since 1910. It should be noted, however, that the high national area-average is influenced by significantly above average temperatures outside of the Basin. Across much of the Murray–Darling Basin, minimum and maximum monthly average temperatures were largely above average to very much above average (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

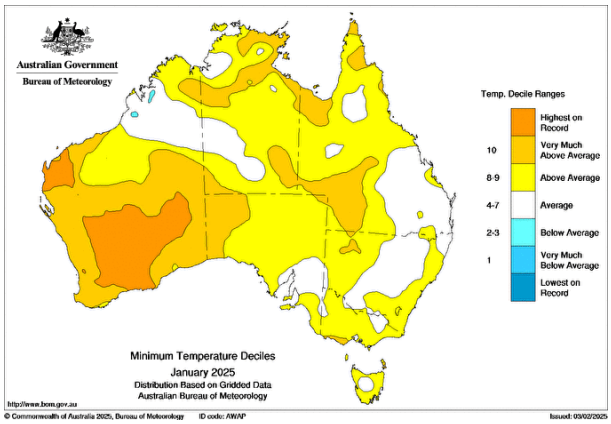

Figure 2: minimum temperature decile for January 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

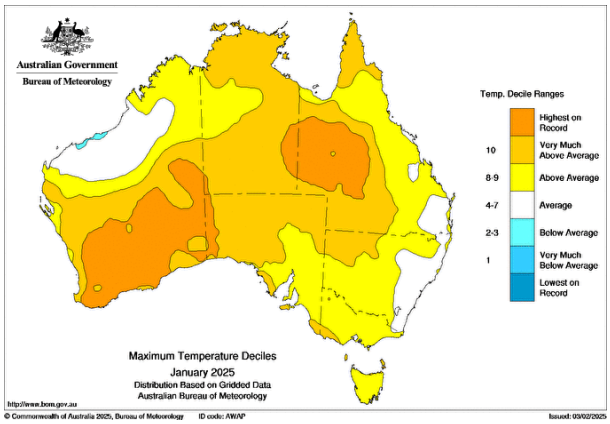

Figure 3: maximum temperature decile for January 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

The Bureau advises that for February and March, rainfall is more likely (60 to 70% chance) to be above median for most of the Basin. (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

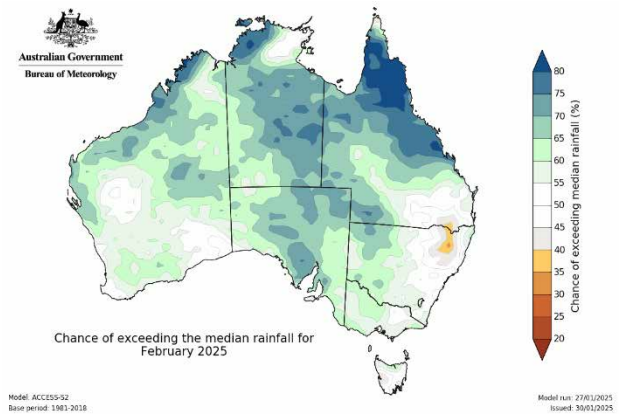

Figure 4: climate outlook issued 30 January 2025 for the chance of above median rainfall for February 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

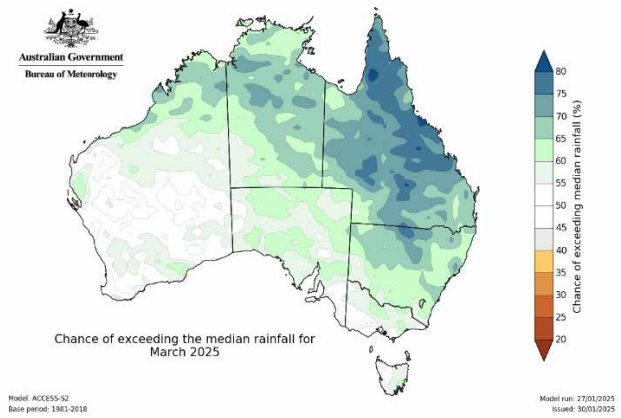

Figure 5: climate outlook issued 30 January 2025 for the chance of above median rainfall for March 2025 (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

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Rainfall and inflows

Rainfall for the week was patchy with isolated areas observing high totals, while surrounding areas were relatively dry (Figure 6). In New South Wales notable totals included 48 mm at Glenn Innes and 34 mm at Barraba. In Queensland, while not the highest totals in the state, within the Basin Hannaford received 30 mm. In Victoria, Archdale Junction received 37 mm and Bet Bet 35 mm. In South Australia, Berri received 12 mm.

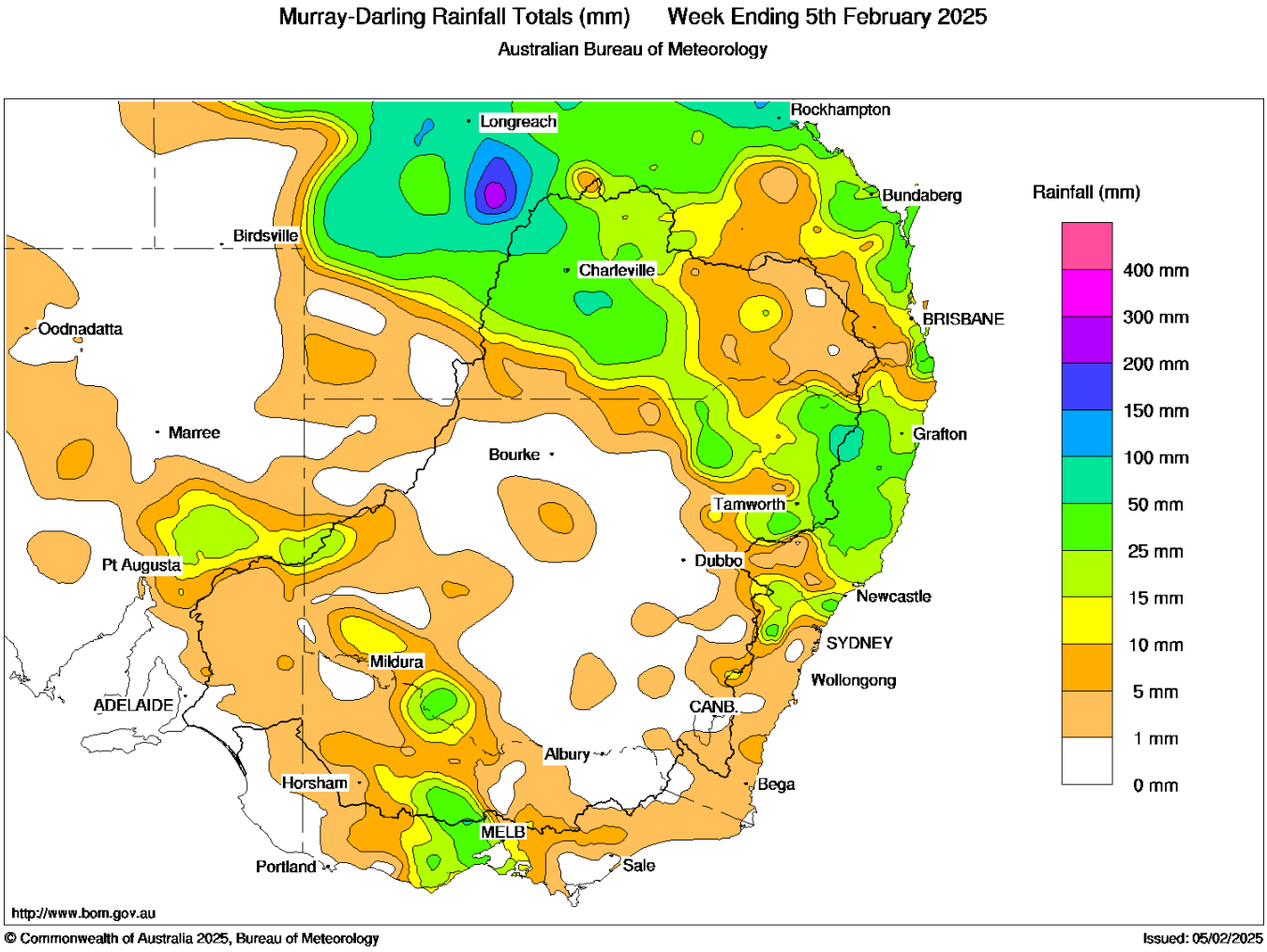

Figure 6: Rainfall totals across the Murray–Darling Basin for the week ending 5 February 2025 (Bureau of Meteorology)

The Bureau's 8-day rainfall forecast is relatively dry with rainfall ranges between 1 – 5 mm across the Lower Murray, and 5 – 25 mm for eastern and northern areas of the Basin.

River operations

- Bulk Transfers from Dartmouth to Hume continue in February
- Flows increase in the Mitta Mitta River
- Risk of delivery shortfall remains low for the coming week

River Murray System update

Hot and dry conditions are persisting for most of the Basin. Transfers from Dartmouth to Hume Dam are expected to continue throughout February, with higher flow rates planned if conditions continue to remain dry. Releases from Dartmouth Dam are expected to vary between 2,500 and 5,900 ML/day through February. The release from

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Hume Dam increased over the beginning of the week to around 20,000 ML/day before decreasing again and is currently around 18,000 ML/day.

Further down the system, Lake Victoria storage levels remain healthy for this time of year, enabling a reduction in transfers being made through the Murray Irrigation Ltd (MIL) system.

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has continued calling water from the Menindee Lakes to meet River Murray System demands, however the target flow rate at Weir 32 is likely to reduce over coming weeks. The MDBA continues calling Inter Valley Transfers (IVT) from the Goulburn System at modest rates to support 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

Reducing inflows from the Northern Basin continue to bring variable quality water into Menindee Lakes. Flow management options are limited but being carefully considered to the extent possible as agencies work together to best manage water quality.

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

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

Victoria's Goulburn-Murray Water has issued BGA alerts for Lake Eildon, Torgannah & Hepburns Lagoons, Murray Valley Irrigation Area 4 (d/s Lorenz Rd), and Torrumbarry Irrigation Area Gum/No.2 Lagoons.

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

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

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River operations

Over the last week **MDBA active storage volume** reduced to 5,133 GL, or 60% capacity.

At **Dartmouth Dam**, the storage decreased by 25 GL to around 3,364 GL (87% capacity) over the week. The release, measured at the Colemans gauge, increased to 5,400 ML/day before decreasing to around 2,000 ML/day to better mimic the natural variability of the system while transferring sufficient volume to Hume Dam to meet downstream demands. Next week, flows are planned to remain in the range 2,500 – 2,800 ML/day before gradually increasing later in the month to approximately 5,900 ML/day as part of a planned pulse (Figure 7)

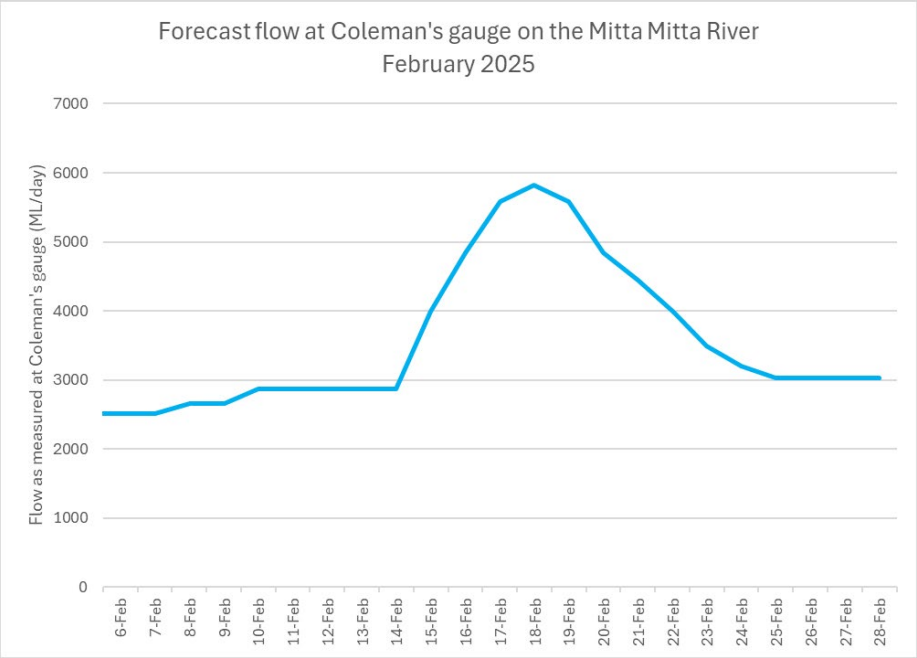

Figure 7: Forecast flow as measured at the Coleman's gauge during February 2025

Hume Dam storage reduced by 72 GL to 1,224 GL (40% capacity). The release from Hume Dam is currently 16,000 ML/day. The release from Hume Dam will vary over the coming week in response to conditions.

Inflow from the Ovens River to the River Murray, measured at **Peechelba,** decreased slowly to around 280 ML/day and is forecast to continue to recede. The **Lake Mulwala** level remained within the normal operating range (124.6 to 124.9 m AHD) during the week and is currently 124.74 m AHD. The water level is expected to remain within the normal operating range over the coming week.

At **Yarrawonga Weir**, irrigation demands remained steady across the week. At Mulwala Canal, demands averaged around 4,550 ML/day, while Yarrawonga Main Channel averaged around 1,500 ML/day. Releases from Yarrawonga Weir were increased slightly and averaged 9,000 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 in response to demands downstream.

Downstream on the River Murray, the regulators through the **Barmah-Millewa Forest** remain closed. Flow remained relatively steady over the week through the **Kolety** (pronounced Kol-etch)/**Edward River offtake** around 1,550 ML/day, and flow through the **Gulpa Creek offtake** at around 250 ML/day. While transfers using the Edward Escape were reduced last week, some flow remains to assist in meeting downstream demands over summer.

Downstream at **Steven's Weir**, flows averaged around 1,400 ML/day. The flow will vary over the coming week, decreasing to around 1,100 ML/day during February.

Inflow to the Murray from the **Goulburn River**, measured at McCoy's Bridge, averaged around 950 ML/day. Flows are forecast to increase slightly over 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.

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The flow downstream of **Torrumbarry Weir** averaged around 5,700 ML/day, with the flow currently around 6,100 ML/day and forecast to remain steady over the coming week. The diversion to **National Channel** remained around 1,700 ML/day over the last week.

On the **Murrumbidgee River**, the flow at Balranald this week averaged around 550 ML/day. Flows are likely to continue to recede over the coming days. 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 5,200 ML/day across the week and forecast to reduce slightly in the coming week.

Storage in the **Menindee Lakes** reduced to 771 GL (44% capacity). Inflows from rainfall in the northern Basin have slowed, however continue to arrive at the Menindee Lakes. Approximately 340 GL had arrived up to 4 February 2025 with WaterNSW forecasting an additional 25 – 35 GL of inflows to arrive by the end of March 2025.

The release from the Menindee Lakes, measured at **Weir 32**, continued to target 1,500 ML/day. In February, the MDBA expects to reduce its call, however it is likely transfers 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 winter 2025, depending on demands and inflows. More information can be found in WaterNSW Community Updates.

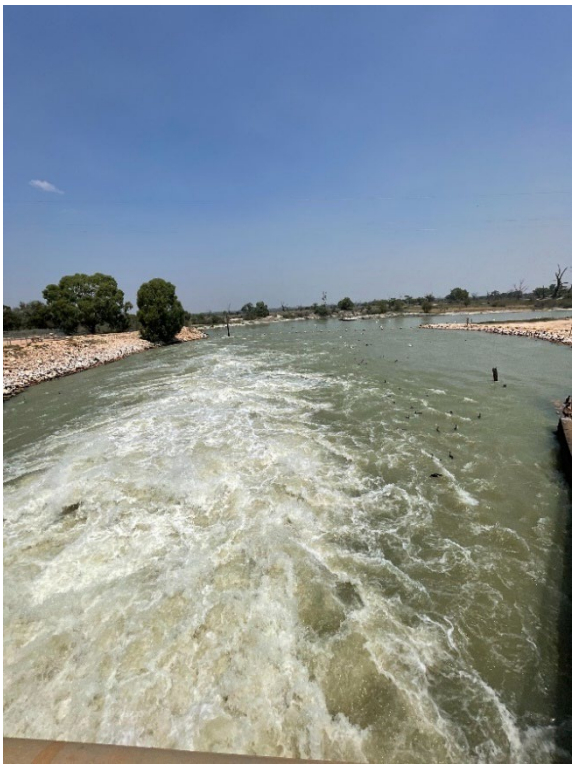

Figure 8: Flow being released from the Lake Victoria Outlet Regulator (D.Stubbs)

The storage at **Lake Victoria** decreased by 38 GL over the last week to around 448 GL (66% 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 8,200 ML/day over the past week and is likely to reduce slightly for the remainder of February.

The **Lower Lakes** 5-day average water level is approximately 0.63 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 05 Feb 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	478	3364	87%	71	3293	-23
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	181	1224	41%	23	1201	-72
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	25	448	66%	100	348	-38
Menindee Lakes		1 731*		771	45%	(480) #	291	-23
Total		**9 269**		**5808**	**63%**	- -	**5133**	**-156**
Total Active MDBA Storage							**60%^**	

* 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 04 Feb 2025

Storage	Active Storage (GL)	Weekly Change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This Week	From 1 May 2024
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1823	-22	Snowy-Murray	21	657
Snowy-Murray Component	638	-24	Tooma-Tumut	0	145
Target Storage	1460		Net Diversion	21	512
			Murray 1 Release	18	784

Flow to South Australia (GL)

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

Entitlement this month	194.0*
Flow this week	57.5
Flow so far this month	39.1
Flow last month	269.2

(8,200 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 05 Feb 2025)

NSW State Allocations (%)

Location	High Security	General Security
Murray Valley	97	62
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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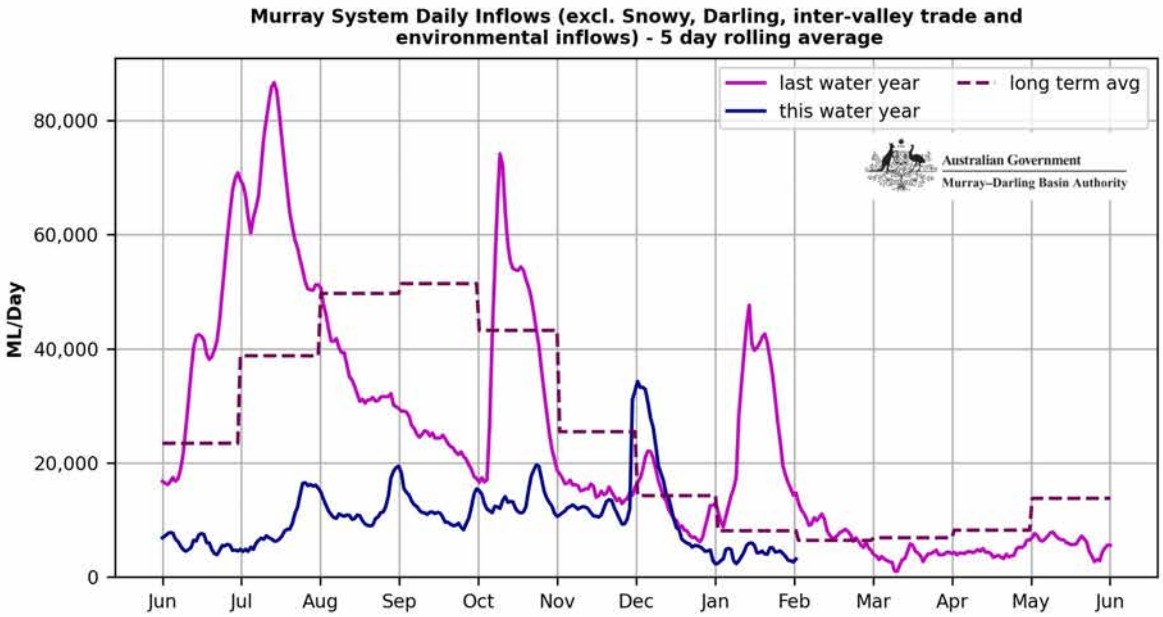

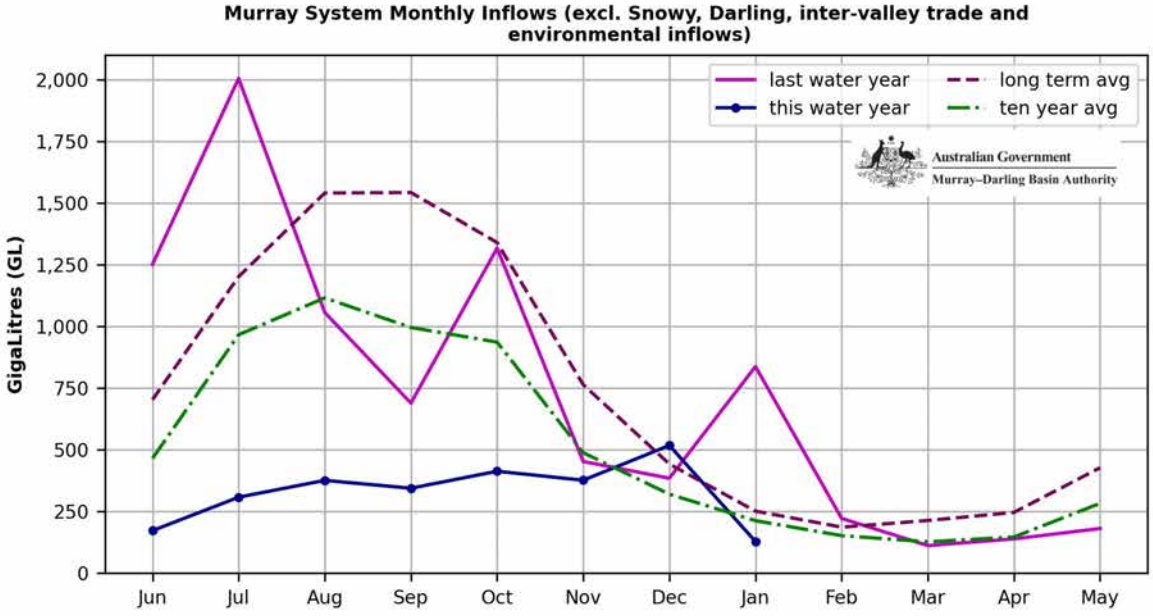

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