

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 18 October 2000

Our Ref: MDBC:269 :BWH 20 October, 2000



After rain late in the week, further rainfall totals of up to 40 to 50 mm were received across the upper Murray, Kiewa and Ovens River catchments late on 18 October with isolated falls of 70 to 90 mm. This rain has produced stream rises in all of the north-east Victorian tributaries of the River Murray, and in the Murray upstream of Hume Reservoir.

Increase in release from Hume Reservoir was commenced on 18 October in response to increased inflows, and near capacity storage levels. By the morning of 20 October, further increases in release from Hume had caused the level of the River Murray at Albury to rise to 3.9 m or 0.4 m below minor flood level. Further rises to near minor flood level at Albury are expected.

Since 9 October, additional release from Hume has been made, and accounted to the Barmah-Millewa Forest environmental water allocation, to maintain release from Yarrowonga Weir in the range 18 500 to 20 500 ML/day for most of the week. These flows have been set to maintain suitable river levels to extend the duration of forest watering following the recession of the flood which occurred in September. Details of the commencement of use of the Barmah-Millewa Forest allocation are given in the attached media release.

At the end of the week, release from Yarrowonga Weir was increased to about 20 000 ML/day, and further substantial increases will be required next to pass inflows arising from increased flows in the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers, and increased releases for flood operation of Hume Reservoir. Accounting for the regulated release of the Barmah-Millewa allocation from Hume has been suspended because more than sufficient flow can now be maintained downstream of Yarrowonga Weir from upstream floodwater. After the passing of this current flood, it is expected that release of the forest allocation will resume in order to maintain suitable water levels in the forest to extend the duration of watering.

Major diversions from Lake Mulwala to Victoria and New South Wales have declined to about 50% of capacity as a result of the recent rain. Diversion from Torrumbarry Weir pool to National Channel has remained steady at about 70% of capacity.

As a result of the floodwater generated in September in the River Murray and tributaries, flow in the Edward River at Liewah peaked at 6 600 ML/day on 10 October, and flow in the Wakool River at Stoney Crossing peaked at 9 200 ML/day on 13 October. In the mid Murray, flow at Swan Hill had a broad flat peak over the first half of October, and began to slowly recede this week. Consequently, flow at Euston (34 000 ML/day on 18 October) will slowly fall next week. Forecasts of subsequent peaks in the mid Murray cannot be made until further details on upstream peak levels become available. However, without further rain, preliminary indications are that river levels downstream of Yarrowonga are not expected to reach the peak levels experienced since mid September.

Following the higher release rate from Lake Victoria last week to enhance flow to South Australia, release from the Lake has been reduced. As the upstream salinity of the River Murray is lower than salinity of Lake Victoria, river water is now being flushed through the Lake to freshen the Lake water.

DAVID DOLE

General Manager

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 20 October 2000

Environmental Water Release for Barmah-Millewa Forest

The Barmah-Millewa Forest is now receiving the largest allocation of environmental water yet made in Australia. The environmental release is designed to stimulate tree growth and prolong conditions suitable for bird and fish breeding and is timed to supplement flooding already occurring in the forest. In the longer term, the improved environmental conditions will benefit the substantial tourist industry in the area.

The initial release of up to 200,000 megalitres will be made from reserves in Hume Reservoir, with an additional 100,000 megalitres available if required. In managing the release, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission will regulate release from Hume Reservoir to maintain flow downstream of Yarrawonga Weir at a level suitable for extending the period of flooding in the forest. After flowing through the forest, much of the water will re-enter the Murray and provide additional benefits to the river environment and downstream users. The environmental release will be suspended if sufficient flows for the forest are available from floodwater.

In a joint announcement of the release made today, Mr Richard Amery, the New South Wales Minister for Agriculture and Land and Water Conservation, and Ms Sherryl Garbutt, the Victorian Minister for the Environment and Conservation, said that the decision reflected the commitment of their governments to improve the environmental condition of the River Murray system. The water will be provided equally by the New South Wales and Victorian governments.

In contributing to this release, New South Wales has paid back the water that was borrowed from the Barmah-Millewa allocation in 1997 and again in 1999. That water was used to increase allocations to New South Wales' irrigators in what were two very dry years. Mr Amery said that this year's prospects for water look positive for NSW Murray irrigators, as well as for benefits to the environment.

Management of the flooding within the Barmah-Millewa Forest is in accordance with the MDBC Barmah-Millewa Forest Water Management Strategy and the Operating Plans prepared annually by the Barmah-Millewa Forum. The Forum is the community/agency body established to advise the Murray-Darling Basin Commission about water management for the Barmah-Millewa Forest. The release complies with the key recommendation of the Victorian Murray Water Entitlement Committee that water be saved up and released every few years to extend a natural flood, which would otherwise be mitigated in Hume Reservoir.

The Barmah-Millewa Forest covers some 70,000 hectares and extends along both sides of the Murray upstream from Echuca. It is the largest red gum forest in the world, with a unique range of wetlands of high environmental value. The forest is culturally important for both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians and supports many economic and recreational activities. The Barmah section of the forest has been declared a wetland of international significance under the 'Ramsar' convention.

Following extensive public consultation, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council approved, in 1993, an annual environmental allocation of 100,000 megalitres (equivalent to about 3% of the capacity of Hume Reservoir) for the forest. This water is released in those years when it will produce the greatest environmental benefits.

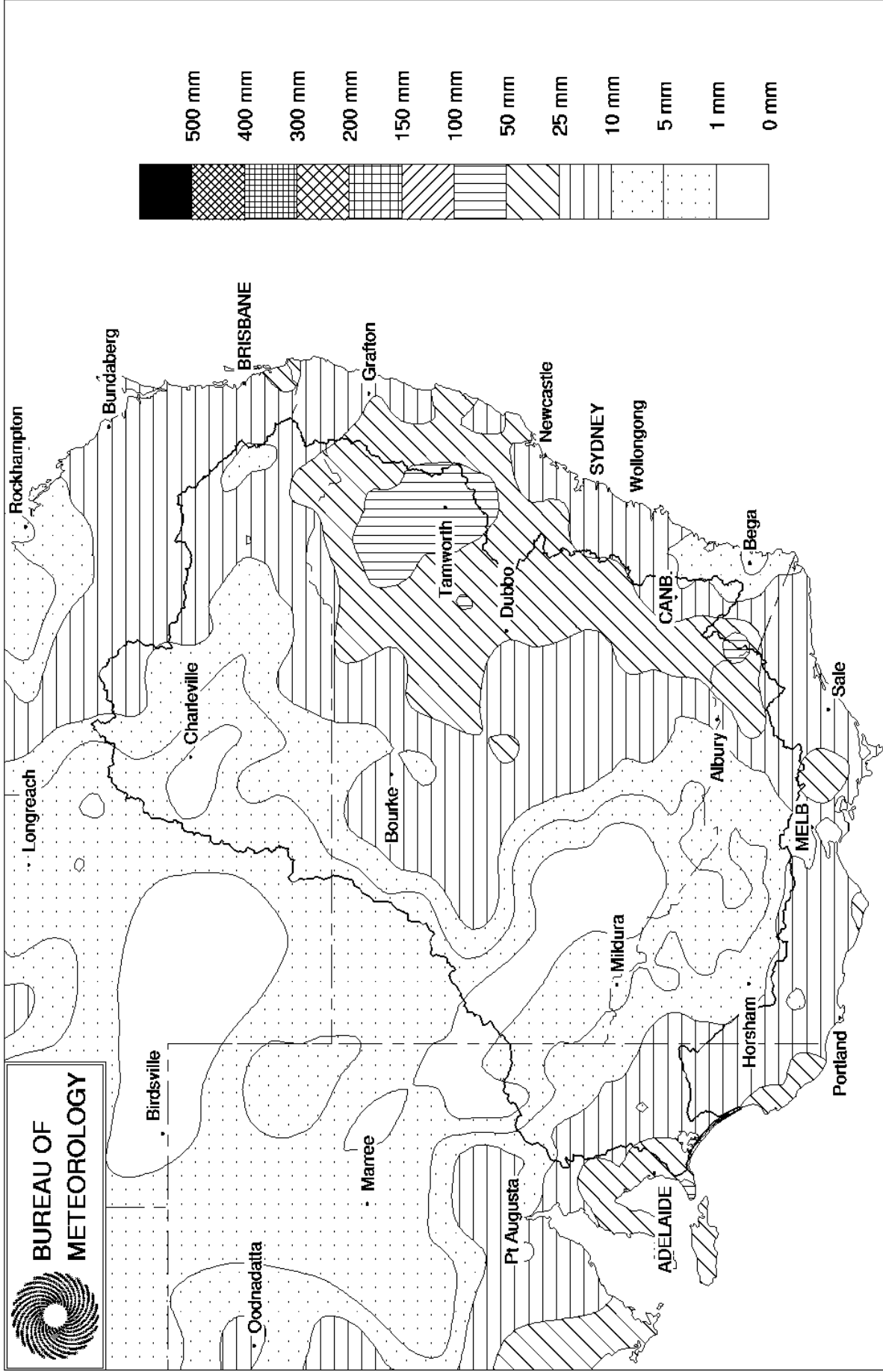
This is only the second time that the allocation has been released. In 1998, 100 000 megalitres was provided to supplement a minor flood in the forest caused by high flows in the Ovens River.

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Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 18th October 2000

Product of the National Climate Centre



<http://www.bom.gov.au>

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Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	FSL	Full Supply	Level	Storage		Dead storage	Active storage	Change for week
	m AHD	GL	m AHD	GL	%	GL	GL	GL
Dartmouth Reservoir	486	3906	467.31	2789	71%	80	2709	+33
Hume Reservoir	192	3038	191.86	3010	99%	30	2980	-3
Lake Victoria	27	680	25.77	545	80%	100	445	-54
Menindee		1682 *		1942	115%	480 #	1462	-16
Total		9306		8286	89%	690	7596	-40

* Menindee surcharge capacity 1999 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **88%**

NSW Menindee Lakes Reserve

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1026	663	65%	3	660	+7
Blowering Reservoir	1631	1360	83%	24	1336	-31
Eildon Reservoir	3390	1459	43%	100	1359	+26

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 17-Oct-2000

Storage (GL)	Current storage	Weekly change	Diversion	This week	From 1st May
Lake Eucumbene - Total	2691	+56	Snowy-Murray	+3	493
Snowy-Murray Component	1281	+42	Tooma-Tumut	+18	220
Target Storage	1400		Nett Diversion	-15.1	273
			Murray 1 Release	+29	734

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July	Victoria	This week	From 1 July
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	57.6	311.1	Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	13.3	52.8
Wakool System loss	0.0	4.4	Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	19.7	194.8
Western Murray Irrig.	0.7	3.0	Sunraysia Pumped Districts	4.9	16.1
Licensed Pumps	9.0	60.1	Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.3	7.7
Lower Darling	0.2	124.2	Licensed pumps - SRW	3.7	37.3
TOTAL	67.5	502.9	TOTAL	42.9	308.7

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	170
Flow this week	279.2
Flow so far this month	601
Flow last month	727

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25 C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August
Swan Hill	130	141	201
Euston	120	120	201
Red Cliffs	170	170	239
Merbein	130	140	195
Burtundy	470	465	415
Lock 9	160	181	237
L.Victoria	310	319	325
Berri	270	263	319
Waikerie	290	290	376
Morgan	260	284	378
Mannum	300	323	379
Murray Bridge	340	345	367
Meningie	1240	1270	1283
Goolwa Barrages	1190	2216	1879



Week ending 18-Oct-2000

River Levels and Flows

	Minor Flood stage	Gauge height	Flow	Trend	Average flow this week	Average flow last week
River Murray	m	m	ML/day		ML/day	ML/day
Khancoban	-	-	6600	R	6240	5490
Jingellic	4.0	2.47	12000	F	13330	13530
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.76	1820	F	2050	2090
Heywoods	5.5	3.06	16020	F	17280	14050
Doctors Point	5.5	3.47	19900	F	21460	18930
Albury	4.3	2.55	-	F	-	-
Corowa	7.0	3.90	22400	S	21610	24810
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	2.72	18500	S	18210	26030
Tocumwal	6.4	3.35	18966	S	18540	32260
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	4.69	17307	F	19110	24060
Stevens Weir (d/s)		3.19	4550	F	7450	8424
Swan Hill	4.5	3.15	19000	F	20150	21330
Wakool Junction	8.8	6.96	30400	F	31530	30630
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	4.71	33870	F	33700	33520
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	4.74	31900	R	31030	32640
Rufus Junction	-	6.37	36328	F	39880	31370
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	35600	R	31670	23910
Tributaries						
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	2.33	3340	F	3610	3840
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	9.31	4453	F	4710	5770
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.52	936	F	1360	3850
Edward at Liewah	-	4.15	4900	F	5650	6400
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	2.89	7800	F	8700	7930
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	1.08	740	F	610	1250
Darling at Bourke	-	4.20	960	F	1220	1450
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.88	611	F	690	1080
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.05	0	F	0	10

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	23740	26280
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Weirs and Locks

Pool levels above or below design level

Murray	FSL (M AHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (M AHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrowonga	124.90	+0.13	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+1.25	+4.07
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	-0.01	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.16	+2.35
No. 15 Euston	47.60	-0.04	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.49	+2.08
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	-0.01	+1.93	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.42	+3.00
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.00	+2.10	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.02	+2.32
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.04	+1.40	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.25	+2.35
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.13	+2.30	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.13	+1.49

Murrumbidgee	FSL (M AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht. metres	Flow ML/day
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.58	0.53	210
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.34	0.28	394

Barrages

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.78	35
Mundoo	26 openings	0.87	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwichee	322 gates	0.87	60

