

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 19 March 2003

Our Ref: MDBC:269 :ng:bwh

20 March, 2003



Catchment Rainfall

Rainfall was generally limited to upper Darling River system catchment areas with some isolated falls in the range 25 to 50 mm. Previous rainfall in the upper Darling River catchment in recent weeks has produced renewed river flows as far downstream as Bourke where flow has increased to 4 500 ML/day, and it is now forecast that a small volume of this water in transit will reach Menindee Lakes – further details will be provided over coming weeks.

The Bureau of Meteorology's latest seasonal rainfall outlook suggests that the northern portion of the Murray-Darling Basin has better prospects for rain over the three month period April to June 2003 than does the upper Murray and particularly the south west of the Basin (*see attached diagram*).

Further Reduction in Dartmouth Release

In response to reduced losses and demands along the River Murray, as described last week, release from Dartmouth Dam was reduced to 5 000 ML/day by 15 March, and is now being further reduced to 2 500 ML/day by 26 March (*see Media Release attached*). It is likely that further reductions in release will be made in coming weeks, particularly if there are reductions in irrigation demand downstream of Hume Reservoir.

Mid Murray Operation

After the passing of the flow peak at Euston in early March, flow is continuing to fall mainly in response to reductions in release from Yarrawonga Weir in recent weeks. This week, flow downstream of Euston Weir declined from 5 700 to 3 600 ML/day and is expected to fall to, and remain steady at, about 3 000 ML/day next week. If warm and dry conditions prevail in coming weeks, a temporary drawdown of Euston Pool, by up to 0.2 m may be required in early April in order to assist in meeting downstream flows. As upstream river flows recede, storage in Lake Victoria has again begun to be drawn down to assist in meeting the entitlement flow for South Australia.

Algal Counts

Counts of blue-green algae continue to show a downward trend in many locations in response to cooler conditions. However, High Alerts remain in place for Lake Hume, Lake Mulwala and the River Murray downstream to Tocumwal, as well as the lower Darling River. Counts are generally in the low to medium alert range in the Murray down to Wentworth. Generally low levels exist in South Australia, although high counts, mostly of non toxic species, are current in Lake Alexandrina.

Lower Lakes & Murray Mouth

The water level in Lake Alexandrina near the Murray Mouth is steady at about 0.4 m AHD – or 0.35 m below nominal full supply level. It is expected that the lake level will remain fairly steady over the coming few months even if conditions remain dry. Dredging is continuing at the Murray Mouth, with work currently occurring on the Coorong side of the Murray Mouth, and has reinstated restricted tidal movement in both the Coorong and Goolwa channel.

DAVID DOLE
General Manager

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 18 March 2003



Further Reduction in Release from Dartmouth Reservoir

River Murray Water announced today that release from Dartmouth Reservoir will be further reduced over the next week to conserve water resources.

The release requirement from Dartmouth has reduced as a result of a recent increase in storage in Hume Reservoir, and declining demand for water along the River Murray.

Storage in Hume Reservoir has risen to 8 % of capacity, and is slightly higher than previously expected under continuing dry conditions, due to lower than expected flow requirements arising from reduced river transmission losses, and lower than expected diversion rates along the River Murray. As a result, the rate of transfer of water from Dartmouth Reservoir to Hume Reservoir can now be further reduced to conserve water resources in Dartmouth Reservoir for the 2003/2004 irrigation season.

Commencing 8:00 am Tuesday 18 March, flow downstream of Dartmouth at Colemans is being gradually reduced from 5 000 ML/day (2.24 m gauge height) to 2 500 ML/day (1.82 m gauge height) by Tuesday 25 March. Further downstream at Tallandoon, the gauge height can be expected to fall from the current level of 2.47 m to about 2.0 m, without significant rain in tributaries downstream of Dartmouth.

A very slow rate of reduction is being adopted to minimise the risk of bank erosion and slumping by allowing groundwater pressure levels more time to stabilise following a prolonged period of several months during which the banks of the Mitta Mitta River have been saturated.

Storage in Dartmouth is currently 1 183 GL (30% of capacity), and without further rain, the rate of fall in storage is expected to decline to about 2 GL per day after the current reduction in release is completed.

If extremely dry conditions return during late March with an associated significant increase in irrigation demand along the Murray, it may be necessary to increase release from Dartmouth before the end of the irrigation season, however, it is unlikely that such an increase in release will be required. Under moderate or wet conditions, further reductions in Dartmouth release are likely to be required. Further details will be provided by separate Media Release.

For further information contact:

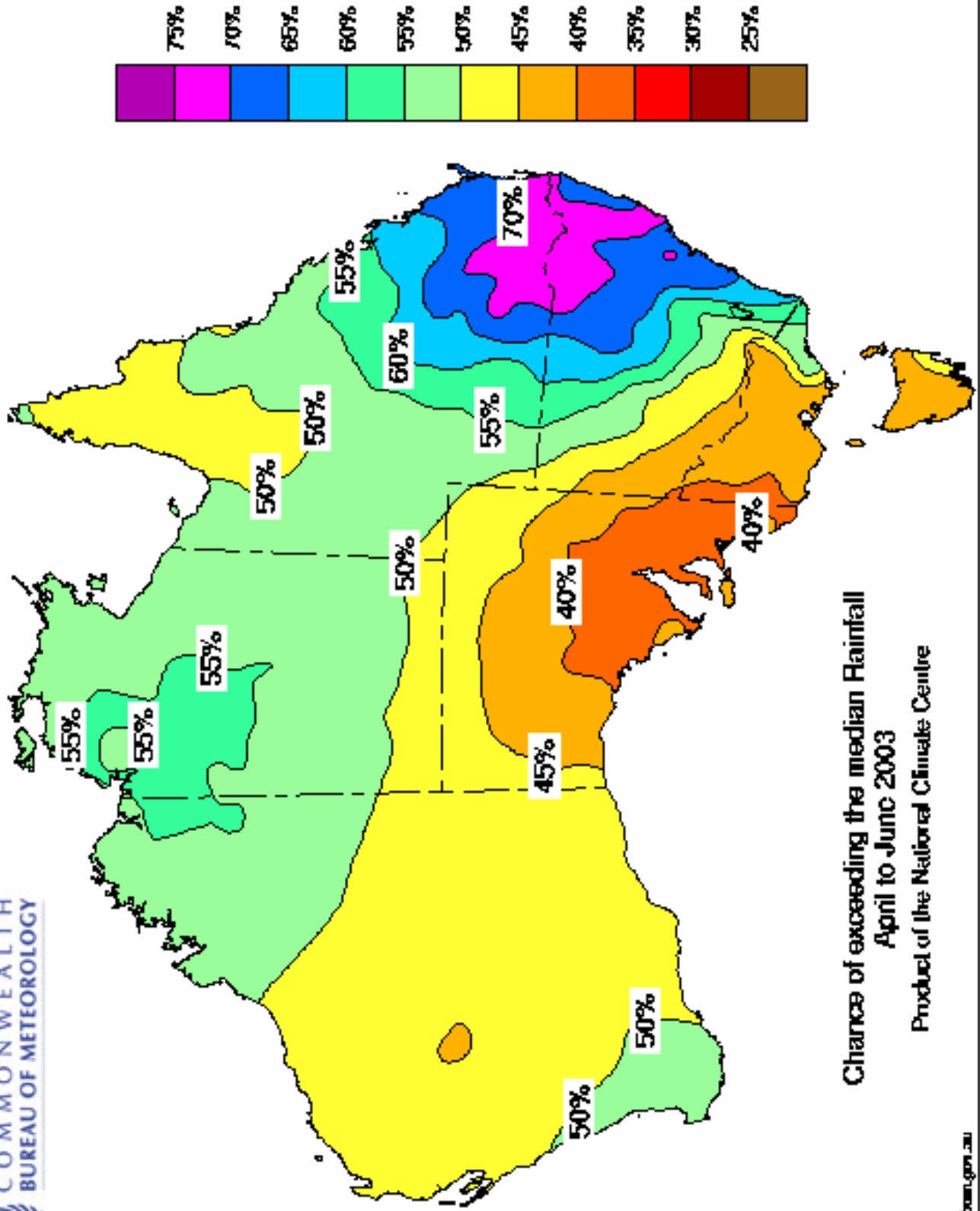
Lawrie Kirk

Media Liaison Officer

Phone: 02 6279 0100

E-mail: lawrie.kirk@mdbc.gov.au

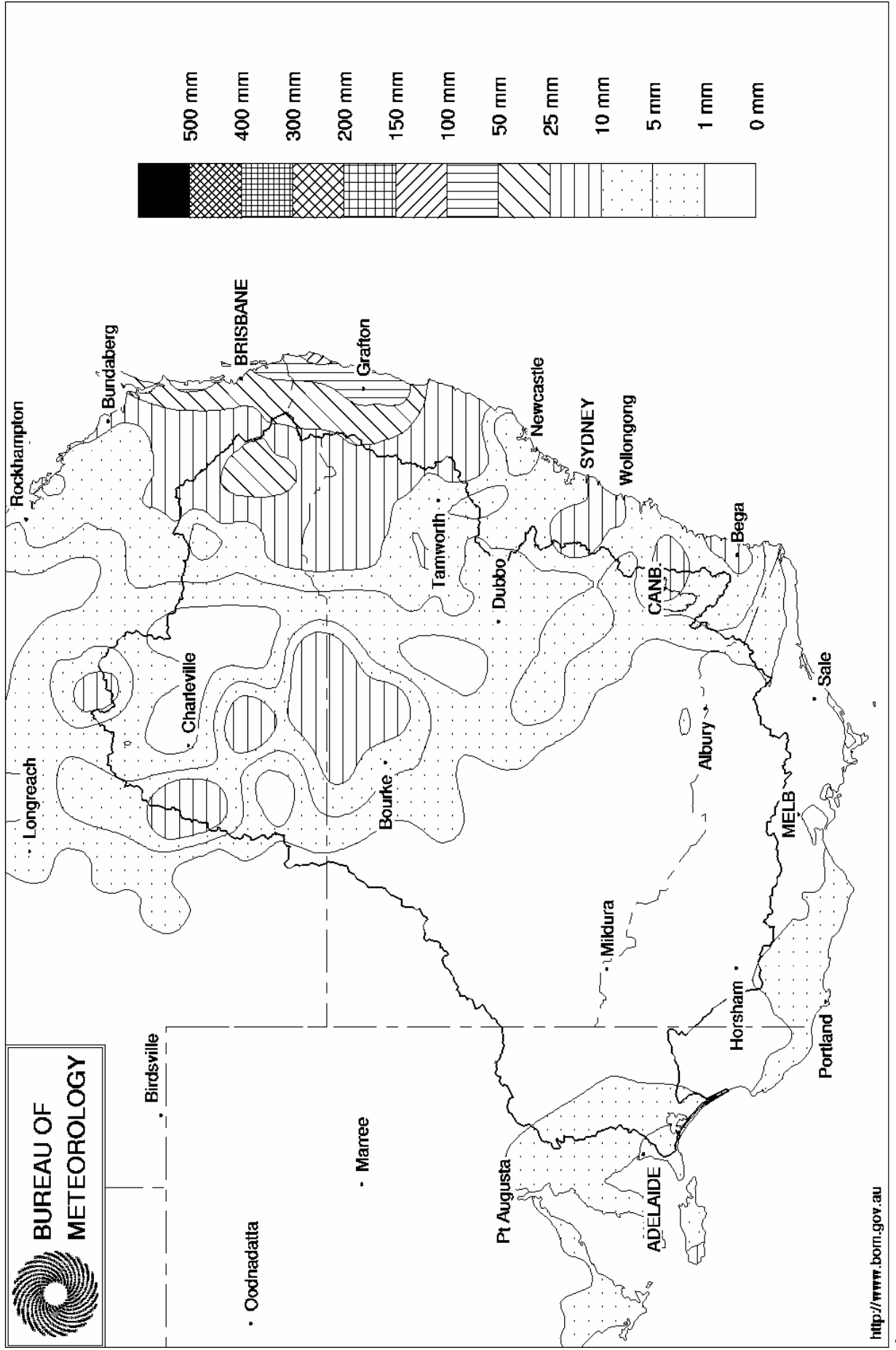
(Lawrie Kirk is *not* to be quoted as a spokesperson)



Chance of exceeding the median Rainfall
April to June 2003
 Product of the National Climate Centre

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 19th March 2003

Product of the National Climate Centre



Week ending Wednesday 19 Mar 2003

Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	429.48	1 179	30%	80	1 099	-36
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	169.56	250	8%	30	220	-9
Lake Victoria	27.00	680	24.40	401	59%	100	301	-20
Menindee Lakes		1 682 *		66**	4%	640 #	0	-3**
Total		9 306		1 897	20%	850	1 621	-69

* Menindee surcharge capacity 1999 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **19%**

NSW Menindee Lakes Reserve

**Capacity tables used by RMW and DLWC are different and are currently under review.

Discrepancies exist between DLWC and RMW figures.

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026	83	8%	3	80	-3
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	35	2%	24	11	-16
Eildon Reservoir	3 390	348	10%	100	248	-17

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 18-Mar-2003

Storage (GL)	Current storage	Weekly change	Diversion	This week	From 1 May 2002
Lake Eucumbene - Total	2 459	-50	Snowy-Murray	+43	704
Snowy-Murray Component	1 169	-	Tooma-Tumut	+2	203
Target Storage	1 410		Nett Diversion	40.9	501
			Murray 1 Release	+45	920

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2002
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	27.2	418.5
Wakool System loss	1.2	42.1
Western Murray Irrig.	0.6	25.6
Licensed Pumps	4.6	175.3
Lower Darling	1.2	114.8
TOTAL	34.8	776.4

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2002
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	11.2	423
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	15.8	729
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	3.3	137
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.6	64
Licensed pumps - SRW	4.5	159
TOTAL	36.4	1 513

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	186	(6 000 ML/day)
Flow this week	41.8	
Flow so far this month	114	
Flow last month	194	

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2002
Swan Hill	80	90	80
Euston	110	110	120
Red Cliffs	120	110	130
Merbein	110	110	140
Burtundy (Darling)	1 420	1 440	1 130
Lock 9	120	120	170
Lake Victoria	210	220	300
Berri	290	270	330
Waikerie	340	350	410
Morgan	340	350	500
Mannum	400	400	590
Murray Bridge	470	470	670
Milang (Lake Alex.)	1 280	1 220	1 150
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	1 320	1 270	1 150
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	1 850	1 760	1 610
Goolwa Barrages	3 040	2 900	3 240



Week ending Wednesday 19 Mar 2003

River Levels and Flows

River Murray	Minor Flood stage (m)	Gauge height		Flow (ML/day)	Trend	Average flow this week (ML/day)	Average flow last week (ML/day)
		local (m)	(m AHD)				
Khancoban	-	-	-	6 860	F	6 330	7 250
Jingellic	4.0	1.97	208.49	7 160	R	6 850	7 380
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	2.43	219.32	4 970	F	5 510	8 410
Heywoods	5.5	2.81	156.44	13 500	F	13 330	11 980
Doctors Point	5.5	2.92	151.39	12 800	F	12 710	11 580
Albury	4.3	1.89	149.33	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	2.82	128.84	14 100	S	13 830	11 470
Yarrawonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.42	116.46	7 630	R	7 160	6 780
Tocumwal	6.4	1.79	105.63	7 050	S	7 100	6 860
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.35	79.90	3 450	S	3 270	3 750
Swan Hill	4.5	0.75	63.67	2 800	R	2 780	4 310
Wakool Junction	8.8	1.80	50.92	3 180	F	3 650	6 400
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	0.84	42.68	3 580	F	4 440	7 610
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	30.83	3 610	F	5 140	7 940
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.82	27.58	2 000	F	4 220	7 110
Rufus Junction	-	3.24	20.17	5 220	F	5 570	5 570
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	-	3 040	F	3 250	3 680
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.46	153.69	30	F	50	60
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.43	145.11	36	F	60	90
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.18	92.60	399	S	410	360
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	300	F	300	310
Edward at Liewah	-	0.66	56.04	280	F	420	910
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.44	54.93	357	F	430	460
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.43	56.39	154	R	210	530
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.48	-	710	F	860	1 440
Darling at Bourke	-	4.63	-	4 740	R	2 250	0
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.69	-	90	S	100	120

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	1 140	500
---	-------	-----

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
Yarrawonga	124.90	-0.17	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.10	+0.94
No. 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.00	+0.06
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.04	+0.14
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.02	+0.03	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.00	+0.56
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.02	+0.18	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.03	+0.19
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.03	-0.02	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.02	+0.12
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.00	+0.10	No. 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.02	-0.30

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.23	0.65	70	345
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.07	0.2	61.5	314

Barrages

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.24	All closed
Mundoo	26 openings	0.20	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwitchere	322 gates	0.28	All closed



AHD = Level relative to Australian Height Datum, i.e. height above sea level