

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 23 March 2005

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24 March, 2005



Rainfall and inflows

A low pressure system located off the NSW coast brought light falls of rain to the ranges in the east of the Basin this week. However little or no rain fell across the majority of the Basin and inflows to the Upper Murray have remained fairly steady.

River Murray Operation

The release from Dartmouth Reservoir has remained steady at about 600 ML/day during the week, however it was reduced slightly to 400 ML/day today (Thursday 24 March), to conserve water resources in this, the Commission's upper-most storage. The release is likely to be further reduced to the minimum flow of 200 ML/day in coming weeks if conditions permit.

Diversions at the major offtakes from the Yarrawonga Weir pool have remained strong, and have steadily increased over the week as warm and dry conditions have persisted across the irrigation areas. To meet these demands and increasing river losses, the release from Hume Reservoir was gradually increased to 18 000 ML/day. Releases from Hume have only been this high on one other occasion this season, in mid January 2005. The Yarrawonga Weir pool was also marginally lowered for a short period to sustain the increased water demands, but is expected to rise over the Easter weekend.

Demands and river losses were also high downstream of Yarrawonga Weir, and releases from the Weir were accordingly temporarily increased to 8 700 ML/day. It is also likely that there will be a need to temporarily draw down the Euston Weir pool over the coming weeks to ensure that downstream water demands can be met (*see attached media release*). The extent of the draw down will depend on weather conditions and demands over the next few weeks, but the pool is unlikely to be drawn down more than 30 cm below the normal operating level.

Weir Pool Raising for Environmental Benefit

Over the past week, the upper pool levels of Locks 5 and 6 have been gradually raised to 10 cm above normal pool level as part of a project to water some areas of low-lying floodplain and wetlands in the Chowilla Floodplain (in the Riverland, South Australia) (*see attached media release*). After Easter, both pools will be gradually raised a further 5 cm, to 15 cm above normal pool level. The pools will be raised for up to 6 weeks, providing water to stressed River Red Gums and other vegetation on the floodplain. Water birds and other aquatic species are also expected to benefit from this watering. Both weir pools will be returned to normal operating levels around the end of April.

DAVID DREVERMAN
General Manager

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 24 March 2005

Temporary Partial Drawdown of Euston Weir Pool Level



The water level of Euston Weir pool will be partially drawn down to assist in meeting flow requirements between Euston and Wentworth, River Murray Water (RMW) announced today.

RMW General Manager, Mr David Dreverman said this operation is being undertaken to maintain downstream flow requirements.

“Recent warm and dry conditions have increased river losses and diversions over the last two weeks, and inflows to Euston Weir pool are forecast to be slightly less than current flow requirements downstream of Euston,” Mr Dreverman said.

“As a result, it is now necessary to temporarily draw on water in the Euston Weir pool to continue meeting downstream water supply requirements,” he said.

The water level of Euston Weir pool is currently 47.55 m or 5 cm below full supply level (47.6 m AHD). It is expected the pool level will be gradually drawn down to a level about 20 to 30 cm below full supply level by mid April, and then return to near full supply level.

However, the extent of the drawdown may be less than this if inflows to Euston Weir pool improve as a result of a change to cooler weather conditions.

“This operation will not impact on levels in the Mildura Weir pool. Plans are in place to maintain the level of Mildura Weir pool near full supply level over the coming week for the Mildura 100 Ski Race,” Mr Dreverman said.

River pumpers, boat operators and other river users are advised to take this operation into account when planning their make any necessary adjustments in response to the lower pool level.

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

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River Murray Water

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Tuesday, 22 March 2005

WEIR RAISING TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The health of hundreds of stressed Red River Gums is being boosted by a weir raising project at Chowilla in the Riverland this month.

Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said Lock 6 is to be raised by a maximum of 15cm for up to six weeks providing a much-needed drink for the River Red Gums.

“By raising the weir above normal pool level, more flow will be pushed into creeks and some areas of low lying floodplain and wetland will be inundated,” Minister Maywald said.

“While the main focus of this project is to improve the health of River Red Gums, other vegetation along creek lines and wetlands will also benefit, as will water birds and other aquatic species.”

“The weir pool raising is part of an ongoing coordinated effort to maintain the Chowilla Floodplain and it complements the Red Gum watering and other activities already underway.”

Minister Maywald said the weir would be raised slowly prior to Easter and raised to a maximum 15 cm above normal levels in the following week with levels to be returned to normal around the end of April.

“The Chowilla floodplain is one of six sites along the River Murray identified by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council as Significant Ecological Assets, and this activity is one of many identified in the Chowilla Asset Environmental Management Plan.”

“Recent engineering investigations have shown that most of the weirs in the main river channel can be used to raise water levels without putting undue stress on the weirs themselves. This event signals the beginning of a longer term commitment to use river management infrastructure to deliver environmental benefits.”

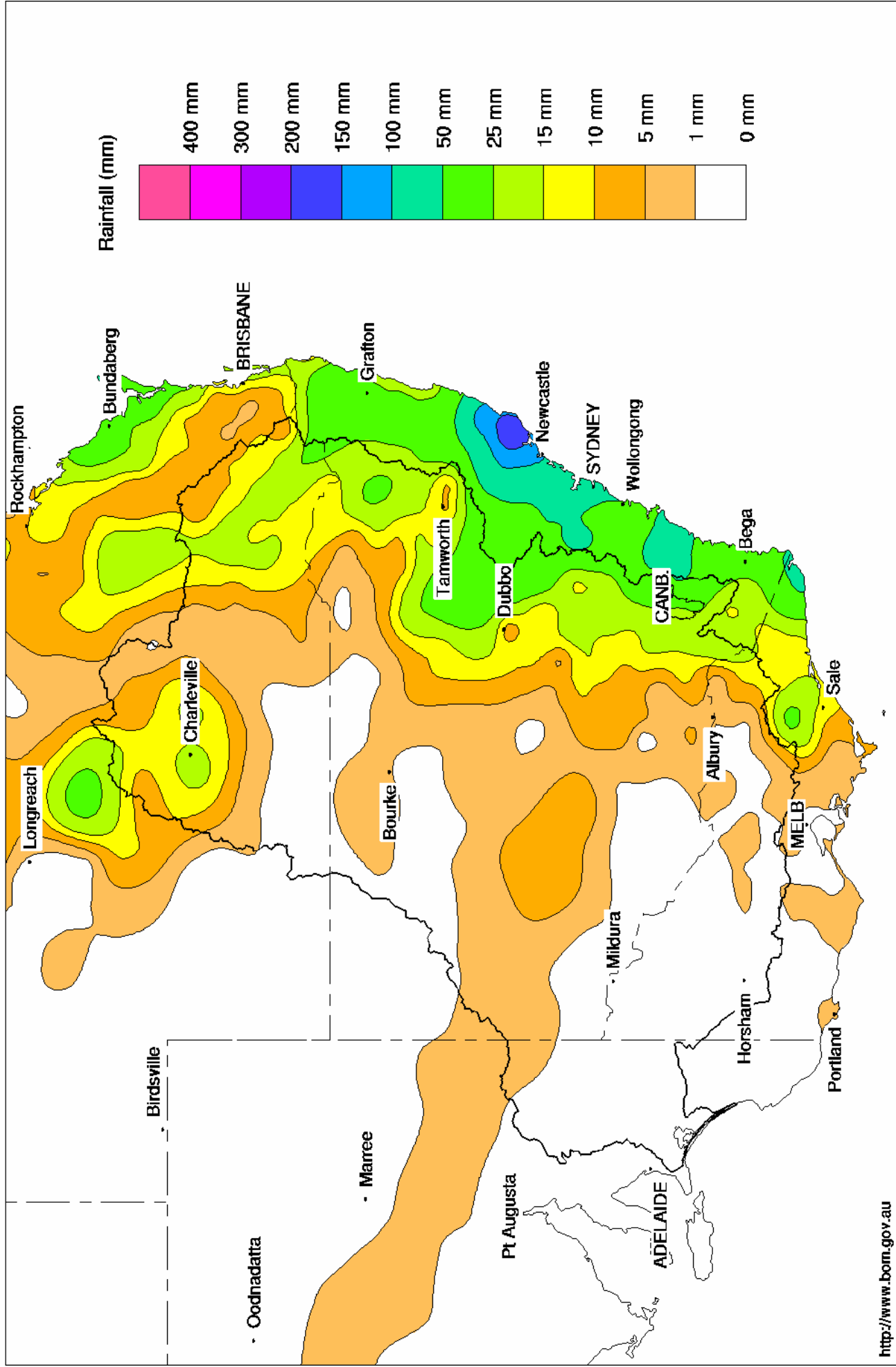
“The weirs provide an opportunity to maximise the benefits of available flow and using these structures to provide environmental benefits will soon become an essential component of river operation,” Minister Maywald said.

The project is being coordinated by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) and SA Water, with the support of River Murray Water and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) and SA Water will also closely monitor the environmental response, salinity levels, and water levels to ensure no navigation risks arise downstream of Lock 6.

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 23rd March 2005

Product of the National Climate Centre



Water in Storage

MDBC Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	MDBC Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	444.66	1 724	44%	80	1 644	-0
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	177.26	859	28%	30	829	-83
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	25.82	538	79%	100	438	-34
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		399	23%	(- -) #	0	-5
Total		9 352		3 518	38%	--	2 910	-122

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **34%**

NSW takes control of Menindee Lakes when storage falls below 480 GL, and control reverts to MDBC when storage next reaches 640 GL

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026		248	24%	3	245	+0
Blowering Reservoir	1 631		230	14%	24	206	-45
Eildon Reservoir	3 390		1 144	34%	100	1 044	-35

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 22-Mar-2005

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversions (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2004
Lake Eucumbene - Total	2 370	-29	Snowy-Murray	+33	564
Snowy-Murray Component	1 116	-30	Tooma-Tumut	+1	279
Target Storage	1 410		Nett Diversion	31.3	286
			Murray 1 Release	+35	923

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2004
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	44.8	667.3
Wakool System loss	1.4	16.2
Western Murray Irrig.	0.8	27.6
Licensed Pumps	9.7	232.6
Lower Darling	1.9	25.8
TOTAL	58.6	969.5

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2004
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	15.6	302
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	25.1	509
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	4.0	138
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	2.3	32
Licensed pumps - SRW	5.2	221
TOTAL	52.3	1 203

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	186	
Flow this week	42.7	(6 100 ML/day)
Flow so far this month	139	
Flow last month	197	

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2004
Swan Hill	100	110	110
Euston	130	120	120
Red Cliffs	170	170	120
Merbein	130	130	120
Burtundy (Darling)	650	690	540
Lock 9	150	150	140
Lake Victoria	190	200	180
Berri	210	210	240
Waikerie	330	320	360
Morgan	330	330	380
Mannum	420	420	470
Murray Bridge	370	370	500
Milang (Lake Alex.)	1 420	1 420	1 320
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	1 240	1 250	1 080
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	2 130	2 250	2 120
Goolwa Barrages	2 210	2 180	1 950



River Levels and Flows

	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)				
River Murray							
Khancoban	-	-	-	4 870	F	5 240	5 590
Jingellic	4.0	1.86	208.38	6 160	R	6 510	6 270
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.50	218.39	900	S	920	900
Heywoods	5.5	3.33	156.96	18 200	R	17 380	14 030
Doctors Point	5.5	3.38	151.85	19 000	R	17 990	14 330
Albury	4.3	2.46	149.90	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	3.37	129.39	18 500	F	17 730	14 300
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.58	116.62	8 710	S	8 440	7 990
Tocumwal	6.4	2.07	105.91	8 720	R	8 320	8 100
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.46	80.01	3 820	F	4 060	4 000
Swan Hill	4.5	0.82	63.74	3 370	F	3 360	3 470
Wakool Junction	8.8	1.85	50.97	3 470	S	3 580	4 480
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	0.74	42.58	3 140	F	3 280	4 570
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	30.80	2 490	F	2 760	5 090
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.78	27.54	2 200	S	2 370	4 530
Rufus Junction	-	3.26	20.19	5 330	F	5 650	5 740
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	-	2 810	R	2 940	3 550
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.80	154.03	400	S	460	460
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	8.00	145.68	790	R	740	830
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.81	93.23	1 440	F	1 640	1 690
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	590	F	450	320
Edward at Liewah	-	0.50	55.88	214	F	290	490
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.46	54.95	390	R	380	450
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.44	56.40	178	S	190	200
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.18	-	30	S	40	80
Darling at Bourke	-	3.96	-	32	F	60	110
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.81	-	335	S	310	220

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	1 380	1 970
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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	-0.21	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.08	+0.94
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.09	+0.15
No. 15 Euston	47.60	-0.03	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.09	+0.14
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.00	+0.00	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.05	+0.55
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.00	+0.14	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.02	+0.26
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	-0.01	+0.01	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.10	+0.12
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.03	+0.11	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.06	-0.09

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-2.18	0.5	69.85	211
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.75	0.12	61.42	244

Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	0.63

Barrages

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.64	All closed
Mundoo	26 openings	0.70	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwichee	322 gates	0.61	All closed

