

REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 30 April 2008

Our Ref : M2008/00001/as
Trim Ref : 08/4161

2 May, 2008



Rainfall and Inflows

During the past week, light rain was recorded across the southern half of the Murray-Darling Basin, with most regions receiving 5 to 25 mm (see Map 1). The highest falls, of up to 50 mm, were recorded in the Snowy Mountains and Victorian Alps. Despite the recent rain, April rainfall was below average for large areas of the Basin, particularly in the north-west (see Map 2). For the month of April, Murray system inflows (excluding Menindee) were only about 60 GL. This is well below the long term average of 240 GL, and only slightly higher than the record low of about 40 GL in April 2007. The Bureau of Meteorology has reported that most indicators of the El Niño - Southern Oscillation are now neutral and are expected to remain neutral throughout winter.

River Operations

As the irrigation season comes to an end, the release from Hume Dam has been steadily reduced from 2 600 to 860 ML/day during the past week. Further reductions are planned, and on 7th May the release is likely to be reduced to 400 ML/day which is slightly lower than the normal winter minimum of 600 ML/day (see attached media release). The normal winter minimum of 1 200 ML/day at Doctors Point (near Albury) will be reduced to 800 ML/day. These measures are part of a system-wide strategy to conserve water for 2008/09.

The level of Lake Mulwala has also been steadily lowered during the past week, and is currently 124.2 m AHD. The lowering will continue, and under a dry scenario is expected to reach about 123.8 m AHD (1.1m below full supply level) by mid May (see attached media release). The water released is being used to supply any remaining irrigation and has reduced the demand on Hume Reservoir. The lower lake level will enable future high inflows from the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers to be re-regulated within the lake, so that releases from the Lake can be maintained as far as possible within the river channel. This will minimise overbank flow and reduce losses in the Barmah-Millewa Forest.

The release from Torrumbarry Weir is currently about 2 200 ML/day and is expected to remain fairly steady during the coming week. During the past week the river height at Swan Hill has dropped from 0.69 to 0.56 m (local gauge height) which is slightly below the normal minimum of 0.6 m. The level is expected to remain close to the minimum while conditions remain dry. Further downstream, the flow at Mildura Weir is 2 100 ML/day and should rise very slightly over the next few days. Torrumbarry, Euston, Mildura and Wentworth Weirs all remain at full supply level. Menindee Lakes remains under NSW control, and the release along the lower Darling River is expected to be reduced from 300 to 200 ML/day during the coming week.

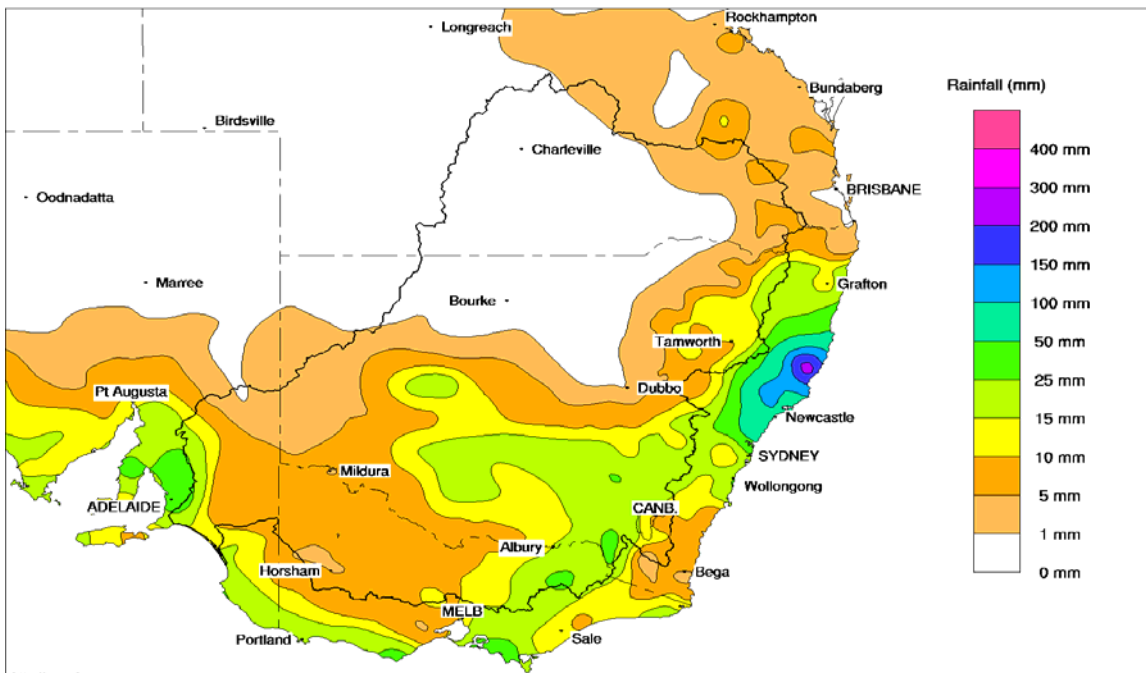
Storage in Lake Victoria decreased by 10 GL to 268 GL (or 40 % capacity) and is expected to continue gradually falling as it is used to supplement flows to South Australia. The water levels in Locks 1 to 6 are close to, or slightly above, full supply level and salinities upstream of Lock 1 have remained fairly steady. The water level in Lake Alexandrina is about -0.5 m AHD (or 50 cm below mean sea level). The cooler weather is resulting in lower evaporative losses and a stabilisation of the water level.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) are providing a small amount of environmental water (17 GL) for critical drought refuges in the north-central, Goulburn-Broken and Mallee catchments. The environmental water will target sites that have not received water since spring 2006 and areas that provide habitat to threatened species.

DAVID DREVERMAN
General Manager

Murray Darling Rainfall Analysis (mm) Week Ending 30th April 2008

Product of the National Climate Centre

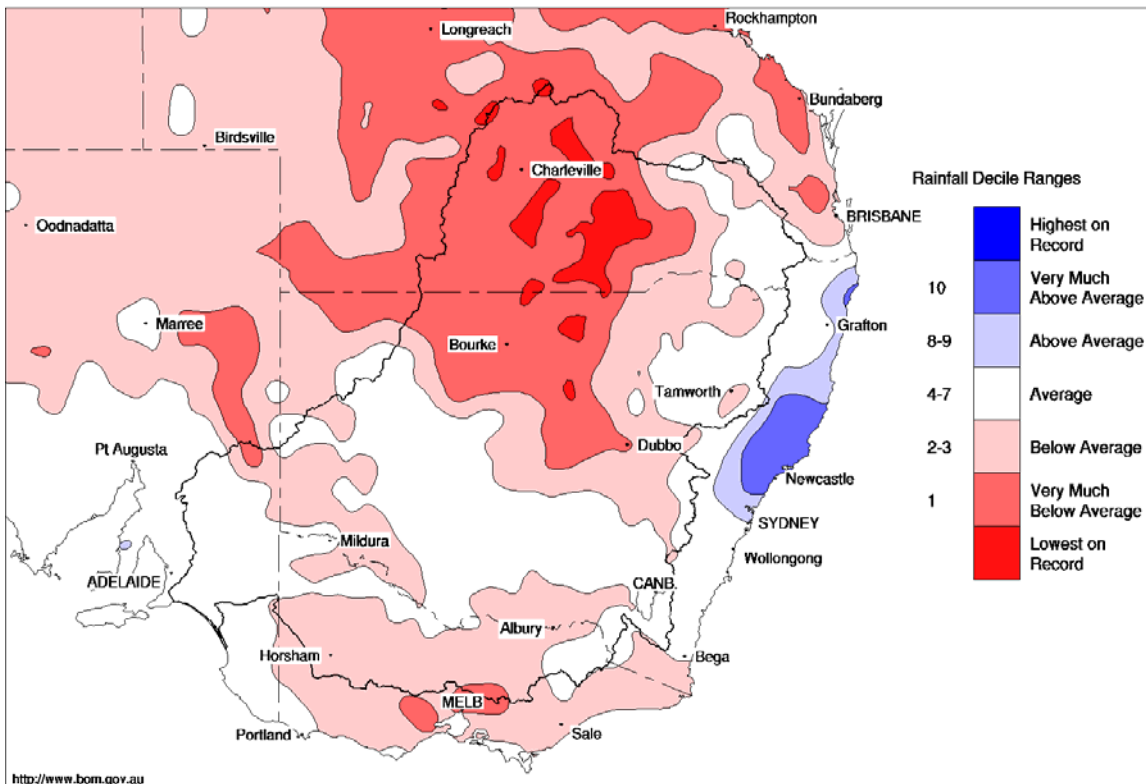


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Issued: 30/04/2008

Murray Darling Rainfall Deciles April 2008

Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



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Issued: 30/04/2008

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	410.84	679	17%	80	599	-1
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	169.55	250	8%	30	220	+17
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	23.43	268	40%	100	168	-11
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		577	33%	(- -) #	0	-2
Total		9 352		1 773	19%	--	986	+3

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **12%**

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	423	41%	3	420	-0
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	398	24%	24	374	-0
Eildon Reservoir	3 390	452	13%	100	352	-8

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 29-Apr-2008

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2008
Lake Eucumbene - Total	379	n/a	Snowy-Murray	+15	479
Snowy-Murray Component	47	-	Tooma-Tumut	+2	161
Target Storage	1 340		Nett Diversion	13.4	318
			Murray 1 Release	+24	719

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2007
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	- 3.5	97.1
Wakool System loss	0.4	20.5
Western Murray Irrig.	0.3	21.7
Licensed Pumps	n/a	81.6
Lower Darling	n/a	10.5
TOTAL	-2.7	231.3

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2007
Yarrowonga Main Channel (net)	4.8	130
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	10.0	229
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	1.1	91 *
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	0.0	12
Licensed pumps - LMW	0.0	170
TOTAL	15.9	632 *

* please note that these values do not include Millewa pumping figures.

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	135 *	(2 100 ML/day)
Flow this week	14.7	
Flow so far this month	74	
Flow last month	109	

* Reduced to approx. 90 GL during April drought contingency operations

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2007
Swan Hill	80	90	90
Euston	90	100	120
Red Cliffs	-	-	130
Merbein	260	250	150
Burtundy (Darling)	300	300	890
Lock 9	220	200	150
Lake Victoria	240	240	190
Berri	330	310	350
Waikerie	-	-	530
Morgan	410	410	580
Mannum	690	690	660
Murray Bridge	760	840	680
Milang (Lake Alex.)	3 600	3 610	2 900
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	2 930	2 830	2 520
Menigie (Lake Alb.)	-	-	3 150
Goolwa Barrages	24 380	24 850	19 540



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	-	-	-	5 370	R	3 800	4 500
Jingellic	4.0	1.77	208.29	5 300	R	3 580	4 970
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.29	218.18	420	F	400	430
Heywoods	5.5	1.33	154.96	860	F	1 260	4 420
Doctors Point	5.5	1.49	149.96	1 200	R	1 550	4 750
Albury	4.3	0.66	148.10	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	0.63	126.65	1 620	F	2 150	5 150
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	0.61	115.65	3 010	S	3 360	4 050
Tocumwal	6.4	1.12	104.96	3 380	F	3 510	4 310
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.00	79.55	2 180	R	2 020	2 370
Swan Hill	4.5	0.59	63.51	1 990	F	2 420	2 120
Wakool Junction	8.8	-	-	2 670	F	2 650	2 260
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	0.63	42.47	2 770	R	2 170	1 840
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	2 100	F	2 020	1 500
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.79	27.55	1 650	S	1 520	1 390
Rufus Junction	-	2.52	19.45	1 330	S	1 460	1 660
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-0.56	-	940	S	960	1 390
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.77	154.00	329	R	230	270
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.81	145.49	457	R	340	290
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.12	92.54	376	R	370	380
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	780	F	720	530
Edward at Liewah	-	-	-	483	F	480	440
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	-	-	0	F	0	0
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.45	-	200	F	200	200
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.19	-	33	F	30	20
Darling at Bourke	-	4.00	-	49	F	60	80
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.72	-	75	S	90	240

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	950	390
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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	-0.66	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.10	+0.20
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	-0.01	-0.06
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.01	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.01	+0.06
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.05	+0.01	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.04	+0.22
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.02	+0.15	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.04	-15.10
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.03	-0.02	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	-15.10	-12.20
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.00	+0.21	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.00	-1.31

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-15.00	-	-	-9
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-14.60	-	-	-9



Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

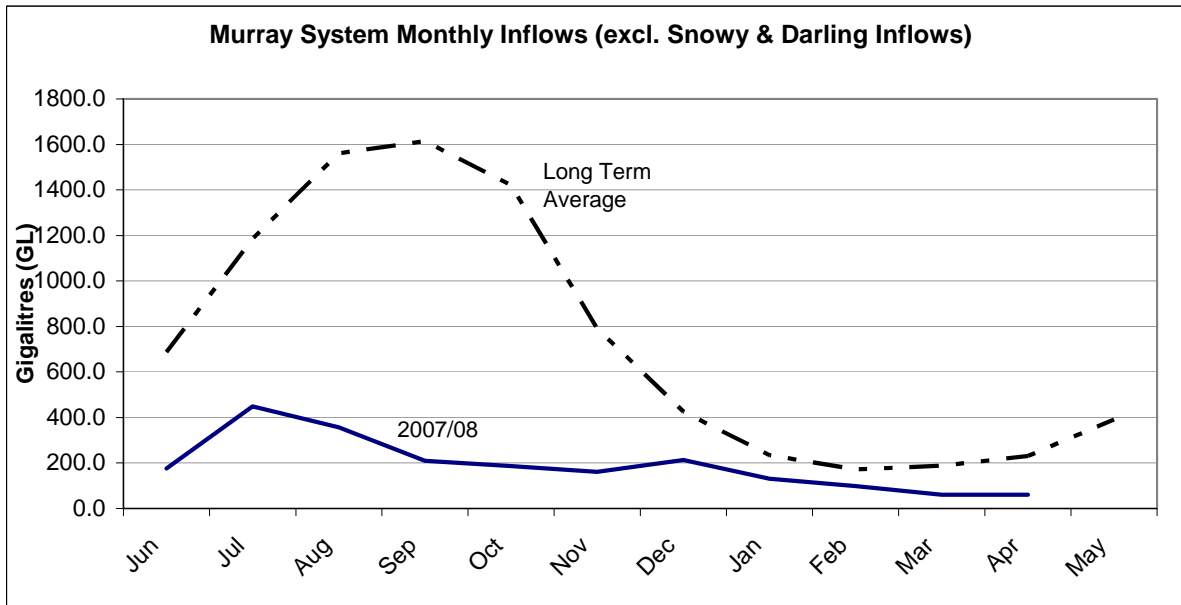
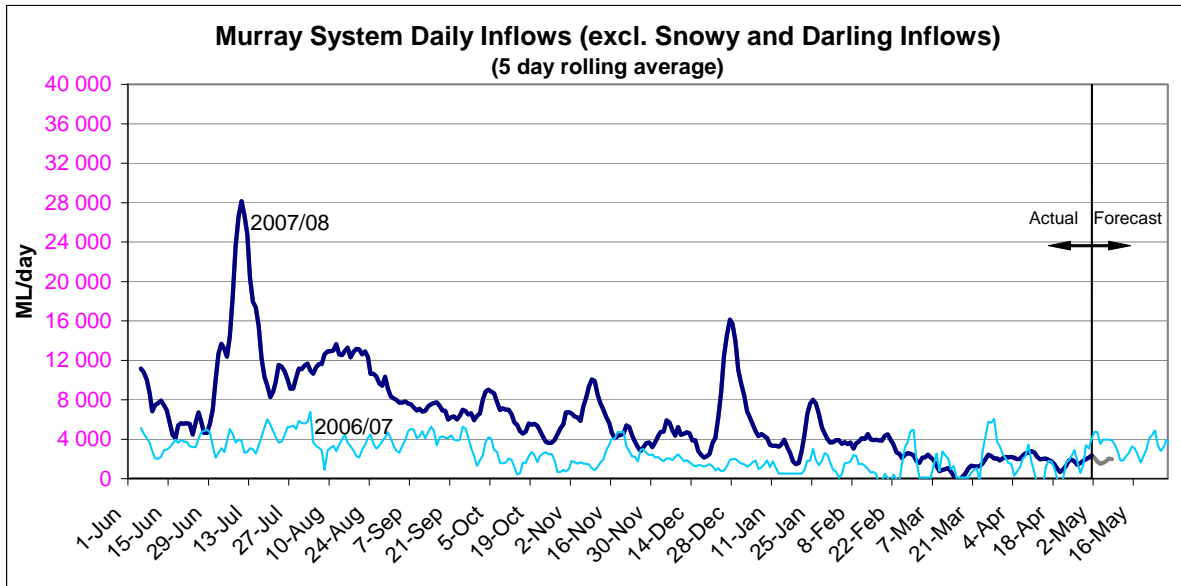
	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	-0.50

Barrages

Fishways @ Barrages

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertical Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	-0.43	All closed	-	Closed
Mundoo	26 openings	-0.45	All closed	-	-
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed	-	-
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed	-	-
Tauwichee	322 gates	-	All closed	Closed	Closed

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



State Allocations (as at 30th April 2008)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	25%
General security	0%

NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	90%
General security	13%

NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	50%

Victoria - Murray Valley

high reliability	43%
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Victoria - Goulburn Valley

high reliability	57%
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South Australia - Murray Valley

irrigation allocation	32%
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NSW : http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/water/state_mm_murr_water_quality.shtml#alloc
 VIC : <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp>
 SA : <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html>



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 2 May 2008

RELEASE FROM HUME RESERVOIR TO FALL BELOW NORMAL MINIMUM

Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM advises that the release from Hume Reservoir and the flow in the Murray River at Doctors Point, (near Albury) will be reduced below their normal minimums to conserve water for the 2008-09 water year.

“Similar to last winter, the lower than normal minimum flow rates for the Hume release and for the Murray River at Doctors Point will apply from 7 May 2008,” Dr Craik said.

“The minimum release from Hume Reservoir will be reduced from 600 to 400 ML/day. It will only be increased above 400 ML/day if inflows from the Kiewa River are very low and the flow at Doctors Point is expected to fall below 800 ML/day (1.32 m gauge height) rather than the usual minimum of 1 200 ML/day (1.48 m gauge height)”.

The 400 ML/day release from Hume Reservoir equates to a level in the Murray River at Heywoods Bridge of about 1.05 m (gauge height). Currently it is 1.21 m (gauge height).

Boat operators, stock owners, river pumpers and other river users are advised to take these changed water levels into account and make any necessary adjustments to their activities.

For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone, phone 0407 006 332



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 30 April 2008

LEVEL OF LAKE MULWALA TO BE LOWERED

Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM advises that the management of the water level in Lake Mulwala will be central to Murray operations over the coming months.

“The level of the Lake will be gradually lowered below its current level of 124.2 m (AHD) later this week and under a dry scenario is expected to be about 123.8 m AHD (1.1m below the Full Supply Level) by mid May with the water released being used to supply this year’s remaining irrigation demands”.

The lower lake level will enable future high inflows from the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers to be re-regulated within the lake, so that releases from the Lake can be maintained as far as possible at rates within the river’s channel capacity downstream. This will minimise overbank flow during small flushes and thus reduce evaporation losses in the Barmah-Millewa Forest.

“The lowering to 123.8m AHD will not by itself lead to any significant weed control. However, MDBC has been exploring options to further lower the lake level over winter to help control weed growth and for periodic maintenance of the weir. A decision on whether further lowering will occur will not be made until after diversions into the Yarrowonga Main Canal cease on about 15 May,” Dr Craik said.

“The initial lowering over the coming weeks will mean that any decision to further lower the lake level can be implemented quite quickly. However we need to be clear that such a decision must balance irrigation needs and environmental implications along the entire Murray Valley”, Dr Craik said.

MDBC hope to lower the lake as much as possible to allow frost to kill the weed. Unfortunately, given the scarcity of water it is not possible to guarantee that the further lowering will happen or that the lake will be held low for a long enough period.

To enable irrigation diversion at the commencement of the next irrigation season, the level of Lake Mulwala will need to be returned to the lower bounds of its operating range by late July.

“MDBC will continue to review Murray operations as the season develops and will provide regular updates over the coming weeks and months on likely water levels in Lake Mulwala,” Dr Craik said.

Boat operators, stock owners, river pumpers and other lake users are advised to take these changed water levels into account and make any necessary adjustments to their activities.

For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone, phone 0407 006 332