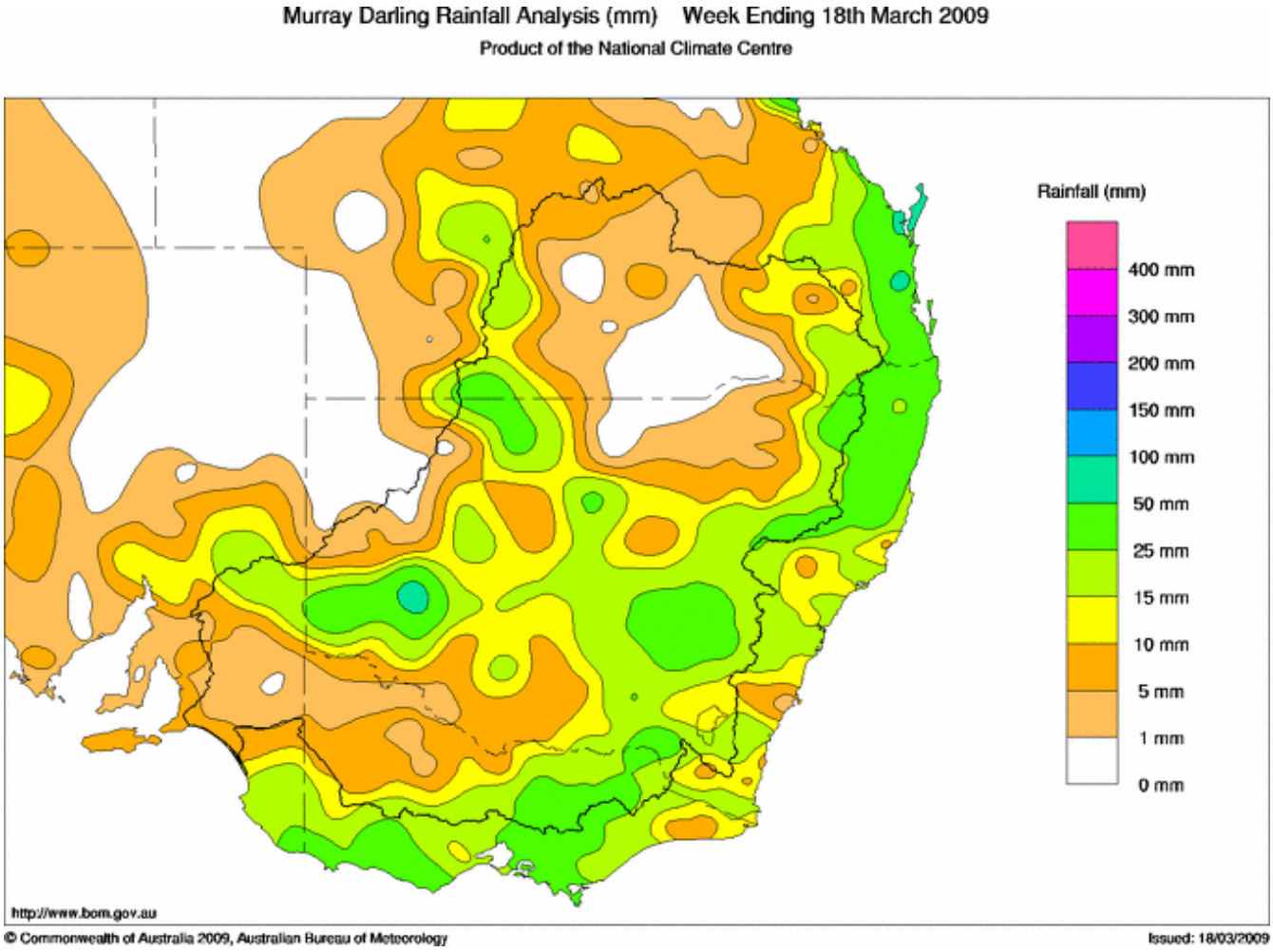
RIVER MURRAY WEEKLY REPORT

FOR THE WEEK ENDING WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 2009

Trim Ref: D09/3110 20 March, 2009

Rainfall and Inflows

Over the past week 25 to 50 mm of rain was received along the eastern highlands from Victoria to central NSW. The heaviest falls occurred in south west NSW with Karpa Kora station on the Darling River near Pooncarie receiving 84 mm of rain (see map). Streamflow response in Upper Murray, as well as the Ovens and Kiewa catchments was relatively low. March 2009 inflows are tracking towards the record low of about 50 GL experienced in March 2007.



River Operations

Storage in Dartmouth Reservoir remained constant at around 859 GL (22% of capacity). Storage in Hume Reservoir decreased by 46 GL to a total of 201 GL (6.6 % capacity). This is lower than end of March 2008 (300 GL) and well below the March long term average (1 017 GL). Hume release was reduced from 10 500 to 8 700 over the past week to target a flow at Doctors Point of about 9 000 ML/day.

The release from Yarrawonga Weir was gradually reduced from 7 500 to 6 500 ML/day over the past week and is likely to be reduced further as losses and irrigation demands downstream continue to decrease. The pool remains steady at around 124.7 m AHD. Commencing late April, the Lake Mulwala pool level will be gradually lowered in order to control the spread of an invasive aquatic weed (see media release attached).

The Murray Region Algal Coordinating Committee (MRACC) has issued a water quality alert for Lake Mulwala / Yarrawonga Weir. The public is advised to avoid direct bodily contact with water from the lake, with monitoring detecting high levels of potentially toxic blue-green algae (see www.g-mwater.com.au). The MRACC has also issued an alert for all of Lake Hume, which currently has a red alert level warning (see www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au).

Flow in the River Murray throughout Sunraysia will gradually decrease over the coming week as the reductions made to the release from Lake Mulwala in early March arrive. For instance, flow at Euston is expected to reduce from 5 400 to about 4 000 ML/day by mid next week. Flows along the Murray in Sunraysia are expected to continue to gradually decrease over the coming weeks if conditions remain dry.

Flow at Weir 32 has increased from about 200 to 1 800 ML/day. This increased release from Menindee Lakes will help ensure that Lake Wetherell does not spill. Lake Victoria storage has increased by 7 GL to 169 GL (25% of capacity) and the flow to South Australia remains at around 4 000 ML/day.

The upstream levels of Locks 6 to 1 are all near, or at, FSL and release from Lock 1 has remained steady at around 1 800 ML/day. The water level in Lake Alexandrina decreased by about 2 cm over the past week and is now -0.92 m AHD, however the water level in Lake Albert has been relatively steady at -0.53 m AHD. Salinites at Locks 1-4 have remained fairly steady since early February. The salinities at Locks 5 and 6 have been gradually falling since early February with the salinity at Lock 6 falling from 290 to 230 EC.

For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone on 02 6279 0141

DAVID DREVERMAN
Executive Director, River Murray

Week ending Wednesday 18 Mar 2009

Water in Storage

MDBA Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage (GL)	Current Storage %	Dead Storage (GL)	MDBA Active Storage (GL)	Change in Total Storage for the week (GL)
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	418.33	859	22%	80	779	+1
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	168.54	201	7%	30	171	-52
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	22.14	169	25%	100	69	+8
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		247	14%	(- -) #	0	+21
Total		**9 352**		**1 475**	**16%**	**- -**	**1 018**	**-23**

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL % of Total Active MDBA Storage = **12%**

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

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026		496	48%	3	493	-15
Blowering Reservoir	1 631		495	30%	24	471	-11
Eildon Reservoir	3 390		493	15%	100	393	-12

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 17-Mar-2009

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2008
Lake Eucumbene - Total	546	-8	Snowy-Murray	+9	570
Snowy-Murray Component	235	-11	Tooma-Tumut	+4	219
Target Storage	1 410		Nett Diversion	5.0	351
			Murray 1 Release	+14	775

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL) *

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2008
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	8.8	109.4
Wakool System loss	0.5	30.7
Western Murray Irrig.	0.4	22.0
Licensed Pumps	4.1	95.0
Lower Darling	0.1	9.9
TOTAL	**13.9**	**266.9**

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2008
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	5.5	95
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	10.8	196
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	0.8	91
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.0	11
Licensed pumps - LMW	6.2	121
TOTAL	**24.4**	513

* Figures derived from Estimates and Monthly Data. Please note that not all data may have been available at the time of creating this report.

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	186 *	
Flow this week	28.2	(4 000 ML/day)
Flow so far this month	72	
Flow last month	142	

* Reduced to approx. 125 GL during March drought contingency operations

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2008
Swan Hill	50	50	70
Euston	80	110	100
Red Cliffs	130	120	130
Merbein	120	110	130
Burtundy (Darling)	610	620	440
Lock 9	110	120	210
Lake Victoria	310	260	260
Berri	360	360	370
Waikerie	-	-	490
Morgan	460	460	520
Mannum	650	660	620
Murray Bridge	740	660	620
Milang (Lake Alex.)	5 400	5 660	4 260
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	5 430	5 370	3 980
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	10 760	10 950	6 710
Goolwa Barrages	28 890	30 260	21 620

Week ending Wednesday 18 Mar 2009

River Levels and Flows

River Murray	Minor Flood stage (m)	Gauge height local (m)	Gauge height (m AHD)	Flow (ML/day)	Trend	Average flow this week (ML/day)	Average flow last week (ML/day)
Khancoban	-	-	-	840	R	1 830	1 600
Jingellic	4.0	1.14	207.66	990	F	2 050	1 360
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.42	218.31	520	S	520	530
Heywoods	5.5	2.56	156.19	8 730	F	9 740	9 250
Doctors Point	5.5	2.53	151.00	9 240	F	10 050	9 630
Albury	4.3	1.52	148.96	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	2.19	128.21	9 220	F	9 460	9 230
Yarrawonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.19	116.23	6 530	R	6 920	8 010
Tocumwal	6.4	1.71	105.55	6 740	F	7 090	7 890
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.71	80.26	4 930	F	5 380	6 320
Swan Hill	4.5	1.08	64.00	5 080	F	5 530	6 080
Wakool Junction	8.8	2.43	51.55	5 870	F	6 290	6 470
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	1.36	43.20	5 370	F	5 580	5 340
Mildura Weir (d/s)		-	-	6 120	F	6 020	5 450
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	3.02	27.78	5 170	S	5 260	4 510
Rufus Junction	-	2.94	19.87	3 470	R	3 350	3 420
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-0.68	-	1 800	F	1 790	1 830
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.66	153.89	180	S	140	110
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.70	145.38	280	S	200	120
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.13	92.55	390	S	370	360
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	1.10	80.87	830	F	1 010	1 130
Edward at Liewah	-	1.80	57.18	1 100	F	1 120	1 160
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	1.00	54.50	10	S	10	20
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.46	56.42	220	F	250	170
Barwon at Mungindi	-	3.29	-	170	F	240	670
Darling at Bourke	-	4.27	-	1 270	F	1 430	4 500
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	0.71	-	90	R	80	70

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	350	

Weirs and Locks

Pool levels above or below Full Supply Level (FSL)

Murray	FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrawonga	124.90	-0.15	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	-0.01	+0.68
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.00	-0.03
No. 15 Euston	47.60	+0.00	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	-0.00	+0.05
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.04	+0.11	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	-0.04	+0.39
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	-0.01	+0.38	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.00	+0.11
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.10	+0.10	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.00	+0.13
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+0.11	+0.50	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.04	-1.43

Murrumbidgee	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht. local (m)	d/s gauge ht. (m AHD)	Flow (ML/day)
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-3.75	0.665	70.015	302
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-3.43	0.142	61.442	262

Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	-0.92

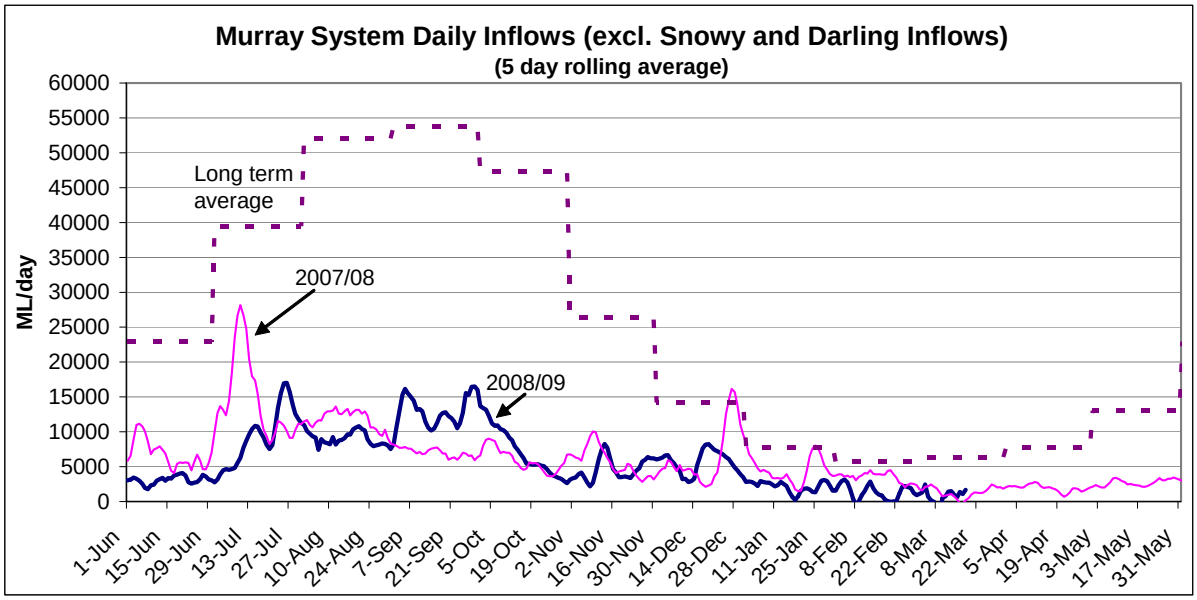
Barrages

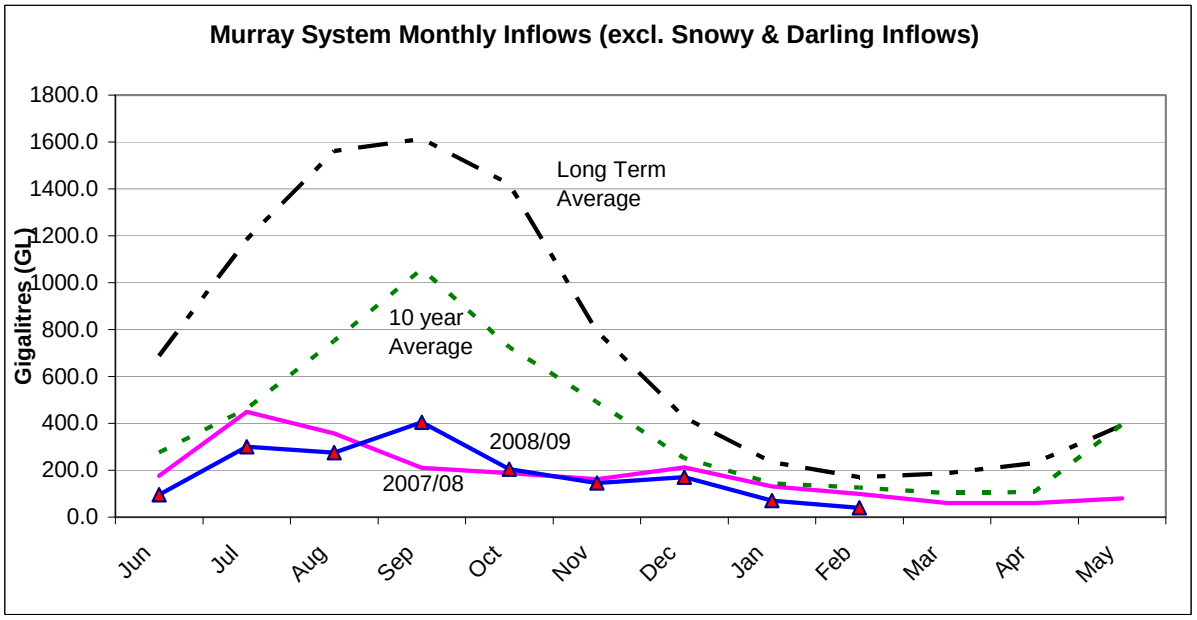
Fishways @ Barrages

	Openings	Level (m AHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertcal Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	-0.93	All closed	-	Closed
Mundoo	26 openings	-0.69	All closed	-	-
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed	-	-
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed	-	-
Tauwitchere	322 gates	-	All closed	Closed	Closed

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

Week ending Wednesday 18th March 2009





State Allocations (as at 18th March 2009)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	95%
General security	9%

NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	95%
General security	21%

NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	50%

Victoria - Murray Valley

high reliability	35%

Victoria - Goulburn Valley

high reliability	32%

South Australia - Murray Valley

High security	18%

NSW : http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/mediarelnr/mr_toc_currnr.html
VIC : http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp
SA : http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

MEDIA RELEASE

Date….16th March 2009

Planned lowering of Lake Mulwala to control invasive aquatic weed.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority, in conjunction with Goulburn-Murray Water, is planning a drawdown of Lake Mulwala in late autumn and winter to control the spread of an invasive aquatic weed.

Egeria densa, commonly known as dense waterweed, is a non-native weed introduced from South America that has formed dense clumps throughout Lake Mulwala. It is affecting recreational and tourism activities, interrupting normal operation of the power station and fishway at Yarrawonga Weir and causing problems for town water supplies.

There are a number of control methods available; however, a lowering of the water level is the only method that provides viable weed control over the whole of the Lake.

The lake has been subject to winter drawdowns at irregular intervals, ever since it was constructed. The most recent were; 1984, 1989, 1993, 2002 and a partial drawdown in 2008.

It is understood that the local community is generally supportive and recognises that an 'off season' lowering will provide recreational and tourism benefits for a number of years.

The first phase of the lowering is planned to commence in late April. Irrigation diversions will not be affected. The water level will be gradually lowered, up to 10 cm each day, until the lake level is about 123.5 m AHD (or 1.4 m below Full Supply Level) by the end of the irrigation season in mid-May.

After the end of the irrigation season, the rate of drawdown would be accelerated by increasing the release from Yarrawonga Weir. The rate of drawdown would up to about 30 cm/day. The lake level would be lowered to about 119.5 m AHD (or 5.4 m below FSL) by early June and held constant until about mid July.

Refilling is expected to begin in mid-July, and the water level would be raised to a level which allows irrigation diversions at the start of the irrigation season in early to mid-August.

This current plan may be altered in response to weather and river conditions over the coming months. Further updates will be provided in media releases and in the MDBA's weekly report prior to, and during, the drawdown.

Media contact: MDBA, Sam Leone, phone (02) 6279 0141

Trim ref: D09/3052