

# REPORT FOR THE WEEK ENDING

Wednesday, 17 March 2004

Our Ref : RMW305/01/01/prs  
Trim Ref : 04/3004DO

18 March, 2004



## ***Rainfall and Outlook***

Further welcome rain fell across the northern half of the Basin with up to 150 mm along the Queensland/NSW border. Whilst this rainfall will contribute little in the way of inflows to Menindee Lakes, it has improved the chances of significant flows occurring in the future by wetting catchments. It will also help meet local water use demands. The Bureau of Meteorology's latest seasonal outlook (*see diagram attached*) also shows improved odds of receiving above median rainfall across the Darling headwaters during April/May/June, boosting prospects for improved flows in the Darling River.

Conversely, a drier than average season is more likely in South Australia, much of Victoria and the far southwest of NSW. More details on rainfall and temperature outlooks can be found in the BOM website at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/>.

## ***River Murray System***

Increasing irrigation demands have required release from Hume Reservoir to remain at high rates during the week. Storage in Hume Reservoir fell by 130 GL to 730 GL or 24% of capacity. If the very dry conditions observed across the upper Murray continue throughout autumn, it is possible that the reservoir could again fall to the very low levels observed last year.

Transfers of water from Hume Reservoir to Lake Victoria are now being reduced with the flow downstream of Stevens Weir on the Edward River being reduced from 2200 to 1400 ML/day. Release from Stevens Weir will remain at about this rate for some days before being gradually reduced towards minimum rates early in April.

Release from Euston Weir was maintained at about 6500 ML/day for much of the week to assist in the dilution of saline Darling inflows and the refilling of Mildura Weir pool. Euston and Mildura pools were temporarily drawn down about 0.2 and 0.1 m respectively and will be gradually refilled over the coming week.

## ***Salinity Spike***

Saline inflows from the Darling River have now effectively passed downstream of Wentworth (*see Media Release attached*) with salinities peaking a little higher than forecast at about 1300 EC. Lake Victoria has captured the bulk of this saline water to mitigate river salinity levels in South Australia.

## ***Algal Update***

Algal counts remain at high alert levels in Lake Hume with slicks of algae visible from the air. More detailed information on the situation at Hume is available on the Murray Regional Algal Coordinating Committee's website at <http://www.murraybluegreenalgae.com/>. Algal counts elsewhere in the Murray are generally in the low to medium alert level range except for high alert levels still present in the lower Darling River as well as the lower lakes in South Australia.

DAVID DREVERMAN  
General Manager

# MEDIA RELEASE

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Wednesday, 17 March 2004

## UPDATE ON SALINITY RISES IN THE MURRAY BELOW WENTWORTH

River pumpers are advised that the high salinity water from the Darling River has now entered the River Murray and passed downstream of Wentworth Weir. It is now approaching Lock 9 however most of it is being diverted into Lake Victoria.

According to River Murray Water (RMW) General Manager David Dreverman, the highly saline Darling water has mixed completely with fresh Murray water from upriver, significantly reducing its salinity.

“The peak salinity experienced in the Murray below Wentworth Weir was about 1300 EC for a short period of time, compared with the peak salinity experienced in the lower Darling of over 3000 EC” Mr Dreverman said.

Salinity levels downstream of Wentworth Weir have now fallen to about 200 EC as shown in the attached diagram. Mr Dreverman said: “the tail end of the “salt slug” is now at least 20km downstream of Wentworth Weir.”

RMW has reported that salinity in the lower Darling River has since fallen to a low level of about 250 EC. NSW DIPNR has reduced releases from Menindee Lakes to 300 ML/day, to conserve water resources in Lake Wetherell.

SA Water is currently closely monitoring salinity levels in the Murray and Lake Victoria. The extent of salinity rises in the Murray below Lake Victoria will depend on the extent of mixing that occurs within the lake.

Mr Dreverman said: “as much water as possible is currently being passed through Lake Victoria to mitigate rises in salinity in South Australia. River salinity in South Australia is not expected to rise to the levels experienced at Wentworth.”

“RMW is continuing to monitor progress on this ‘salt event’ in association with state agencies, and RMW is implementing operational responses aimed at minimising impacts on all river users downstream.”

“Once monitoring reveals the extent of mixing that is taking place in Lake Victoria, more accurate estimates of the likely rises in river salinity downstream in South Australia can be made” Mr Dreverman said. “Current estimates are that the salinity at Morgan could rise to a temporary peak of about 900 EC in about mid June 2004, however, this will be kept under close review” he added.

The temporary releases of additional water recently from Euston and Mildura Weir pools contributed to reducing the extent of rise in river salinity downstream. These pools are now slowly being refilled back to their normal levels.

Further media releases will be issued when more information and revised forecasts are available.

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Ref: 04/2643DO

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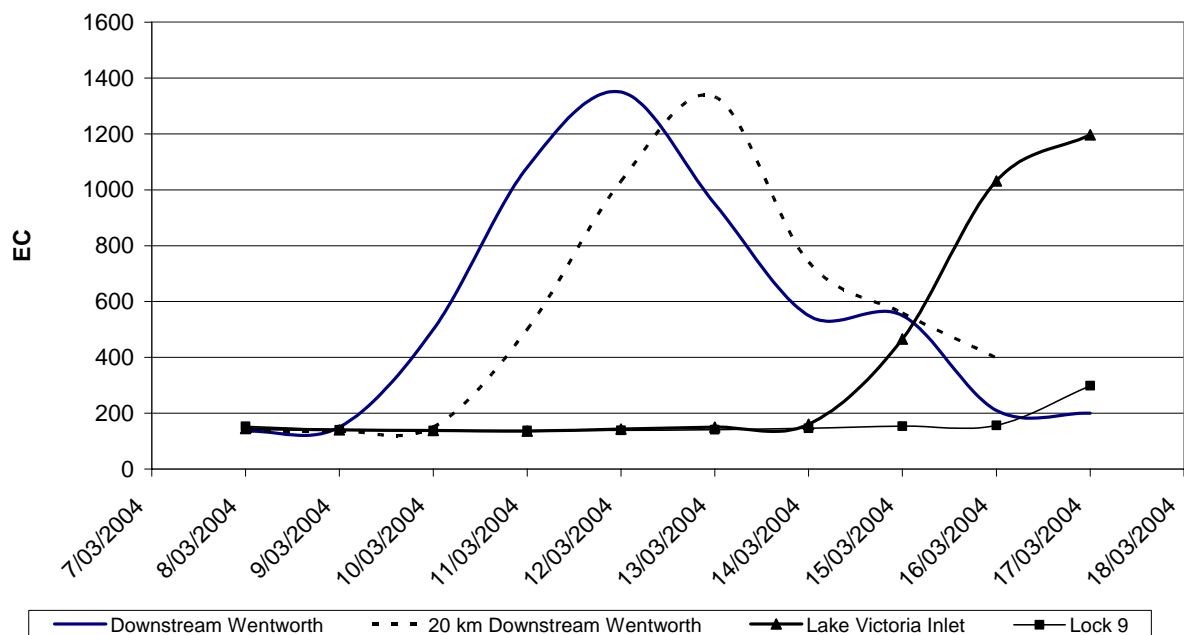
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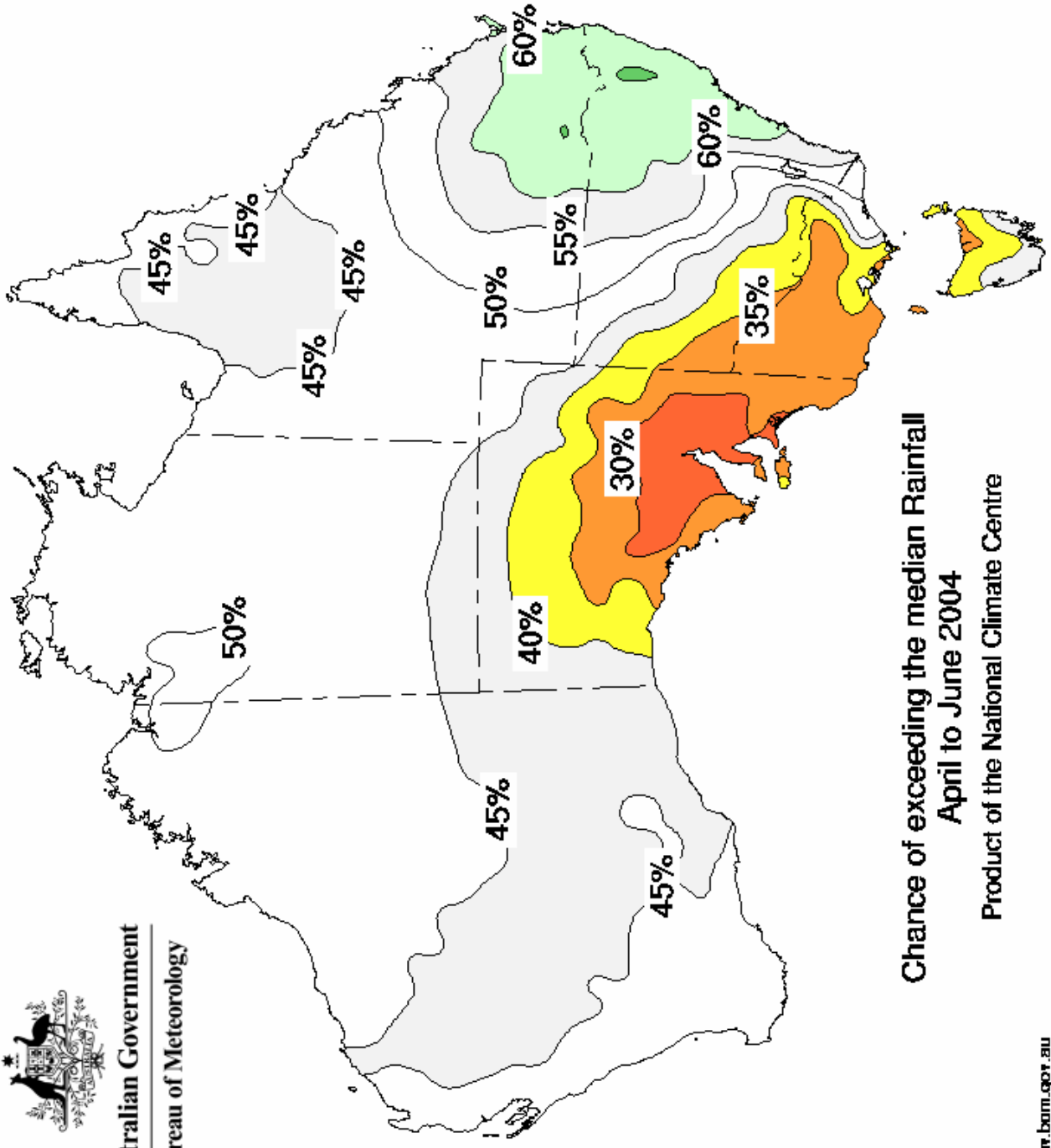
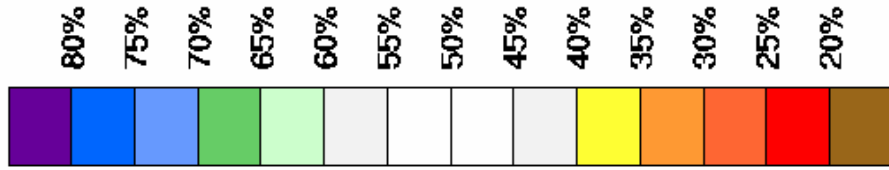
**River Murray Salinities**







Australian Government  
Bureau of Meteorology



Chance of exceeding the median Rainfall  
April to June 2004  
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)	Active Storage (GL)	Change in Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 906	447.56	1 843	47%	80	1 763	+1
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 038	175.91	727	24%	30	697	-130
Lake Victoria	27.00	680	23.48	309	45%	100	209	-4
Menindee Lakes		1 603 *		248	16%	640 #	0	+0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 227</b>		<b>3 127</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>2 669</b>	<b>-133</b>

\* Menindee surcharge capacity 1916 GL

% of Total Active MDBC Storage = **32%**

# NSW Menindee Lakes Reserve

**Major State Storages**

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026		433	42%	3	430	-3
Blowering Reservoir	1 631		329	20%	24	305	-39
Eildon Reservoir	3 390		887	26%	100	787	-52

**Snowy Mountains Scheme**

Snowy diversions for week ending 16-Mar-2004

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2003
Lake Eucumbene - Total	1 844	-3	Snowy-Murray	+7	620
Snowy-Murray Component	1 043	-	Tooma-Tumut	+0	263
Target Storage	1 410		Nett Diversion	6.7	357
			Murray 1 Release	+11	951

**Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL)**

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2003
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	38.8	662.6
Wakool System loss	1.7	30.1
Western Murray Irrig.	0.8	24.9
Licensed Pumps	12.6	197.7
Lower Darling	3.8	16.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>932.2</b>

Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2003
Yarrawonga Main Channel (net)	15.0	288
Torrumbarry System + Nyah (net)	0.0	452
Sunraysia Pumped Districts	3.8	132
Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	1.9	31
Licensed pumps - SRW	4.8	168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>1 071</b>

**Flow to South Australia (GL)**

Entitlement this month	186	(6 100 ML/day)
Flow this week	42.8	
Flow so far this month	105	
Flow last month	201	

**Salinity (EC)**

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2003
Swan Hill	80	80	100
Euston	100	100	120
Red Cliffs	110	100	130
Merbein	110	120	140
Burtundy (Darling)	260	270	2 390
Lock 9	230	160	170
Lake Victoria	240	240	230
Berri	250	250	270
Waikerie	340	330	380
Morgan	370	370	410
Mannum	440	440	440
Murray Bridge	480	480	480
Milang (Lake Alex.)	1 240	1 220	1 120
Poltalloch (Lake Alex.)	-	890	1 090
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	-	2 210	1 620
Goolwa Barrages	1 890	1 880	2 150



**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)				
<b>River Murray</b>							
Khancoban	-	-	-	2 650	F	1 750	1 330
Jingellic	4.0	1.42	207.94	2 780	R	1 950	1 720
Tallandoon ( Mitta Mitta River )	4.2	1.33	218.22	600	R	610	620
Heywoods	5.5	3.38	157.01	19 380	R	18 520	19 560
Doctors Point	5.5	3.49	151.96	20 200	R	18 970	20 130
Albury	4.3	2.55	149.99	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	3.45	129.47	18 800	F	19 720	20 120
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	1.77	116.81	10 100	S	10 100	10 170
Tocumwal	6.4	2.29	106.13	10 690	S	10 620	10 770
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	1.60	80.15	4 380	S	4 500	5 230
Swan Hill	4.5	0.91	63.83	3 810	F	3 970	5 020
Wakool Junction	8.8	2.40	51.52	5 550	F	6 000	7 150
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	1.21	43.05	5 450	F	6 220	6 520
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	30.93	5 400	F	5 670	5 380
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	2.87	27.63	6 700	R	7 620	6 360
Rufus Junction	-	3.42	20.35	6 280	R	5 790	5 870
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	-	-	3 870	R	3 770	3 900
<b>Tributaries</b>							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	0.63	153.86	150	F	230	380
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	7.89	145.57	556	R	560	420
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	1.16	92.58	383	F	390	550
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	1 350	F	1 960	2 290
Edward at Liewah	-	2.50	57.88	1 940	S	1 960	2 100
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	0.39	54.88	287	F	280	310
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	0.51	56.47	238	S	250	240
Barwon at Mungindi	-	4.66	-	4 730	R	1 100	410
Darling at Bourke	-	4.27	-	1 426	S	1 450	1 340
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	1.31	-	1 820	F	3 080	3 170

<b>Natural Inflow to Hume</b> (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	- 480	480
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**Weirs and Locks**

**Pool levels above or below design level**

<b>Murray</b>	FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (m AHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrowonga	124.90	-0.19	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+0.06	+1.12
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	+0.00	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.03	+0.10
No. 15 Euston	47.60	-0.16	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	+0.02	+0.16
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	-0.08	+0.13	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.02	+0.62
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.03	+0.23	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.05	+0.21
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	-0.04	-0.09	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.06	+0.15
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	-0.07	+0.05	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.07	-0.16

<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	FSL (m AHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	-0.58	0.63	69.98	325
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	-0.52	0.19	61.49	305

**Barrages**

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	Openings	Level	Status
Goolwa	128 openings	0.58	All closed
Mundoo	26 openings	0.60	All closed
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	All closed
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	All closed
Tauwicheere	322 gates	0.56	All closed



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