



Australian Government

Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

Southern Spring flow 2019 - Update #1

21 August 2019

Plan, adapt, deliver – the Southern Spring Flow is on its way!

Objectives	Provide food and shelter for native fish and other aquatic animals along the River Murray, from Hume Dam to the Coorong.
Start date	1 August 2019 (Hume Dam release)
Total duration	1 st flow – 2-3 weeks 2 nd flow – at least 6 weeks
Flow rate	Combined with other flows to target up to 2.2m (15,000 megalitres/day) downstream of Yarrowonga Weir.
Target areas	River Murray channel and key wetlands and creeks in Barmah-Millewa and Gunbower Forests, Edward-Wakool, Lake Kramen (in the Victorian Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes complex), Coorong and Lower Lakes.

Flow so far...

The first of two small flows to boost the health of the River Murray started its downstream journey from Hume Dam on 1 August.

The flows are carefully planned to follow a natural river flow pattern, typical for this time of year. Environmental water managers have been closely monitoring creeks and rivers upstream of Lake Hume and natural inflows in July have provided at least three cues for us to release water.

We need to be flexible and adaptable! The first flow was planned at a rate of 15,000 megalitres/day. However, rainfall in early and mid-August changed our plans. As a result, we reduced the amount of water for the environment being delivered downstream of Yarrowonga Weir.

Target flows will now be maintained between 10-11,000 megalitres/day at Yarrowonga Weir until flows targeting 15,000 megalitres/day resume in September.

This is because the inflows from the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers in Victoria helped to achieve the objectives for the Southern Spring Flow.



Photo: River Murray at Burramine, 12km below Yarrowonga Weir on 7 August 2019.
Anthony Wilson/CEWO.

We are now focussed on keeping small creeks running and maintaining low levels of inundation in the Barmah-Millewa forest.

Keeping water in the creeks will help to avoid Murray cod and other native fish from becoming stranded.

Low level inundation of the forest will help to minimise potential frost damage to emerging aquatic native plants that germinated following a natural overbank flow in July.

Water from the Southern Spring Flow is being re-used multiple times along the River Murray all the way from Lake Hume to the Coorong.

We are collaborating with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, SA Department for Environment and Water, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Goulburn-Broken CMA, Water NSW and Goulburn Murray Water.



Photo: Top Lake in Barmah forest showing shallow inundation on 7 August 2019. Keith Ward/GBCMA.

Historically the Barmah-Millewa forest would have received natural inflows every winter/spring, even in dry years. In 19 of the past 20 years the forest would have received flows from the river onto the floodplain, including during the Millennium Drought.

More information:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/media-release/southern-spring-flow-throws-lifeline-river-murray>

Local Engagement Officers

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Map of southern Murray-Darling Basin showing approximate progress of Southern Spring flow – dark orange line as at 20 August.