

Burnett River

This brochure describes the flood risk and previous flooding in the Burnett River catchment, last updated in July 2025.

Flood Risk

The Burnett River is located on the southern Queensland coast with the mouth of the river sited just north of the City of Bundaberg. The total area of the catchment is about 33,000 square kilometres.

The Burnett River rises in the Dawes Range, just north of Monto and flows south through Eidsvold and Mundubbera. Along the way it is joined by the Nogo and Auburn Rivers which drain large areas in the west of the catchment. Just before Mundubbera, the main river is joined by the Boyne River draining areas from the south and then begins its northeasterly journey to the coast. Between Gayndah and Mt Lawless, the Barker-Barambah Creeks system joins the Burnett River.

There are several ungated dams (operated by Sunwater) and weirs across the Burnett catchment.

- Upper Burnett: Cania Dam, Wuruma Dam.
- Auburn & Boyne: Boondooma Dam.
- Barker & Baranbah: Bjelke-Petersen Dam.
- Lower Burnett: Paradise Dam.

Major flooding in the Burnett River is relatively infrequent, however, under favorable meteorological conditions such as a tropical low-pressure system, heavy rainfall can occur throughout the catchment which can result in significant river level rises and floods. These floods can cause considerable damage to rural properties along the rivers and to the commercial and residential areas in some of the smaller towns in the area and at Bundaberg. Significant floods at Bundaberg can be generated from very heavy rainfall in the lower reaches of the Burnett River below Mt. Lawless and can be exacerbated when coincided with high astronomical tides.

Previous Flooding

The record of significant floods in the Burnett River extends back to the middle of last century. The flood record at Mundubbera commences with the 1942 flood when the river peaked at 23.62 metres. At Gayndah, records extend back to 1864 with over 15 events exceeding the 10 metre level.

Major floods have been recorded at Bundaberg in 1890, 1893 (twice in 2 weeks), 1942, 1954, 2010 and 2013. The highest recorded flood peak at Bundaberg occurred in January 2013 (Tropical Cyclone Oswald), when the river level reached 9.53 metres. During this event, 2,400 properties were destroyed, 7,000 people evacuated, and 600 businesses damaged.

2013 was the last major flood event in the catchment with moderate flood level peaks observed in upper river catchment in 2017 (Tropical Cyclone Debbie). Since then, periodic minor to moderate flood peaks have been recorded in 2021, 2022 and 2024 in parts of the catchment.

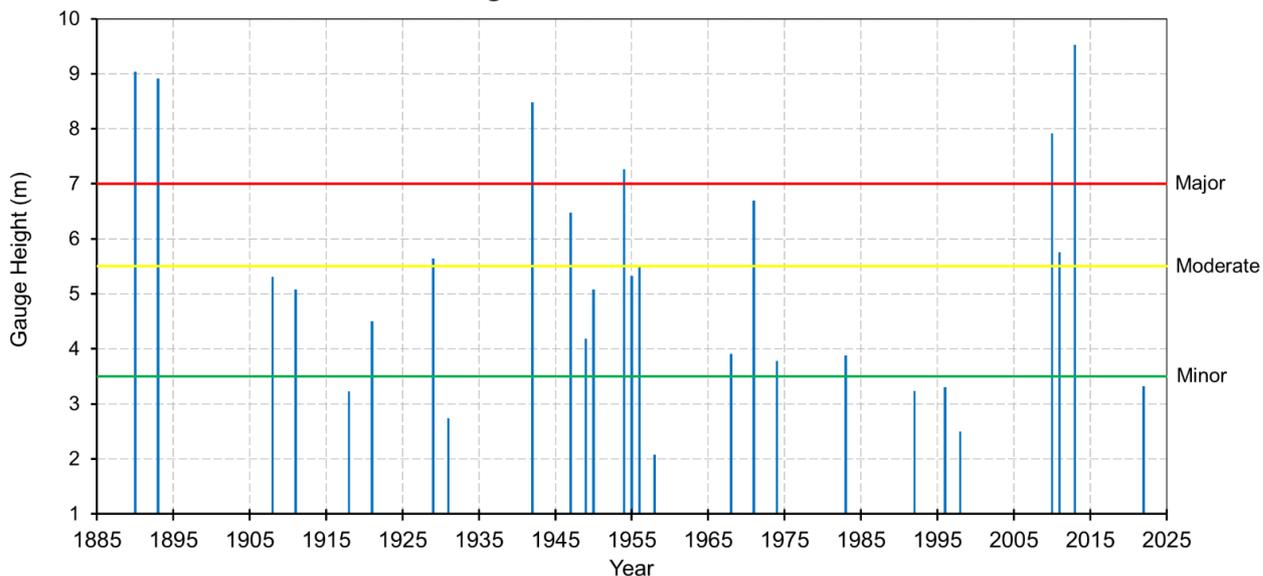
Flash flooding is often reported around the Monto area in the Upper Burnett River.

The table below summarises the flood history of the Burnett River catchment - it contains the flood gauge heights of some of the more historically significant flood peaks.

Flood Event	Dunollie	Eidsvold Bridge	Mundubbera	Gayndah	Stonelands	Brian Pastures	Walla	Bundaberg
Jan 1890	-	-	-	16.27	-	-	23.11	9.04
Feb 1893	-	-	-	16.12	-	-	22.84	8.91
Feb 1942	12.49	-	23.62	19.66	-	-	22.45	8.48
Jul 1954	14.33	-	18.29	14.38	-	15.27	19.41	7.26
Feb 1971	12.49	10.69	17.45	13.92	10.24	9.54	18.08	6.70
Mar 1992	-	11.50	8.20	6.40	7.41	6.15	11.20	3.24
Feb 2003	-	14.35	10.60	8.60	-	-	9.76	-
Dec 2010	10.45	16.20	18.82	15.60	9.94	8.15	20.10	7.92
Jan 2013	12.98	22.21	23.00	18.61	-	13.00	23.50	9.53
Feb 2015	-	12.25	10.15	-	5.86	-	10.11	-
Mar 2017	4.60	10.20	9.62	-	-	-	8.76	-
Oct 2017	-	10.90	9.17	-	2.11	-	7.79	2.7

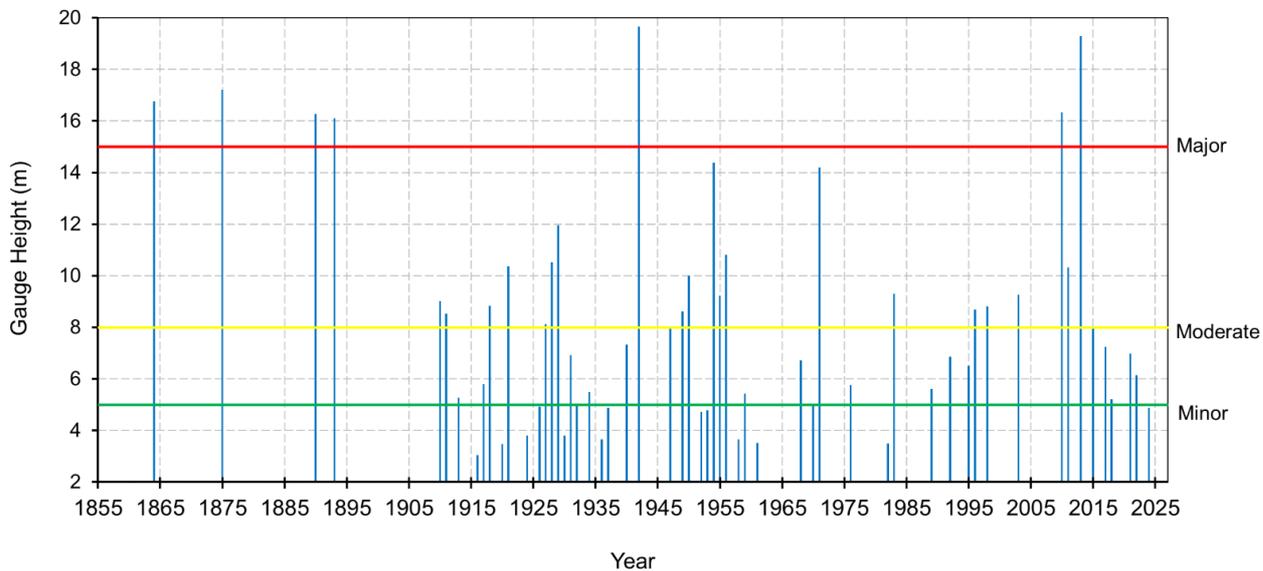
All heights are in metres on flood gauges.

Burnett River at Bundaberg Highest Annual Flood Peaks

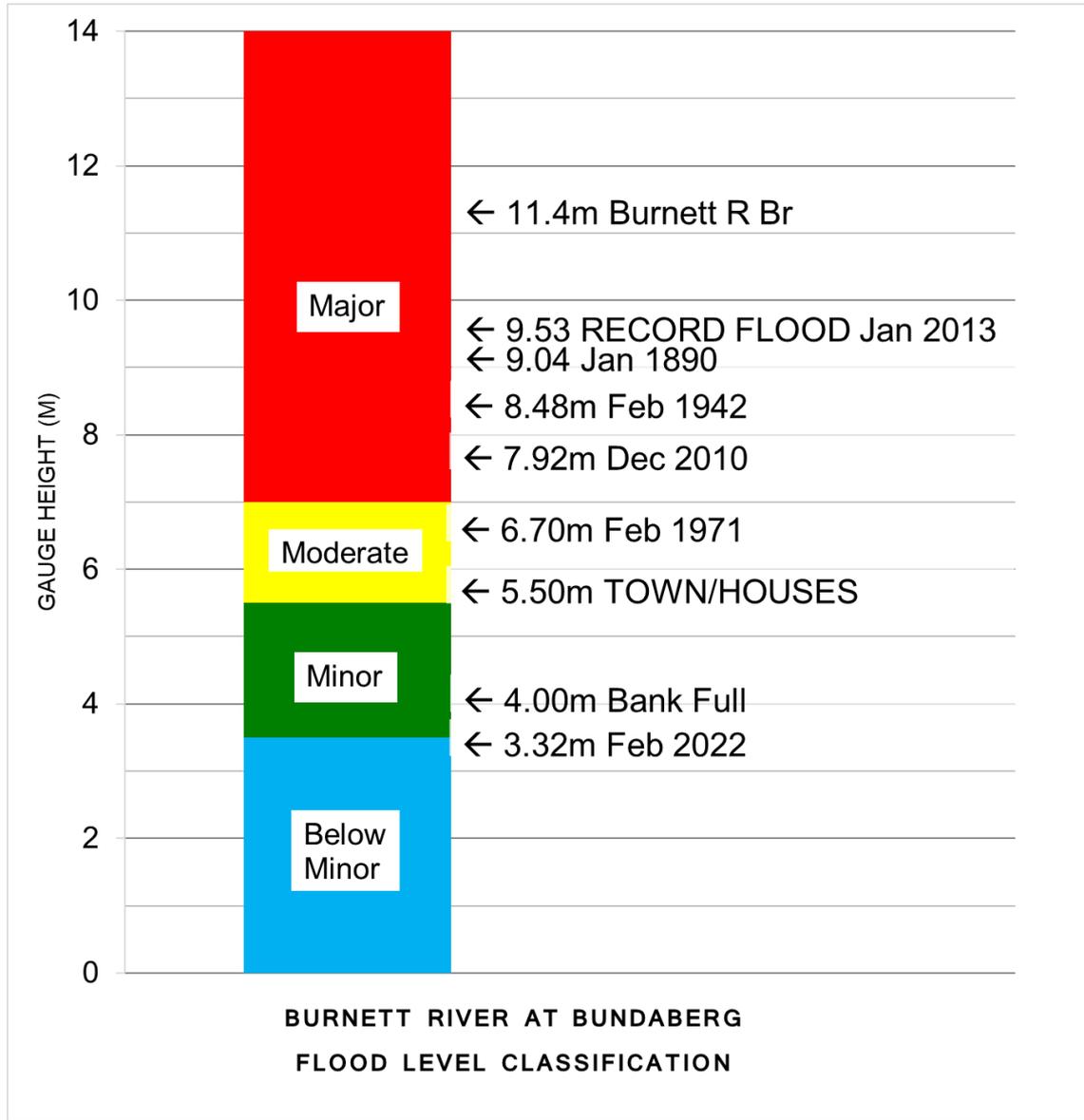


Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology

Burnett River at Gayndah Highest Annual Flood Peaks



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Further Information

- [Latest rainfall and river heights](#)
- For information on the flood warning service for the Burnett River: [Queensland Service Level Specification](#)
- Catchment map: [Queensland Burnett Basin map](#)
- [National Arrangements for Flood Forecasting and Warning](#)