

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

for the

DIAMANTINA RIVER

This brochure describes the flood warning system operated by the Australian Government, Bureau of Meteorology for the Diamantina River. It includes reference information which will be useful for understanding Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins issued by the Bureau's Flood Warning Center during periods of high rainfall and flooding.



Diamantina River at Tulumur

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(Last updated September 2019)

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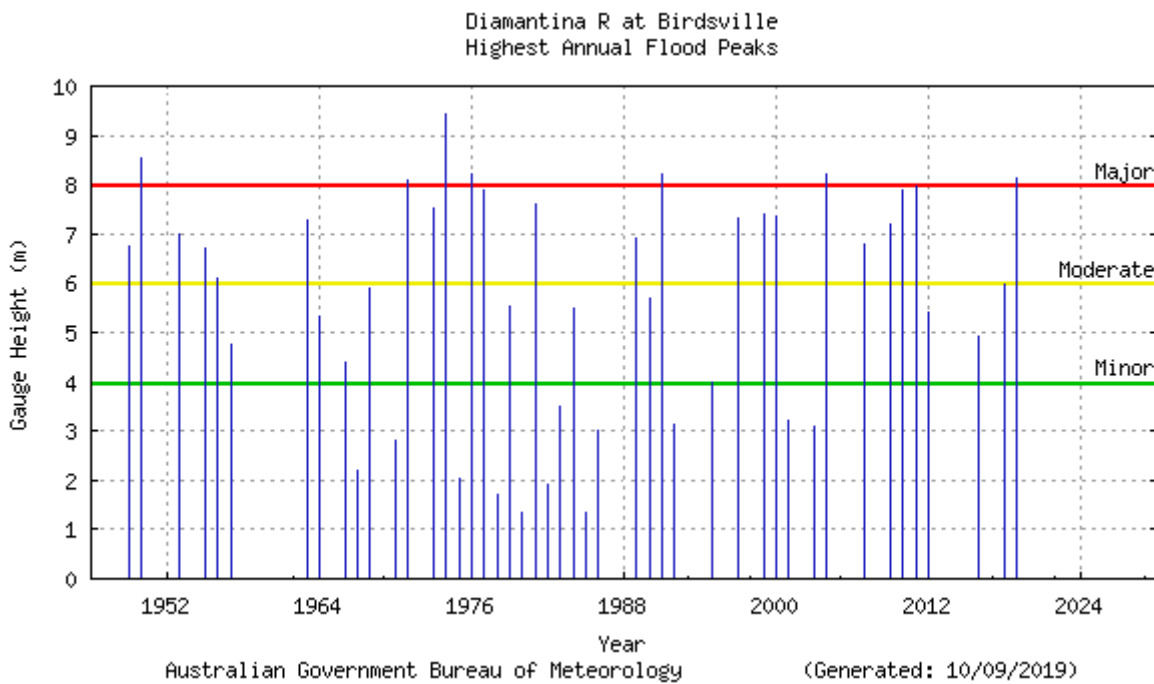
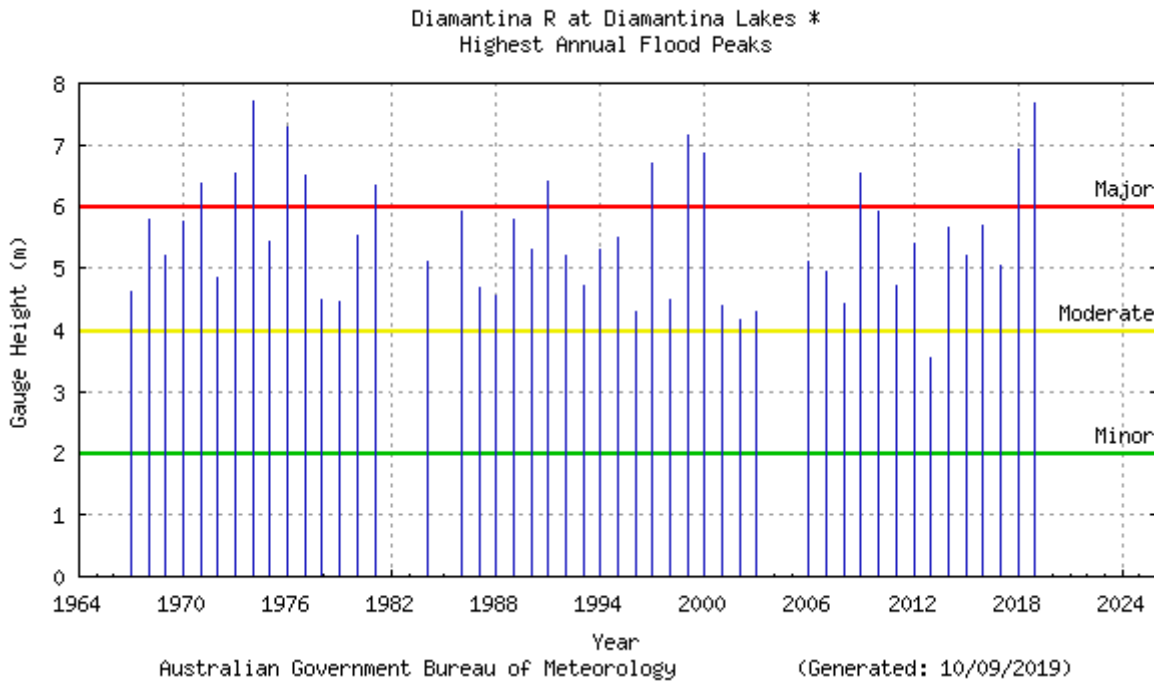
Flood Risk

The vast Diamantina River catchment is located in south west Queensland and covers an area of approximately 119,000 square kilometres. The river rises in the Swords Range, 70 kilometres southwest of Kynuna and flows initially in a north and easterly direction before changing to a southwesterly direction 70 kilometres west of Winton. Major tributaries joining the river are the Western and Mayne Rivers above Diamantina Lakes and Farrars Creek below Monkira. The river does not have a well defined main channel but consists generally of a series of wide, relatively shallow channels. The river passes through the town of Birdsville before crossing the Queensland-South Australia border 10 kilometres south of Birdsville. Floods normally develop in the headwaters of the Diamantina River and in its major tributaries, however, flooding may result from heavy rainfall falling in the middle to lower reaches of the catchment around Diamantina Lakes. Local area rainfalls can be a significant factor throughout these areas.

The main impact of the record major flooding in January 1974 at Birdsville, and more recently the floods of 1991, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2009 and 2019 is the isolation of towns and properties and the extensive inundation of grazing lands which can last several months in some areas, with road transport disrupted for considerable periods of time.

Previous Flooding

The Diamantina River catchment has well documented history of flooding dating back some 50 years, including Diamantina Lakes (commenced 1965) and Birdsville (commenced 1949).



Flood Forecasting

The Bureau of Meteorology operates a flood warning system for the Diamantina River based on a rainfall and river height observations network shown on the map. The network consists of a number of volunteer rainfall and river height observers who forward observations by telephone when the initial flood height has been exceeded at their station.

The Bureau's Flood Warning Centre issues Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins for the Diamantina River during flood events. Qualitative flood forecasts are issued when moderate flood levels are likely to be exceeded at Winton and quantitative forecasts are provided whenever river levels are forecast to exceed 7.0 metres at Birdsville.

Local Information

Local Council's throughout the Diamantina River catchment may be able to provide further details of flooding in your area.

Flood Warnings and Bulletins

The Bureau of Meteorology issues Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins for the Diamantina River regularly during floods. They are sent to radio stations for broadcast, and to local Councils, emergency services and a large number of other agencies involved in managing flood response activities. Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins are available via :

Radio

Radio stations, particularly the local ABC, and local commercial stations, broadcast Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins soon after issue.

Local response organisations

These include the Councils, Police, and State Emergency Services in the local area.

Internet/World Wide Web

Flood Warnings, River Height Bulletins and other weather related data is available on the Bureau's Web page at <http://www.bom.gov.au> . The Queensland Flood Warning Centre website is <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/flood> .

Telephone Weather

Flood Warnings are available through a recorded voice retrieval system, along with a wide range of other weather related and climate information.

Main Directory	Phone	1900 955 360
Flood Warnings	Phone	1300 659 219

Interpreting Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins

Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins contain observed river heights for a selection of the river height monitoring locations. The time at which the river reading has been taken is given together with its tendency (e.g. rising, falling, steady or at its peak). The Flood Warnings may also contain predictions in the form of minor, moderate or major flooding for a period in the future. River Height Bulletins also give the height above or below the road bridge or causeway for each river station located near a road crossing.

One of the simplest ways of understanding what the actual or predicted river height means is to compare the height given in the Warning or Bulletin with the height of previous floods at that location.

The table below summarises the flood history of the Diamantina River basin - it contains the flood gauge heights of the more significant recent floods.

Flood Event	Winton	Elderslie	Tulmur	Diamantina Lakes	Monkira	Durrie Station	Roseberth Station	Birdsville
Mar 1950	4.47*	-	-	-	5.79	-	-	8.54
Mar 1971	-	-	-	6.38	5.03	-	6.33	8.08
Jan/Feb 1974	4.53*	-	9.75	7.71	6.12	5.30	7.60	9.45
Feb 1976	-	-	-	7.29	5.25	3.90	6.50	8.20
Feb/Mar 1977	-	-	-	6.52	4.45	3.40	6.10	7.90
Feb 1991	-	-	-	6.40	4.80	4.30	6.40	8.20
Jan 1999	-	-	4.75	7.15	-	3.10	5.70	7.40
Feb/Mar 2000	4.65*	2.94	7.65	6.85	4.80	3.10	5.80	7.35
Jan 2004	2.90	3.65	6.25	-	5.00	-	-	8.20
Feb 2009	2.45	4.80	7.40	6.53	4.13	2.81	5.70	7.20
Mar 2010	-	-	-	3.81	4.10	3.25	5.96	7.90
Mar 2011	-	3.15	4.30	4.73	3.87	2.90	5.85	7.95
Feb 2012	2.40	3.60	-	5.05	3.55	-	-	-
Mar 2012	-	3.10	-	5.41	3.89	2.21	5.16	5.42
Mar 2018	3.70	4.50	7.70	6.93	4.30	2.00	5.23	5.98
Feb 2019	3.55	5.20	6.60	7.68	5.42	3.80	6.48	8.15

All heights are in metres on flood gauges.

[*] Estimated peak flood heights from flood marks and other information.

Historical flood heights for all river stations in the Diamantina River Floodwarning network, as shown on the map, are available from the Bureau of Meteorology upon request.

DIAMANTINA RIVER CATCHMENT - ASSESSMENT OF THE FLOOD POTENTIAL

Major flooding requires a large scale rainfall situation over the Diamantina River catchment. The following can be used as a rough guide to the likelihood of flooding in the catchment :

75mm in 24 hours over isolated areas, with lesser rains of 50mm over more extensive areas will cause stream rises and the possibility of minor flooding. If lesser rainfalls have been recorded in the previous 24 to 72 hrs, then moderate to major flooding may develop.

100mm in 24 hours will cause isolated flooding in the immediate area of the heavy rain.

General 100mm or heavier falls in 24 hours over a wide area will most likely cause major flooding in the middle to lower reaches of the Diamantina River between Tulumur and Diamantina Lakes extending downstream to Monkira and Birdsville.

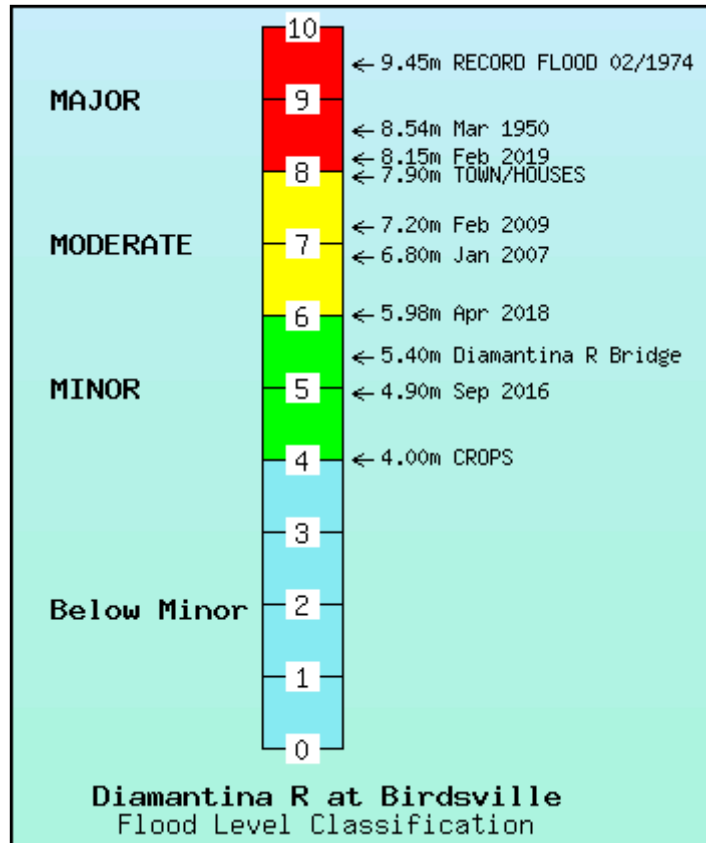
Flood Classifications

At each flood warning river height station, the severity of flooding is described as minor, moderate or major according to the effects caused in the local area or in nearby downstream areas. Terms used in Flood Warnings are based on the following definitions.

Minor Flooding : Causes inconvenience. Low-lying areas next to watercourses are inundated. Minor roads may be closed and low-level bridges submerged. In urban areas inundation may affect some backyards and buildings below the floor level as well as bicycle and pedestrian paths. In rural areas removal of stock and equipment may be required.

Moderate Flooding : In addition to the above, the area of inundation is more substantial. Main traffic routes may be affected. Some buildings may be affected above the floor level. Evacuation of flood affected areas may be required. In rural areas removal of stock is required.

Major Flooding : In addition to the above, extensive rural areas and/or urban areas are inundated. Many buildings may be affected above the floor level. Properties and towns are likely to be isolated and major rail and traffic routes closed. Evacuation of flood affected areas may be required. Utility services may be impacted.



Each river height station has a pre-determined flood classification which details heights on gauges at which minor, moderate and major flooding commences. Other flood heights may also be defined which indicate at what height the local road crossing or town becomes affected by floodwaters.

The table below shows the flood classifications for selected river height stations in the Diamantina River catchment.

River Height Station	First Report Height	Crossing Height	Minor Flood Level	Crops & Grazing	Moderate Flood Level	Towns and Houses	Major Flood Level
Aldingham	1.0	-	1.5	-	1.7	-	2.0
Oondooroo	1.0	0.60 (C)	2.0	-	3.0	-	4.0
Oondooroo Auto	-	2.80 (C)	4.2	-	5.2	-	6.2
Apsley	1.5	-	2.0	-	2.5	-	3.0
Winton	1.3	1.30 (B)	1.5	-	2.0	-	3.5
Elderslie	1.5	1.60 (C)	1.5	2.5	2.5	-	3.0
Tulmur	4.0	-	5.0	7.0	7.0	9.0	8.0
Diamantina Lakes	0.3	2.10 (C)	2.0	-	4.0	-	6.0
Monkira	2.5	2.90 (C)	2.9	3.0	4.0	-	4.5
Durrie	1.4	-	1.5	1.5	2.0	-	2.4
Roseberth	4.0	-	4.5	4.0	4.9	-	5.2
Birdsville	2.0	5.40 (A)	4.0	4.0	6.0	7.9	8.0

All heights are in metres on flood gauges.

(B) = Bridge (A) = Approaches (C) = Causeway

The above details are correct at the time of preparing this document. Up-to-date flood classifications and other details for all flood warning stations in the network are at:

[Flood gauge information](#)

For the latest rainfall and river height conditions please use the following link:

[Latest rainfall and river heights](#)

For the latest rainfall and river height network map please use the following link:

[Network maps](#)

For further information, contact:

The Flood Services Manager, Bureau of Meteorology, GPO Box 413, Brisbane Q 4001
