



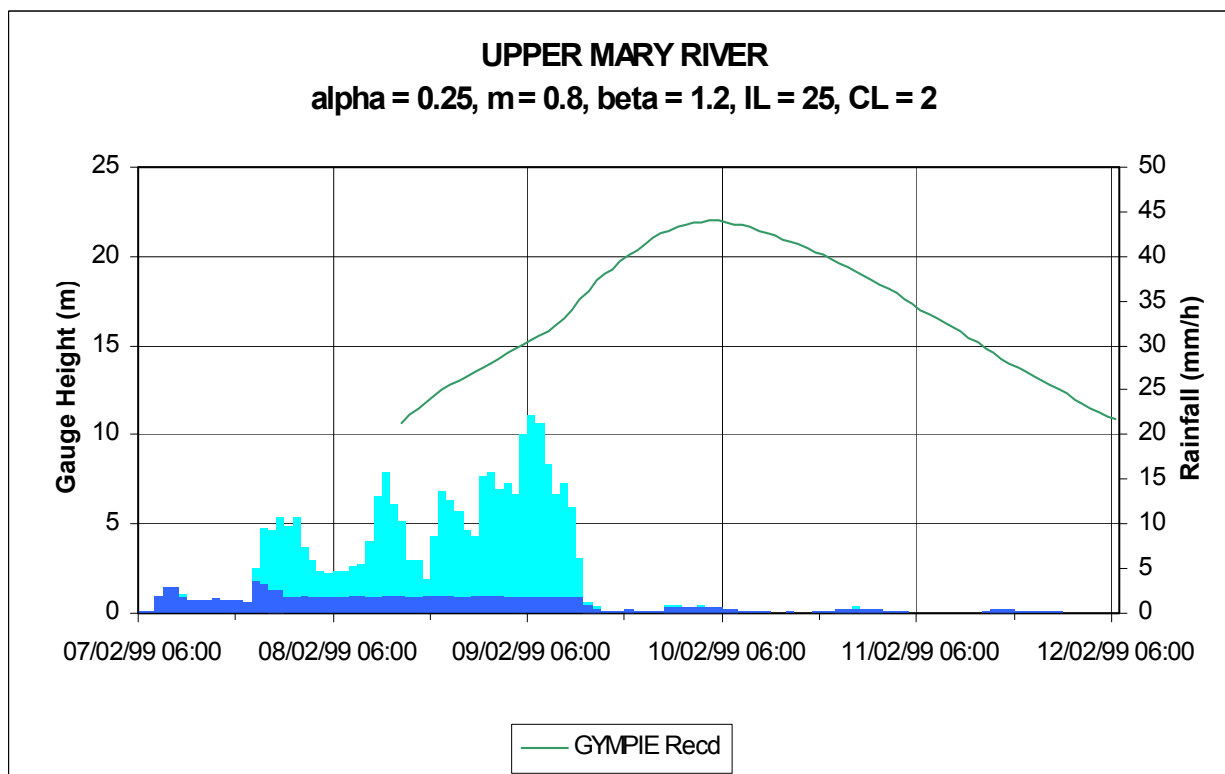
FLOOD IN THE MARY RIVER

February 1999

Rainfall

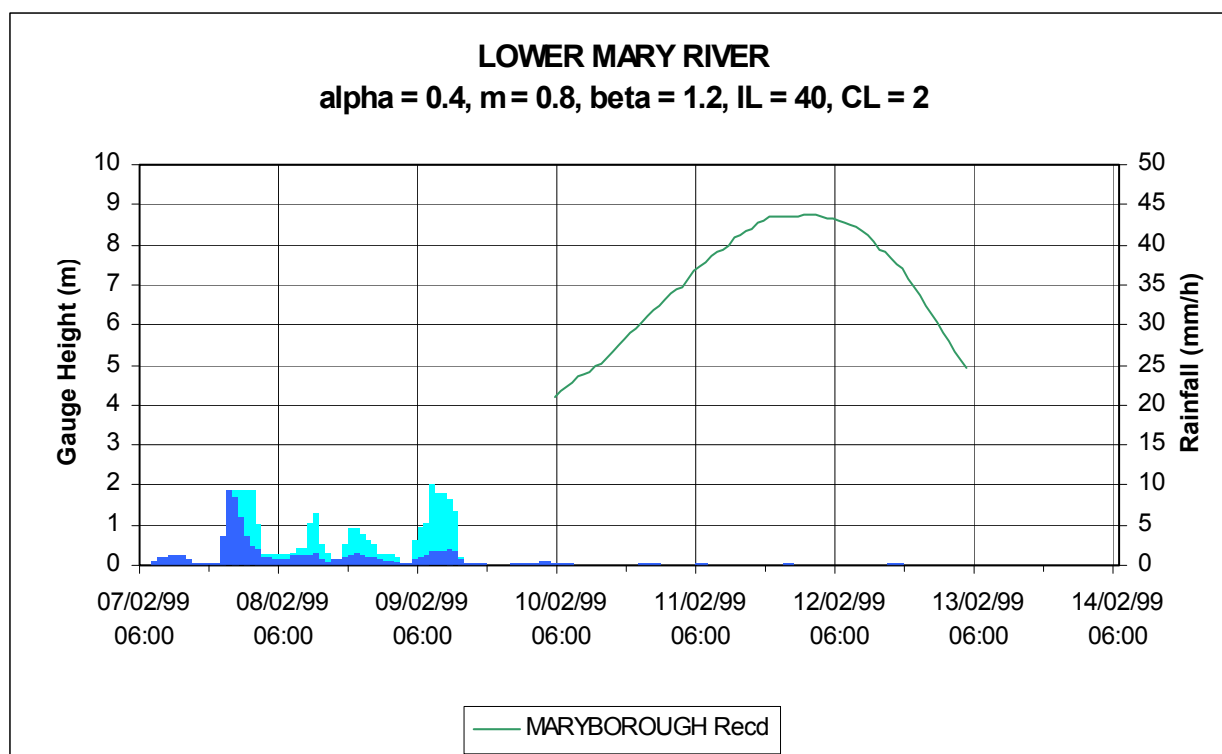
- Heavy rain commenced in the upper Mary River late on Sunday 7 February and continued intermittently until about noon on Tuesday 9 February. In the lower Mary River, the heavy rain also commenced about the same time but only continued for about 6 hours late Sunday and then again for 3 to 6 hours Tuesday morning 9 February.
- Rainfall totals over the 72 hour period ending at 9am Wednesday were highest in the Mary River above Gympie with significantly smaller totals in the lower Mary River. In the upper Mary, totals were generally between 400 and 600mm with the highest totals along the eastern side of the catchment. In the lower catchment, totals ranged from 50mm to 200 mm with an isolated high total of 283mm at Goomboorian.
- Most intense 3 hourly rainfalls:

64mm at Jimna	ending 00:00am Tuesday 9 Feb
58mm at Kenilworth	ending 06:00am Tuesday 9 Feb
89mm at Mapleton	ending 12:00am Tuesday 9 Feb
86mm at Oakwood	ending 03:00pm Monday 8 Feb
54mm at Goomboorian	ending 00:00am Monday 8 Feb



River Heights

- River levels commenced to rise rapidly throughout the upper catchment from about 6am Monday morning and then progressively along the main Mary River. The river did not commence to rise at Maryborough until about 6am on Wednesday 9 February.
- At Gympie, the river rose quickly from less than 4 metres at 3am Monday and climbed steadily until it peaked at 21.95 metres at 4am Wednesday. (This level is 0.5 metres above the Feb 1992 flood and the highest since Jan 1898.)
- The flood levels along the Mary River below Gympie and along Tinana Creek commenced to rise early Monday morning. However, only small rises were recorded in Wide Bay and Munna Creeks.
- At Maryborough, the river rose steady from 6am Wednesday until it reached a peak of 8.75 metres at 1am Friday 12 February.



Flood Forecasts and Warnings

- Rainfall and river heights in the Mary River are primarily monitored by a system of telephone telemeters which are polled regularly by the Bureau's Flood Warning Centre in Brisbane. This system of automatic stations is supplemented by manual observations at selected stations. With a few exceptions of rain stations in the upper catchment, the system performed very well.
- The primary forecast points for the Mary River is the gauge at Gympie and Maryborough which has some records dating back to 1867.

- An initial warning for the Mary River was issued at 09:42am on Monday 8 February.
- Warnings which contained rising limb and peak predictions for Gympie and Maryborough were issued regularly over the next 5 days until the final warning was issued at 10:25am 13 February.
- Flood warnings were issued directly to Council, QES, Police and media via fax.
- River height bulletins, containing the latest river heights, were also issued directly to Council, QES, Police and media via fax.
- Flood Warnings and River Height Bulletins were also available via Weather by Fax and at the Bureau's Web site www.bom.gov.au.
- River Height Bulletins on the www and Weather by Fax were updated every hour.
- As well as being contained in warnings, height predictions for Gympie and Maryborough were regularly discussed with staff from Cooloola Shire Council and Marybrough City Council respectively.

Further Information

- Contact Peter Baddiley (07 3239 8768) or Terry Malone (07 3239 8765).