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FARMERS WINNING FIGHT

Flats flood threat back under control

FARMERS on the Tyntynder Flats were winning a battle with the might of the Murray River yesterday.

Levees banks where overflows had occurred on Monday had been sandbagged and floodwater on paddocks was being pumped back into the river.

Property owners and neighbors had joined forces to turn the tide.

But the main flood focus remained in this downstream area as the river at Swan Hill was on 4.71 metres - down 1cm from Monday when it went 2cm over major flood level.

It is understood that at least one family has had to leave their home and some stock has been taken to safer ground.

A flood problem on some farms on Monday, coming from drainage channels which could not clear because of the high river level, had also eased after extensive pumping operations.

A lot of pumping was also taking place on Pentel Island to clear water dumped on the area after rainfall as high as 145mm (570 points) over the weekend.

But the flood pressure in the Loddon River - the danger spot last week - seems to have eased.



Mr Simmons

Regional Director Peter Simmons, of the State Emergency Service, said yesterday there was confusion now as to the whereabouts of the peak of the original flood flow in the Murray.

He said the Weather Bureau late last week predicted a peak of between 4.65m and 4.68m at Swan Hill, but the river was 4cm over that level on Monday.

"The bureau is usually spot-on with predictions, so the discrepancy can only be attributed to the extremely heavy rain in the local area," Mr Simmons added.

He said rainfall of that intensity alone would put 10cm (four inches) on to the river level, without even considering the significant run-off from the local catchment.

Mr Simmons said calls on the local SES unit had dropped off on Monday and Swan Hill Controller Mr Ian Vernon was holding his personnel in reserve.

All contact on the flood situation should be made through the SES regional office in McCallum Street.

Sandbags are available from Vernon's Steelyards in Thurla Street.

Looking further upstream, Mr Simmons said he hoped floods that had caused so much destruction at Benalla and other north-eastern towns on Sunday and Monday would disperse through the Edward and Wakool Rivers across NSW after they entered the Murray.

"If this by-pass happens a lot of pressure will be removed from the river around Swan Hill, but we can expect extremely high levels to remain for some time.

"And we should keep our fingers crossed that no heavy rainfall occurs in the Loddon and Avoca River catchments in the next few weeks, too," Mr Simmons added.

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Life-membership for Rene

MRS IRENE D'ALTON is the 16th member of Swan Hill RSL Women's Auxiliary to be honored with life-membership.

Mrs D'Alton, currently in her third term as auxiliary president, has given outstanding service over the past 23 years.

She joined the auxiliary in 1971 when she married the late Frank Lacey.

Mrs D'Alton was elected junior vice-president in 1977 and progressed to senior vice-president a few years later, continuing in either of these two offices until her election to the chair in 1991.

Her service to the RSL has previously been recognised with a Silver Star badge award, made in 1986.

Auxiliary secretary Edna Bowen read a citation covering Mrs D'Alton's service before senior vice-president Claire Betts pinned her life-membership badge to her jacket at the auxiliary meeting on Thursday afternoon.

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