

Community update for Barwon–Darling, Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling–Baaka river

Current conditions

Flows in the Darling River around Menindee are now falling as part of MDBA's call on shared resource to meet water resource demands in the River Murray, and will be held at 4,000 ML/day from 21 August. Releases will continue to be made from Lake Wetherell, while inflows from the Northern Basin continue to reach Menindee.

As of 19 August, flows at Wilcannia are at around 2,700 ML/day and rising slowly, with 400–500 GL forecast to enter the lakes by late October. Additional Dilution Flows (ADF) to South Australia are expected to be triggered from 1 September for around 10 days, adding 3,000 ML/day to the required cross-border flows while Menindee storage remains above the 1,300 GL trigger. However, depending on weather conditions in the Murray catchment, and as more information becomes available, releases may change. We will continue to keep you informed.

The Weir 32 fishway barrier has now been removed, improving fish movement, and water quality will continue to be monitored as these operations progress.

MDBA Update

MDBA have issued an order with NSW for maintaining 4,000 ML/day at Weir 32 on the recession.

In managing the River Murray System, the MDBA is currently operating to optimise the use of water in the Darling system to conserve water stored in the upper Murray storages and preserve water in Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo at the end of the current inflow event. This is to maximise water availability for River Murray users and the Baaka/Lower Darling system.

The MDBA is now reviewing it's call on water in response to the increased flows forecast to reach the Menindee Lakes to transfer water to Lake Victoria and meet demands to South Australia, if conditions remain drier on the Murray. The current plan is to maintain 4,000 ML/day at Weir 32 however, the MDBA is currently considering increasing the call to 7,000 ML/day. There are a range of factors to consider in determining the rate to call water at, and the actual call may be higher or lower depending on downstream requirements, including maintenance being undertaken at structures on both the Darling and the Murray. Further updates are provided in the MDBA's [River Murray weekly reports](#)

Fresh Flushes

We've received great feedback from the community about the recent release of 5,000 ML/day from the upper lakes giving the Darling–Baaka a fresh flush. While there may be some concern regarding further increases to releases, we'll continue to keep you informed about when, and why.

The last time flows were over 5,000 ML/day was during March 2023 however this was hypoxic (deoxygenated) water. If flows are increased to 7,000 ML/day for a minimum of 5 days, it is considered a 'large fresh'. A large fresh, flow height has been shown to facilitate the migration and spawning of golden perch (yellowbelly). Golden perch, called "flow pulse specialists", are often cued to spawn during higher flow pulses as these provide habitat and food for their larvae to survive.

While releases will continue, early forecasting from Water NSW is indicating 400–500 GL is expected to reach Menindee Lakes in coming months, however this number will likely be refined in coming weeks.

Basin Officials Committee visit to Menindee

The Basin Officials Committee (BOC) consists of senior officials from each Basin jurisdiction (Commonwealth, NSW, Vic, SA, QLD and the ACT) and last week they were on the ground in Menindee. BOC members were there to learn more about the lakes, and some of the current water management challenges, as well as to meet with some of the key stakeholder groups.

With so much going on in Menindee it was great to show officials from around the Basin, many for the first time, how special this part of the world is. The department would like to thank all community members that were involved in making the trip a success.

Figure 1. BOC officials visit to Menindee



Year 2 – Fishheart launch community day September 20

DPIRD Fisheries are all systems go for the official launch for Year 2 of the temporary fishway trial for September 2025. They are having another community open day on September 20 (which is also the local government election day) so come along, bring the family, we're going to put a feed on and chat about all things fish and the Fishheart unit for the season ahead.

The Fishheart team are due back in Menindee in early September so you will likely see them out and about at the Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator as they prepare for the next season of operation.

Upcoming agency trips to the area

Below is a table outlining the dates and times our agencies will be visiting Menindee and the surrounding areas. Each agency will provide notice to the community if needed.

Agency	When	Reason for visit / Activity	Location
DCCEEW Science Division	18–22 August	Water sampling and buoy maintenance	Menindee weir pool, Wilcannia, Menindee, Pooncarie, and Wentworth
DPIRD Fisheries	20 September	Temporary Tube Fishway Trial – Year 2 Launch	Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator (Main Weir Road)

Additional information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au
- To view community updates issued, visit water.nsw.gov.au/menindee-updates
- If you've got any questions regarding this update contact your local implementation officer, Kate McBride on 0458 945 149 or kate.mcbride@dpie.nsw.gov.au
- To report dead fish, fish struggling or gasping at the water surface, or crayfish leaving the water please call the **NSW Department of Primary Industry Fisheries Phonenumber 1800 043 536** or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills-2019-2020/info-sheet
- Information on recent fish deaths is available at: [Fish kills in NSW](#). When reporting, please include the name of the river/waterbody, location and date of your observation and provide photographs. If possible, please also record what species are affected and an estimate of number of each species observed.
- Further information on blackwater events can be found at the department's website at: water.nsw.gov.au/hypoxic-blackwater
- Additional information is also available on the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website at: www.mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths
www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/infrastructure/menindee-lakes
- WaterNSW operational updates are available in [WaterInsights](#)
- Water quality data collected after the fish deaths at Menindee is available on the Environment Protection Authority web page at: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill
- Real-time water quality data from DCCEEW–CPHR monitoring buoys can be accessed from the [Darling–Baaka River Health Project dashboard](#)
- Data from the WaterNSW gauging network can be found in WaterInsights at: <https://waterinsights.watnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>