

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

## Improvement in conditions in water flowing into upper Lake Wetherell

Dissolved oxygen in the parcel of water that has been flowing down to Lake Wetherell from the Northern basin has improved. This is because the initially high volumes of carbon in the water (from decaying leaf and soil from banks and floodplains), are being progressively consumed by bacteria as the water moves down the river, as well as the dissolved oxygen being replenished by the atmosphere.

The Warraweena gauging station located about 40 km upstream of Bourke at the junction of the Darling and Culgoa rivers shows dissolved oxygen levels have increased to 3.3 mg/L. Dissolved oxygen levels at Louth are stable at around 3.3 mg/L, are around 5 mg/L at Moorabin (Wilcannia) and 4.5 mg/L at Nelia Gaari in the upper reaches of Lake Wetherell.

The fixed depth dissolved oxygen sensors located in the Menindee weir pool downstream of Lake Wetherell main weir and Menindee town gauging stations show there has been no decline in dissolved oxygen levels in response to the arrival of the floodwaters or the increase in discharge through the Lake Pamamaroo inlet.

As a result, there is now less risk of mass fish deaths in upper Lake Wetherell, than initially anticipated.

## Managing flows to address conditions

The uppermost buoy upstream of Menindee is showing that the discharge of 750 ML/day is maintaining mixing in the water column down to 3m. Dissolved oxygen levels have been remaining above 5 mg/L.

The flow velocity through the weir pool is enough to break up thermal stratification and is mixing oxygen through the water column at the downstream of Menindee monitoring buoy. Dissolved oxygen is remaining at around 5 mg/L at mixing.

While the coming weeks are likely to bring soaring temperatures and the risk of fish deaths is still possible, the immediate outlook is a bit more positive.

## Inflows and water quality in the Barwon-Darling river

Rainfall in parts of the northern Murray-Darling Basin over the past month has resulted in noticeable flows in the tributary catchments of the Barwon-Darling Rivers. Inflow forecasting from the most

recent rainfall across the Northern catchments indicate that the Menindee Lakes may receive additional inflows estimated at 300 – 400 GL by early February 2025.

## 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](mailto:water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au)
- To view community updates issued, visit [Community updates and frequently asked questions | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- To report dead fish, fish struggling or gasping at the water surface, or crayfish leaving the water please call the **NSW DPI Fisheries Phonenumber 1800 043 536** or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: <https://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 DCCEEW Water website at: [Hypoxic blackwater | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- Additional information is also available on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website at: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths>  
<https://www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/infrastructure/menindee-lakes>
- Operational updates are available at: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#)
- Water quality data collected after the fish deaths at Menindee is available on the Environment Protection Authority web page at: <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill>
- Real-time water quality data from DCCEEW-BCS monitoring buoys can be accessed from the Darling-Baaka River Health Project dashboard.  
<https://sss.tago.run/dashboards/info/6574473bc8b74d0008344b05?anonymousToken=00000000-5ee2-f600-e0f3-6100270c936d>
- WaterNSW buoy data can be found here <https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>