

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

Managing the dissolved oxygen levels in the Darling River

Now that we are seeing the physical movement of the low dissolved oxygen (DO) water from the North through the weir pool, dissolved oxygen (DO) at most monitoring sites has shown a pattern of dropping, then recovering over a number of days, as the initial front of the low DO moves through. Over the weekend, DO at Weir 32 dropped to 0.7 mg/L. It should be noted that Fish kills can occur when the level falls below 2mg/L.

Inflow from this rainfall event commenced entering Menindee Lakes mid/late December, with approximately 190 GL having arrived so far and forecasting indicates that the Menindee Lakes may receive additional inflows estimated at 110 – 210 GL by mid-February 2025.

The current discharge of 1,500 ML/day is mixing in the water column down to 3.0m and dissolved oxygen levels have improved to about 4.0 mg/L in the upper and middle sections of the weir pool.

With the water quality improving upstream of Weir 32, fish have access to better DO upstream, and can seek refuge, from the low DO water at Weir 32.

We also expect DO levels will commence to recover at Weir 32 as the initial front of low DO water moves downstream. Dissolved oxygen levels downstream of main weir were stable above 6 mg/L.

Water quality will continue to be monitored daily, until it is determined that DO levels can be stabilised. This will likely take 2-3 days of monitoring to confirm.

Micro bubble oxygenation will not be deployed as it has been found to only be effective in low flows or small refuge pools. We are currently utilising high flows as the best option to address low DO.

We are also undertaking studies of this section of the river to identify possible causes of the ongoing issues experienced with oxygen levels.

River monitoring

The Barkandji Rangers removed 6 dead fish near weir 32 (2 golden perch and 4 carp). The risk of potential fish deaths remains, until DO recovers over the next few days. A cooler change after Wednesday is expected to help recovery.

The NSW Biodiversity and Conservation buoy near Menindee town stopped broadcasting Friday at 10 pm. However, the WaterNSW buoys remain operational, and Biodiversity and Conservation staff are headed to Menindee today to rectify the issue.

River operations

Flows were increased to 1500 ML/Day on 9th January, to be maintained until Wednesday 15th January. Pamamaroo and Menindee Inlet regulators were both shut at 12 noon on Saturday to allow Lake Wetherell to fill and to also assist with improving water quality. As a result, mixing in Lake Pamamaroo has increased, leading to an improvement the DO in the water that is being released.

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 [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=0000000-5ee2-f600-e0f3-6100270c936d>
- WaterNSW buoy data can be found here <https://waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>