

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

## Dissolved oxygen update

Dissolved oxygen (DO) results at Walgett, Warraweena, Louth and Wilcannia are above critical levels for fish health. However, DO levels at Nelia Gaari in the upper reaches of Lake Wetherell are lower and have been dropping below 2.0 mg/L over the last two days. The critical level when fish deaths can occur is 2 mg/L. DO readings taken manually at surface level in Lake Wetherell at the Lake Wetherell outlet are at a good level of around 4.0 mg/L.

Dissolved oxygen may be further impacted by low intensity heatwave conditions forecast for this weekend and continuing hot days and nights. Unfortunately, options are limited to prevent or mitigate water quality issues in Lake Wetherell, however, fish can take refuge in better quality water upstream.

## Update on releases

The Lake Pamamaroo inlet was opened further yesterday with 300ML/day flowing in from Lake Wetherell. Flows are being maintained from Lake Pamamaroo outlet at 1200ML/day outlet and 300ML/day at Menindee outlet. Water out of Lake Pamamaroo into the main weir is good quality with DO tracking mostly above 6.5mg/l.

The decision to increase flows through the Lake Pamamaroo inlet has been taken to help balance the lake levels and protect the inlet infrastructure until it can be repaired when water levels are low for an extended period. Increased flow into Lake Pamamaroo from Lake Wetherell will also help to maximise water held in Pamamaroo for water security.

It is likely in coming weeks that this flow volume between the top lakes may increase to continuously manage the levels between the lakes.

With high temperatures persisting in the region, there is an ongoing risk to reduced dissolved oxygen in the water. NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies are continuing to carefully monitor the situation and adjusting releases as required to help prevent hypoxic conditions in the Menindee town weir pool upstream of Weir 32.

## Readiness to respond

Should a mass fish death occur, an incident response plan is in place and a contractor is on standby for clean up if required.

## Lower Darling-Baaka Tube Fishway Trial - site work update

Access continues to be restricted to the site during placement of the Fishheart unit. Releases from Lake Pamamaroo will cease very briefly on Saturday morning, for the contractor working on the tube fishway at Menindee to undertake tasks that are part of the final installation of the fishway.

We will keep a close eye on DO as the interruption passes through the weir pool. Please see the indicative map of the construction footprint for your reference and more information on the project can be found [here](#).

## 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
The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	10-14 Feb	Water monitoring	Darling River from Wilcannia to Pooncarie
Environment Protection Authority	Week of 17 Feb	Discussion with community on Draft Menindee Mass Fish Death Event Sub Plan	Menindee

## 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 DCCEE 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>

- WaterNSW 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](#).
- WaterNSW buoy data can be found here <https://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>