

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

## Current conditions

Water conditions and flows in the Darling River around Menindee remain stable, there is currently a discharge of around 400 ML/day passing through the Menindee weir pool. This flow, combined with cool air temperatures, is ensuring there is no persistent thermal stratification in the weir pool. Dissolved oxygen levels in the Darling River are above 8 mg/L and pose no risk to fish health. The cooler water temperatures over winter increases the amount of dissolved oxygen the water can hold and slows down biological activity that uses up oxygen. Dissolved oxygen levels will continue to be monitored as we progress from winter into spring.

## Welcome Kate McBride – your local water contact

Darling-Baaka local Kate McBride has joined the department as the Senior Water Implementation Officer, working closely with the Menindee community on all things water.

Kate lives on a property between Menindee and Wilcannia, and you'll often see her around town. She's looking forward to being a key point of contact for people in the region.

If you have a question, want to follow something up, or just fancy a chat about water, feel free to get in touch.

Kate can be contacted by email for now at [kate.mcbride@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.mcbride@dpie.nsw.gov.au).

## New water monitoring pontoons

You may have spotted three new monitoring pontoons recently installed across the Menindee region.

WaterNSW has placed the pontoons at:

Lake Wetherell (upstream of the Pamamaroo inlet)

Menindee township (near the gauging station)

Downstream of the Menindee outlet (around 1.4km upstream of Weir 32)

Each pontoon has 3 fixed-depth profile, multi-parameter and self-cleaning water quality sensors that measure water quality at three levels throughout the water column. The recorded parameters are electroconductivity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH and total algae. This will give a clearer picture of what's happening below the surface. The real-time data will be available online in the coming weeks. Two of the pontoons replace WaterNSW buoys that were in the weir pool (but

in different locations) and the extra pontoon in Lake Wetherell will help us better understand the quality of the water flowing towards Main Weir and Lake Pamamaroo.

In addition to the new pontoons, WaterNSW has upgraded the four existing fixed-depth land-based sites from measuring dissolved oxygen that have multi-parameter and self-cleaning water quality sensors so that more water quality indicators can be measured.

- Darling River at Menindee Town
- Darling River at Weir 32
- Darling River at Main Weir
- Darling River at Nelia Gaari

The existing buoy in the weir pool near the gauging station, managed by Conservation Programs, Heritage, and Regulation Group (CPHR), is continuing to monitor water quality while WaterNSW's digital database is being configured to publish data to WaterInsights. This work is part of the NSW Government's commitment to improving real-time monitoring to help reduce the risk of future fish deaths in the region.



*One of the monitoring pontoons moving into position on Lake Wetherell.*

## Successful mass fish death training Exercise

On 17th June 2025, the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) ran a training exercise in Menindee to test the emergency response for a Mass Fish Death Event. Working through a

hypothetical mass fish death scenario, an Incident Management Team was activated, with 19 EPA staff participating with assistance from NSW Police and Fire & Rescue NSW. Additionally, an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was established, where 31 support agency staff from local and state government worked to provide assistance, information, and resources to the EPA Incident Management Team. The EOC was also supported by representatives from the Barkandji Rangers, who provided valuable local cultural knowledge of the area.

The exercise has given us a clearer picture of how ready different agencies are to respond and work together during a real emergency. It helps to improve planning and coordination, so we are better prepared for any Mass Fish Death Events in the future.

The EPA would like to thank the Menindee Country Women's Association for hosting and catering the exercise.

## WaterNSW operational update

Flows originating from Northern Basin rainfall in March / early April have now arrived at the Menindee Lakes, with an estimated 975GL arriving since early April. More recent rainfall has resulted in a revised inflow forecast, with a further 95 -135 GL expected to enter the Menindee Lakes to the end of August. Menindee Lakes hold 1,292 GL (75% of the total capacity).

A further, smaller, flow peak from more recent rainfall has recently passed Wilcannia, peaking around 4,650 ML/d, and is now arriving at Menindee Lakes. Sufficient airspace is still available within Menindee Lakes to safely capture the revised forecast inflows.

Floodwater moving down the Paroo River has slowed substantially. It now appears unlikely the Paroo River will contribute any water to the Darling System.

Management of the current inflows is being undertaken to ensure the upper lakes remain at full supply level with the surplus volume passed into Lake Menindee. Environmental managers are currently ordering environmental water downstream of Weir 32, targeting 400 ML/d.

Lake Pamamaroo and Lake Menindee Inlet Regulators remain open, shifting water within and between the Menindee Lakes.

WaterNSW provide the latest operational information and announcements, which are made available on WaterNSW Water Insights portals. Please [sign up to this service](#) to set up alerts when the latest updates are released.

## 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
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The Basin Officials Committee (BOC)	August 2025	Senior officials from each Basin Government will meet in August 2025 and will visit Menindee.	Menindee
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## 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 Department of Primary Industry 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 departments 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>