

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

Current conditions

Water in the Darling River around Menindee is in good shape. Water quality in the weir pool is stable, with dissolved oxygen levels at above 9 mg/L which is well above what's needed for fish health. Fish can begin to suffer after prolonged periods where dissolved oxygen is less than 4 mg/L. Cooler winter temperatures are keeping water temperature cool, and this is helping keep oxygen levels high. Water releases have continued to be made from the upper lakes and this flow through the weir pool has also helped maintain good water quality conditions. Monitoring will continue as we head into spring.

MDBA Update

With increased inflows in-transit to the Menindee Lakes and a relatively dry forecast on the Murray the MDBA will begin calling water from the Menindee Lakes from Thursday 7 August 2025. This call on water is to manage storage levels at Lake Victoria and allows the MDBA to delay transfers from Hume to Lake Victoria. This will conserve water in the upper Murray storages. It will also provide flexibility in managing the forecast inflows and any additional inflows which may occur in coming months.

The MDBA has shaped the call in accordance with their [Objectives and Outcomes document](#), in consultation with NSW agencies and environmental managers. While final details are still being determined, the water will be delivered with an initial pulse from the upper lakes, maximising flows through Wetherell outlet, which will provide benefits to local water quality and fish passage along the lower Darling/Baaka.

The additional water in-transit to Menindee means Additional Dilution Flows (ADF) to South Australia are likely to be triggered from 1 September. ADF is determined under Specific Objective & Outcome 12.3. ADF is required when agreed storage volume triggers are met at both Hume & Dartmouth Dams combined, and at the Menindee Lakes. If ADF is triggered, then an additional 3,000 ML/day is required to be delivered to South Australia in addition to the required flow across the border.

Kate McBride – your local water contact

As introduced in our last community update, Kate McBride joined the department in July as the Senior Water Implementation Officer, working closely with the Menindee community on all things water.

Kate has a new phone number so if you have any queries regarding this update or other water matters feel free to get in touch. She's looking forward to hearing from you.

Kate can be contacted on 0458 945 149 or at kate.mcbride@dpie.nsw.gov.au.

Save The Date: Temporary Tube Fishway Trial Year 2 Launch

Join us for a fun and informative day out on Country featuring:

- Fishheart demonstration: Get a behind-the-scenes look in the control room
- Info stands & Displays: Learn more about the project and the health of the Baaka!
- Community art installation: Help us paint the pipes!

When: Saturday, 20 September 2025, 10 am to 3 pm

Where: Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator (Main Weir Road).

Parliamentary Committee Visit

The NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development will visit Menindee, Wilcannia and Broken Hill during August to hold public hearings related to the *Impacts of the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023 on NSW regional communities*. The Commonwealth legislation was passed in 2023 and this NSW inquiry aims to ensure the voices of regional communities are heard and the impacts of water management policies are thoroughly examined. The Menindee hearing will be held at the Menindee Civic Hall.

Update on fish passage projects

- DPIRD Fisheries, in collaboration with WaterNSW and partner agencies, plan to re-open the Weir 32 fishway in the coming weeks as conditions allow, to promote fish movement and connectivity in the Lower Darling-Baaka.
- In August 2023, DPIRD Fisheries issued WaterNSW with a s219 permit to temporarily close the Weir 32 vertical slot fishway. The purpose of the closure was to prevent native fish migrating into the Menindee weir pool to reduce the risks of mass fish deaths heading into spring and summer of 2023/24, from low oxygen (hypoxic) conditions being experienced in the weir pool at that time.
- The current weir pool conditions, lake levels and planned operations heading into the spring and summer of 2025/26 provide significantly reduced likelihood of reaching critically poor water quality conditions that could lead to a hypoxic event.
- DPIRD Fisheries will also be reinstating the Fishheart fishway at the Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator in September 2025 until April 2026, for its Year 2 'on season' operations after a successful Year 1, where over 7,500 fish were moved upstream into Lake Wetherell to find new homes, more food and breed and recruit in the Baaka and beyond.
- Opening the Weir 32 fishway will allow greater opportunities for fish movement in the Baaka during lower flow ranges, noting that planned higher operational releases over the coming weeks will also provide opportunities for fish to move past Weir 32.
- These actions will create opportunities for some fish to move into and out of the Menindee town weir pool. These migration opportunities are important as they provide native fish an ability to carry out critical life cycle stages that will benefit fish populations in the Darling-Baaka and broader Northern Basin.
- The Menindee Permanent Fish Passage Business Case program will further investigate how to maximise native fish movement through the Lower Darling–Baaka and Menindee Lakes.

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 Basin Officials Committee (BOC)	August 2025	Senior officials from each Basin Government will meet in August 2025 and will visit Menindee.	Menindee
NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development	11 August	Public Hearing	Menindee
DCCEEW Science Division	13–14 August 18–22 August	Water sampling and buoy maintenance	Menindee weir pool, Wilcannia, Menindee, Pooncarie, and Wentworth

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
- 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.watarnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>