

# Community update for Menindee and Lower Darling-Baaka

## Current Water Quality

Water quality monitoring in the Darling River and Menindee Lakes shows encouraging results, with dissolved oxygen levels above 4 milligrams per litre. This level is essential for fish health, and the readings from fixed-depth sensors confirm that oxygen levels remain safe throughout the water system. Water temperatures are currently over 20°C, with forecasts indicating cooler air temperatures for the coming week. Algal levels are low across the lakes.

Satellite images taken on 29 October show some increased algae in Lake Menindee, but still at safe levels for recreational activities. Amber and green alerts are in place in some areas, while the previous red alert has been lifted. [View the algae alerts map on the Water NSW website.](#)

As we move into summer, we are closely watching water levels and will be ready to introduce water restrictions if needed to protect the community and environment. Community feedback is important to us, and we will continue engaging with locals to understand their concerns and keep everyone informed about any decisions.

## Update on Flows from Menindee Lakes

Water flows from the Menindee Lakes have been adjusted to make the best use of water resources while meeting downstream needs. Water is being released from Lake Wetherell and Lake Menindee to meet the MDBA's current call on water of 3,000 ML/day (at Weir 32). River Murray system demands are closely monitored and the total amount of shared resource that is released from the Lakes is adjusted accordingly. These flow changes are designed to balance water requirements downstream while keeping resources available in the lakes. The outlet from Lake Pamamaroo is currently closed. Releases from Lake Cawndilla are holding steady at around 1,000 megalitres per day. Monitoring and assessment of flows to support river health are ongoing.

## Temporary Changes to Monitoring

To protect monitoring equipment during rising water levels, WaterNSW has temporarily removed two monitoring buoys. These buoys will be reinstalled when water levels stabilise to ensure continuous water quality tracking.

All other monitoring buoys in the reach, are still operational.

## Update on the Menindee and Lower Darling-Baaka Fish Passage Program

Teams from DPIRD Fisheries, Public Works, WaterNSW and Murray-Darling Basin Authority are on Country during the week of 11 November to continue community engagement and site visits related to the Menindee and Lower Darling-Baaka Fish Passage Program.

The team will complete initial site visits at Lake Wetherell, Lake Pamamaroo, Lake Menindee and other flow pathways in the Lower Darling-Baaka to inform future technical design and assessment works for the Business Case.

The Lower Darling-Baaka Tube Fishway Trial project, which aims to trial alternative technologies for fish passage at Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator to provide opportunities to move fish currently accumulated within the Weir 32 (Menindee Town) weir pool, has completed a thorough and competitive tender process, and is currently in the final stages of assessment.

The award of the Lower Darling-Baaka Tube Fishway Trial contract is anticipated to be announced in the coming weeks. Pending final project approvals, it is anticipated that the Lower Darling-Baaka Tube Fishway Trial project will commence during the 2024/25 summer.

## MDBA discussing the operation of Menindee Lakes with community

This week, the MDBA will be visiting communities and stakeholders in the region to better understand their issues and concerns as they relate to the management and operation of Menindee Lakes.

Communities to be visited include Upper Darling, Menindee, Great Darling Anabranch and Lower Darling communities. The MDBA will also provide an update on their work with Basin states to help shape this work and potential outcomes.

## 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>