

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

Current flows

Flows in the Darling River around Menindee remain steady at around 7,000 ML/day currently with water being released from lakes Menindee and Wetherell. The temporary fish passage (Fishheart) unit began being installed this week however complications have arisen that have slightly altered operational plans. As per our last community update on 29 August, once the Fishheart unit is operational (currently expected on Monday 8 September) flows will cease from Lake Menindee and 7000 ML/day will be the combined release from lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo.

This includes the 3,000 ML/day Additional Dilution Flows (ADF) to South Australia triggered while the Menindee storage remains above the 1,300 GL trigger from September to May next year (different volume triggers apply in the other months). The water level at Weir 32 for releases at 7,000 ML/day is expected to remain around 2.7 metres.

Releases will continue to be made from the upper lakes while inflows from the northern Basin continue to reach Menindee with water agencies prioritising ensuring full supply level will be maintained in lakes Pamamaroo and Wetherell once inflows start reducing. The releases from the upper lakes are allowing a freshening of the Menindee weir pool ahead of summer, while also acting as an attractant for fish towards the temporary fish passage.

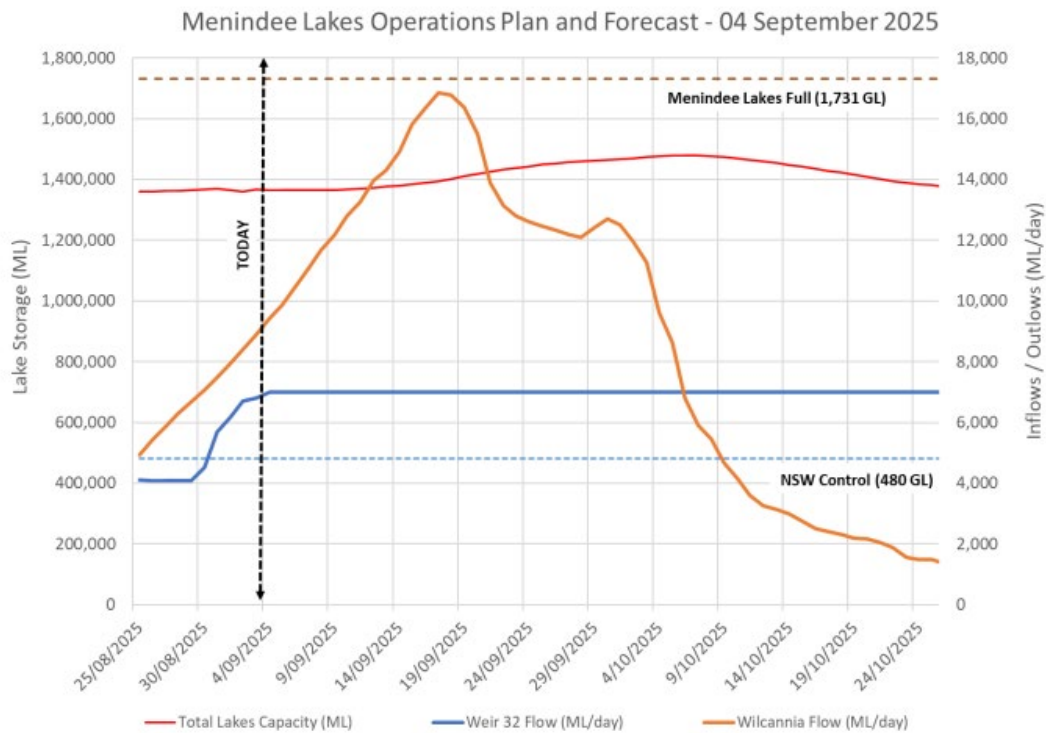
The department has been working closely with WaterNSW and Fisheries on plans to operate the lakes in a manner that may allow for fish passage between lakes Pamamaroo and Wetherell in coming weeks. While this is not business as usual for operations, water releases that provide the additional benefits of fish passage and a healthy weir pool are being managed while full supply levels in the upper lakes are being prioritised.

Inflows

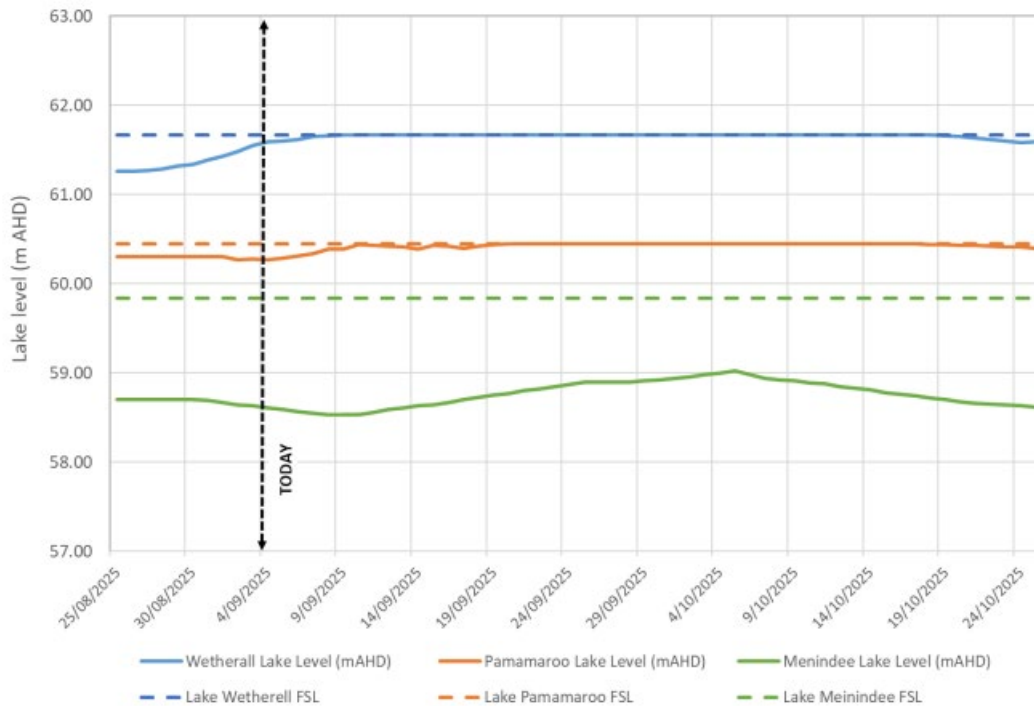
Updated forecasting from WaterNSW indicated a further 460–560 GL of inflows are expected to enter the Menindee Lakes to the end of October, with 140 GL having already passed Wilcannia. Menindee Lakes currently hold 1,364 GL (79% of the total capacity). Lake Pamamaroo and Lake Menindee Inlet Regulators are currently closed, however they will be opened shortly, shifting water within and between the Menindee Lakes.

As at 5 September, flows at Wilcannia are above 10,000 ML/day and rising and flows upstream at Bourke are exceeding 19,000 ML/day. Wilcannia flows are expected to peak below 17,000 ML/day later this month. Water NSW inflow forecasting is undertaken using the best available data at the time. There are several variables which may impact the final volume, with uncertainty of the final volume reducing as water flows toward the Lakes.

Below are figures from the latest Water NSW Operations Update on Menindee Lakes System (forecast inflow).



Menindee Lakes Operations Plan - Lake Levels - 04 September 2025



DPIRD Fisheries – Fishheart installation

The Fishheart fishway unit was lifted into the Darling–Baaka River, secured into place and connected to the pipes on Tuesday 2 September. There is one final piece of installation remaining, with plans to complete this on Monday 8 September. Operational releases from the top lakes will stop for a short time on Monday morning to help complete the works. Once finished, the fishway will move into the testing phase before Season 2 commences proper. Thank you to partner agencies, especially WaterNSW and MDBA, water users and the community for your assistance and patience as we navigate the joys of working in water.

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
DPIRD Fisheries	20 September	Temporary Tube Fishway Trial – Year 2 Launch	Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator (Main Weir Road)

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
- If you've got any questions regarding this update or other water matters **contact your local implementation officer, Kate McBride on 0458 945 149** or kate.mcbride@dpie.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: 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.watnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>