

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

## Current conditions

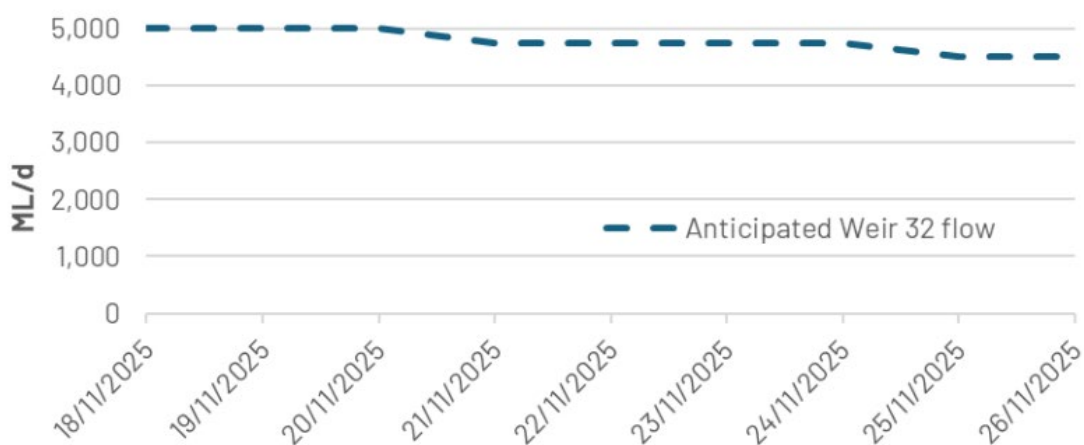
The Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) announced this week a further reduction in their call at Menindee from 5,000 ML/day to 4,500 ML/day will commence on Friday. At these flow rates, flow recessions typically happen in 250 ML/day steps. Due to the hot weather forecast in coming days, it was agreed to spread these flow decreases across a few days to allow for water quality conditions in the weir pool to be closely monitored. Independent expert advice helped to inform this decision. While water quality in the weir pool remains good, and there is still some cooler weather in between a few hot days, a cut in releases would benefit water resource needs moving into summer.

Flow at Weir 32 will begin decreasing from Friday 21 November by 250 ML/day to 4,750 ML/day as the MDBA decrease their call on water. The reduction will be made from Lake Wetherell Outlet in order to maintain water resources in the upper lakes. The water level at Weir 32 for releases at 4,750 ML/day is around 2.32 metres.

Provided water quality conditions do not deteriorate, a further reduction of 250 ML/day to 4,500 ML/day is planned for Tuesday 25 November, however this will be reviewed by key agencies early next week. Any changes to the current plan will be communicated following a decision. The water level at Weir 32 for releases at 4,500 ML/day is around 2.27 metres.

Figure 1. Forecast hydrograph for Weir 32

Forecast hydrograph for Weir 32 (subject to change):



WaterNSW advises users in the weir pool and downstream of Weir 32 that flows will change in coming days and should be considerate of the variable conditions as the change moves downstream. Customers and landholders are advised to monitor warnings and river levels closely to make necessary arrangements to ensure infrastructure and livestock are not impacted.

The decrease in the MDBA call on water is to support management of resources across the Murray–Darling Basin. Water quality within the Menindee weir pool is currently good with the department continuing to closely monitor any changes and ready to alter the release strategy if required.

Menindee Lakes currently holds 1,258 GL (73% of the total capacity). Operations have prioritised maintaining Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo at full supply level for as long as possible, however releases from these top lakes have now exceeded inflows. Consequently, expect to see the level of these lakes decline moving forward unless there are more rain events in the northern Basin.

---

## Inflows

Following good inflows earlier this year, flows from the northern Basin have continued to recede. There are no significant inflows forecast and updated forecasting indicating that a further 20-40 GL is expected to enter the Menindee Lakes to the end of December. Since the start of August, around 700 GL has passed Wilcannia. As at 20 November, flows at Wilcannia have reduced to 921 ML/day and at Bourke flows remain steady around 960 ML/day.

---

## Menindee Review

In 2024, the Basin Officials Committee (BOC) initiated the first phase of a review of the operation and management of the Menindee Lakes system.

The review team will be visiting Lower Darling–Baaka communities, including the Menindee area, from 8–12 December. They will meet with community members and discuss the review. For more information contact Richard Unsworth (MDBA) at [Richard.Unsworth@mdba.gov.au](mailto:Richard.Unsworth@mdba.gov.au)

## 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
Implementation Team	27 November 9am-10.15am	Kate McBride and her manager Ronnie will be in town to discuss water matters	Redsands Cafe
Murray Darling Basin Authority	8 – 12 Dec	Review of Menindee Operations	Various Lower Darling-Baaka communities

## Additional information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: [water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au](mailto:water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au)
- To view community updates issued, visit [water.nsw.gov.au/menindee-updates](http://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@dcceew.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.mcbride@dcceew.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](http://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](http://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](http://www.mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths)  
[www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/infrastructure/menindee-lakes](http://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](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill)
- Real-time water quality data from The department – Strategic Science & Engagement 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>