

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

Current conditions

Releases from Lake Pamamaroo have been returned to 750 ML/day, following the increase last week to manage water quality conditions within the weir pool. Lake Menindee outlet continues to be maximised, releasing ~750 ML/day. The combined total release measured at Weir 32 is 1,508 ML as of this morning. As the flow rate continues to fall from the Menindee outlet, the flow and water level at Weir 32 will continue to reduce slightly over coming weeks.

Weir Pool Water Management

Last weekend the multi-depth monitoring equipment within the weir pool showed oxygen levels at Menindee Town had deteriorated and the forecast dissolved oxygen (DO) at mixing, or 'destratification', would fall below 3.5 mg/L. While fish can survive in water with DO levels as low as ~2 mg/L, persistent exposure to oxygen levels below 4 mg/L can cause stress.

Typically, the response would be to initiate a 'pulse flow' of up to 1,500 ML/day to mix the water column. However, after consulting water quality experts, a new flow response strategy was implemented to try and achieve a different outcome than encouraging destratification (mixing of the water column). The main aim of the flow was to keep algae at the surface to help reoxygenate the layers of the water column so that, when destratification occurred, there was a higher level of oxygen throughout the water column. The grey circle in Figure 1 shows the likely effect caused by the increase in releases. As you can see, there was improved dissolved oxygen levels even in the bottom layers which resulted in mixing occurring with a dissolved oxygen level at around 5 mg/L, which is an adequate level for fish health.

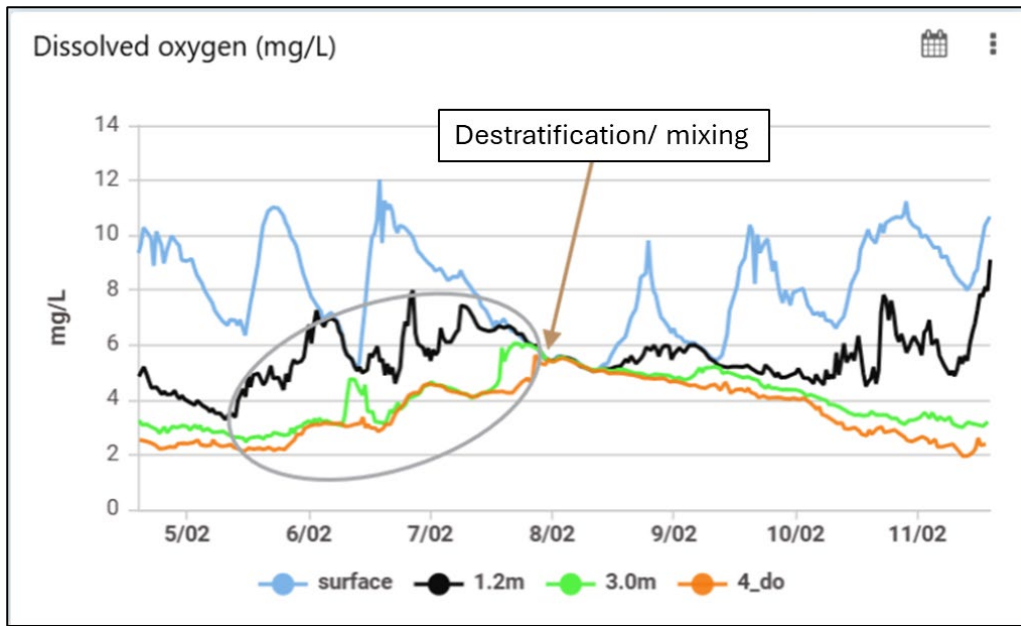


Figure 1. Dissolved oxygen profile at Menindee Town buoy (5 - 11 Feb) showing impact of Pamamaroo releases and destratification

Fish kill update

The Barkandji Rangers, Central Darling Shire Council, and EPA clean-up contractor completed the shoreline clean-up of fish carcasses near Sunset Strip homes on Thursday 5 February. The fish carcasses were taken offsite for disposal. Staff who were on-site praised the efforts of the Rangers, especially under hot weather conditions.

Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator opening

Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator remains open moving water from the Wetherell floodplain into Lake Pamamaroo. The movement of water off the floodplain aims to conserve water by reducing evaporation and avoid deteriorating water quality on the floodplains.

The inlet has been progressively closed over the last few days. The Menindee/Lower Darling Water Quality Working Group will decide early next week whether to completely close the inlet regulator or allow small flows to continue to pass through. The Working Group will consider conserving water in Lake Wetherell, which is preferable due to lower evaporation rates than in Lake Pamamaroo, or continuing to allow a small flow through the inlet while the water in Lake Wetherell is still of good quality. Landholders along Lake Wetherell are advised to monitor stock along the water course.

Inflows

Flow from the northern Basin has been very low over the past month. Flows past Wilcannia are increasing, currently at 180 ML/day with 496 ML/day passing Bourke. A large proportion of expected inflow in Menindee Lakes is protected environmental water.

Algae alerts

Lake Menindee and Lake Menindee Outlet remain on **RED** alert. The Silver City Highway site along the Great Darling Anabranch has now been placed on **RED** alert due to the high algae levels at the head of the flow. Additional sampling will be done in coming weeks once the front has passed and algae levels have decreased.

Darling River at Weir 32, Copi Hollow, Lake Cawndilla Outlet, Lake Pamamaroo Outlet and multiple sites along Lake Wetherell have **AMBER** alerts in place. Darling River pump station (Menindee), Lake Tandure, Pamamaroo inlet and Lake Pamamaroo centre have **GREEN** alerts in place.

Elsewhere around the region, Tolarno, Burtundy, Ellerslie and Tapio remain on **AMBER** with Pooncarie's status being updated to **GREEN**. Wilcannia, Louth and Bourke remain on **AMBER**.

For the latest algal alerts and information, go to [Algae Alerts NSW map - WaterNSW](#)

Upcoming agency trips to the area

The table below outlines the dates and times that agencies will be visiting Menindee and the surrounding areas or holding events. As always, Menindee's local department contact Kate McBride will be around and is happy to discuss any water related matters in person or over the phone.

Murray Darling Basin Authority: webinars

The MDBA have held webinars this week on the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper and today held an online webinar discussing the Menindee Review.

- **Friday 13 February, 10am-11am (AEDT):** Initial Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) Assessments.

Past webinars are available online at [Past webinars | Murray–Darling Basin Authority](#)



Temporary Tube Fishway Trial

End of Season 2 Community Day



Join us for a free BBQ with a fun and informative day out on Country!

- 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 14 March 2026 | 10 AM – 3 PM

Where: Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator (Main Weir Road)



Agency	When	Reason for visit / Activity	Location
NSW DPIRD Fisheries	Saturday 14 March, 10am-3pm	Community Open day – Temporary tube fishway trial (Fishheart)	Lake Wetherell Outlet Regulator
NSW DPIRD Fisheries	Week of 9-14 March	Engagement with local community on the Menindee & Lower Baaka Permanent Fish Passage Business Case	Menindee (various throughout the week).

More 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
- 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@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
- 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 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.waternsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data>