

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

Current Operations

- Following this week's meeting of the Menindee/ Lower Darling Water Quality Working Group, the decision was made to reduce Lake Pamamaroo releases from 750 ML/day to 600 ML/day.
- This is being done to conserve water in the upper lakes of Pamamaroo and Wetherell for critical needs in Menindee and the Lower Darling.
- A reduction also supports the preference of the MDBA to decrease their call-on-water as demands for Murray water resource have reduced due to recent rain events.
- Using the recently developed stratification/destratification model for the weir pool, 600 ML/day should be sufficient to provide a velocity that prompts destratification of the water column on most days.
- Releases from Lake Menindee Outlet continue to be maximised and will continue as the Pamamaroo releases are dialled back. Currently 490 ML/day is being released from Lake Menindee outlet with 1050 ML/day the target at Weir 32.
- Environmental water flows of around 700 ML/day continue to be released from Lake Cawndilla down the Great Darling Anabranch. Last week the flow from the Great Darling Anabranch reached the Murray and, in the next month, a recession of these flows is expected to take place.
- Menindee Lakes currently holds 667 GL (38.5% of the total capacity).
- Further information regarding lake capacity is available at [WaterInsights](#).

Inflows

WaterNSW released an updated inflow forecast on 23 February. Flow from the Northern Basin has been relatively low over the past month. At this time, there are no significant inflows forecast with only a further 15 - 20 GL expected to enter the Menindee Lakes to the end of March. Please note that a portion of this inflow is protected environmental water.

However, thanks to recent and localised rainfall, Menindee Lakes has received some additional inflows and localised level increases. The combined storage of the upper lakes of Wetherell, Tandure, Pamamaroo and Copi Hollow is forecast to reach 250 GL active in coming weeks, which may provide up to 12 months supply to the Lower Darling for critical needs.

Golden Perch deaths within the weir pool

NSW agencies continue to investigate ongoing fish deaths in the Menindee town weir pool. Fish deaths remain in the low 100's and are predominantly Golden Perch with additional observations of fish in stress.

The Barkandji River Rangers continue to complete onsite assessments along the weir pool to monitor conditions and record numbers of affected fish. DPIRD-Fisheries staff are working with the Rangers and department staff to collect samples for analysis. Fisheries staff will be on site this week and progressing the investigations.

At this stage, the cause of the fish deaths remains unknown. Aspects of water quality, such as dissolved oxygen, remain within normal ranges for native fish. NSW Government agencies are exploring appropriate actions to manage the situation, noting options may be limited until the cause of death and any associated risks are known.

The department and DPIRD-Fisheries understand that fish death events are distressing to the local community, particularly on the Lower Darling-Baaka.

Community members are encouraged to report any fish deaths or struggling fish to the Fishers Watch phonenumber on 1800 043 536. For more information on fish kills please visit:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills

Menindee temporary tube fishway trial

February 2026 update – interim Year 2 research outcomes from Fishheart

- 19,028 fish movements have been recorded through the Fishheart so far in Year 2 from 26 September 2025 to 24 February 2026.
- This is more than double the total recorded movements during the Fishheart's first, shorter year of operation (~7,500 movements from January to April 2025).
- Bony Herring remain the most abundant species (10,769), while Golden Perch movements have increased markedly since late December, with some of the highest daily passage rates now occurring in late February.
- Murray Cod have been recorded on multiple days this season, including a single day when eight large individuals passed upstream.

- Species recognition performance has improved substantially. The proportion of fish classified as unidentifiable has reduced from 65.7% in Year 1 to 8.8% in Year 2, following AI retraining and camera and lighting upgrades.
- Ongoing validation work is underway to pressure test counting accuracy, including double blind comparisons between AI-derived counts and physical net captures.
- Distinct day–night movement patterns are emerging, with Bony Herring predominantly moving during daylight hours, whilst Golden Perch display a strong nocturnal movement.

You can access the full report by using this link: [20260225 Tales from the Tube Year 2 Interim Report_February_Final](#)

Algae alerts

- Lake Menindee, Lake Menindee Outlet, Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip, and Silver City Hwy (Great Darling Anabranch) remain on **RED** alert.
- Darling River at Weir 32, Copi Hollow, Lake Pamamaroo Outlet and multiple sites along Lake Wetherell have **AMBER** alerts in place.
- Lake Wetherell near Main Weir, 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 remains **GREEN**.
- Wilcannia, Louth and Bourke remain on **AMBER**.
- The most recent sampling results should be available this week.
- For the latest algal alerts and information, go to [Algae Alerts NSW map - WaterNSW](#)

Connectivity

The department is holding public webinars on the Northern Basin Connectivity and Minimum Inflows projects on **Wednesday 11 March and Monday 30 March**. We will provide updates on the Northern Basin Connectivity program and discuss the results of the assessments made by the department to understand the benefits and impacts of the recommendations made by the independent Connectivity Expert Panel.

The department will also provide an outline of the methodology developed to undertake the Minimum Inflows review, and the department's response to recommendations made in the Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer's Minimum Inflows Method Review report.

The webinar session will include time for questions.

[Register here for Wednesday 11 March, 12.00 pm – 1.30 pm](#)

[Register here for Wednesday 11 March, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm](#)

[Register here for Monday 30 March, 12pm- 1:30pm](#)

Webinars will be recorded and put on the department’s webpage for those who can’t attend.

Find more information on our website at: [Northern Basin Connectivity Program](#)

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.



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 DCCEEW	Wednesday 11 March 12pm-1:30pm session 3.30pm-5pm session	Connectivity Webinar	Online register here
NSW EPA	11-15 March	Engagement around the emergency management framework.	Menindee and Broken Hill
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).
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Week of 16-20 March	Engagement regarding the Menindee Review and Basin Plan Review	Menindee
NSW DCCEEW	Monday 30 March 12pm -1:30pm	Connectivity Webinar	Online register here

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