

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

Reduced flows from Lake Pamamaroo

Flows from Lake Pamamaroo will be reduced today (1 April) from 600 ML/day to 500 ML/day to conserve water in the upper lakes while still maintaining dissolved oxygen (DO) at safe levels for fish. Lake Menindee Outlet will remain fully open, with a natural recession of flow as the lake level recedes. The MDBA will continue to reduce their call in line with this recession. Weir 32 is currently discharging 915 ML/day but this is expected to fall to ~800 ML/day from tomorrow.

The operations and release patterns of water are currently being guided by advice from inter-agency Menindee/Lower Darling Water Quality Working Group which is chaired by the department. The dynamic nature of managing the water quality and overall resource in Menindee Lakes may result in changes to release patterns and flows occurring with little warning. WaterNSW and the department have staff available if water quality deteriorates over the Easter period and a change in releases is required.

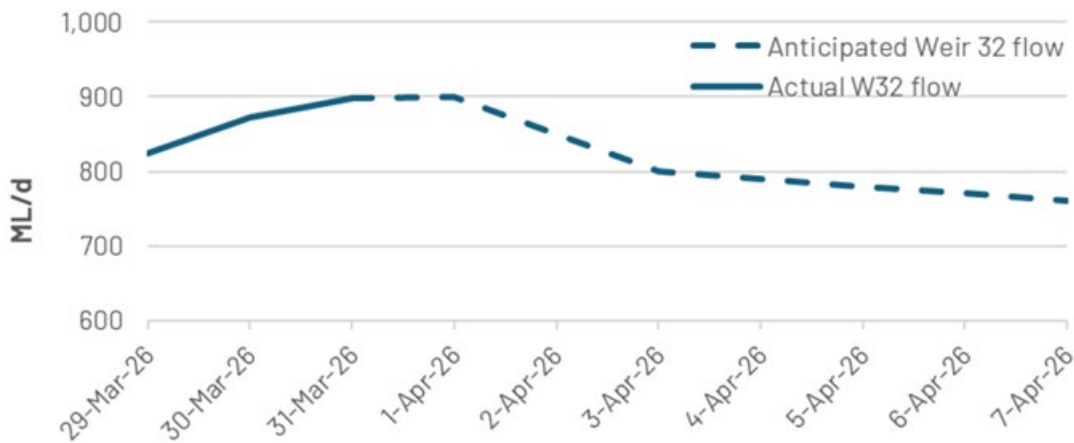


Figure 1. WaterNSW operational graph showing anticipated Weir 32 flow for the next week

WaterNSW is advising customers and landholders that flows may fluctuate over the coming days and to be considerate of the variable changes. The community is advised to monitor river levels closely to make necessary arrangements to ensure infrastructure and livestock are not impacted.

Current conditions

Last week WaterNSW released an updated forecast inflow report ([available here](#)). Flows from the northern Basin have been relatively low over the past month, however localised heavy rainfall earlier

in March resulted in gains in Menindee Lakes and the Darling River. Heavy rainfall in southern Queensland has contributed to high river flows and flooding in the Culgoa Catchment.

At this time, there are modest inflows forecast with a further 20 - 40 GL expected to enter the Menindee Lakes by the end of April. Please note that a portion of this inflow is protected environmental water.

Lake Pamamaroo inlet regulator remains open and is discharging ~800 ML/day from Lake Wetherell into Pamamaroo which is assisting with moving water off the Wetherell floodplain. In the coming weeks the lake levels will equalise.

Storage	Percent full (active storage)
Lake Wetherell	27.5%
Lake Pamamaroo	79.6%
Lake Menindee	6.9%
Lake Cawndilla	27.6%
Menindee total	36.2%

Algae alerts

- Lake Menindee, Lake Menindee Outlet, Lake Menindee at Sunset Strip and Darling River at Weir 32 remain on **RED** alert. Weekly sampling at these sites is being conducted by WaterNSW.
- Silver City Hwy (Great Darling Anabranch) has been downgraded to an **AMBER** alert.
- Copi Hollow, Pamamaroo Inlet, Pamamaroo Outlet and multiple sites along Lake Wetherell have **AMBER** alerts in place.
- Darling River pump station (Menindee), Lake Tandure and Lake Pamamaroo centre have **GREEN** alerts in place.
- Elsewhere around the region, Tolarno, Pooncarie, Burtundy, Ellerslie and Tapio remain on **AMBER**. Upstream at Wilcannia, Louth and Bourke remain on **AMBER**.
- For the latest algal alerts and algal alert definitions, go to [Algae Alerts NSW map - WaterNSW](#).

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>