

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

Lake Pamamaroo releases reduced and Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator closed

Flows from Lake Pamamaroo will be reduced today (11 May 2026) from 300 ML/day to 250 ML/day. This decision was made by the Menindee/Lower Darling Water Quality Working Group (WQWG) and the reduction is to conserve water in the upper lakes while also maintaining dissolved oxygen (DO) at safe levels for fish health in the Menindee weir pool. The department will continue to monitor water quality conditions and will implement a change to releases if required.

Lake Menindee Outlet will remain fully open, with a natural recession of flow as the lake level recedes. The outlet is currently discharging ~60 ML/day and the MDBA will continue to reduce their call in line with this recession. The current discharge of approximately 358 ML/day at Weir 32 is expected to decrease in the coming days, to a new target of ~310 ML/day due to the reduction of discharge from Lake Pamamaroo.

Customers and landholders are advised to monitor river levels closely to make necessary arrangements to ensure infrastructure and livestock are not impacted.

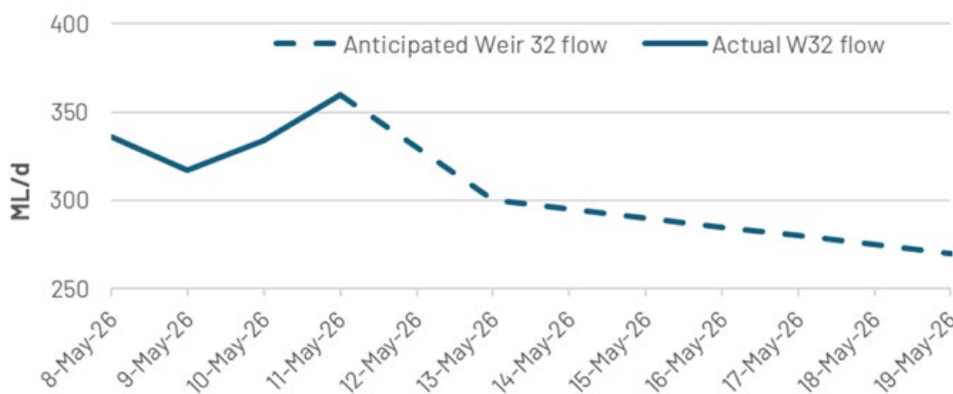


Figure 1. WaterNSW operational graph showing anticipated Weir 32 flow for the next week.

The Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator will be closed today, 11 May 2026, to manage water quality conditions in the upper lakes. Algae levels at downstream sections of Lake Wetherell have increased and this action is being done to minimise algae activity in Lake Pamamaroo and the Menindee Weir Pool. Please see updated algal alerts for the region below.

Inflow forecast

WaterNSW released an [updated inflow forecast](#) last week (May 6). Following recent inflows from the Culgoa and Warrego catchments receding, the forecast indicates only a further 10-15 GL is expected to enter the Menindee Lakes by the end of June.

At this stage there are no further significant flows identified across the Barwon-Darling Catchment. Upstream, flows continue to recede with Wilcannia discharging 644 ML/day and 233 ML/day passing Bourke.

Temporary Water Restrictions in the northern Basin - update

Last month, temporary water restrictions were implemented in the Barwon-Darling and northern tributaries to provide protection of flows to reduce the risk of critical water shortages in the Lower Darling. The restrictions were put in place following the upper Menindee Lakes (Pamamaroo, Wetherell, Tandure and Copi Hollow) falling below 250 GL active storage.

Due to recent inflows, the active storage in the upper lakes has increased to 253 GL. This means that the temporary water restrictions have been temporarily lifted while the upper lakes remain above 250 GL trigger level. You can find the announcement here: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#). It is expected the upper lakes will remain above this threshold for 2-3 weeks before again falling below 250 GL, at which time the restrictions will be reinstated. The combined active storage of the upper lakes is updated daily and available at: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#).

While the restrictions are temporarily lifted, water sharing plan rules remain in place.

For more information see our website: [Temporary water restrictions | Water](#)

Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder update

Managers are considering the critical environmental water needs of the lower Darling/Baaka River over winter. This includes balancing the ecological benefits of providing additional flows now, with potential impacts on future water availability, drought preparedness, and community concerns.

DPIRD Fisheries (via the CEWH's FlowMER program) are currently undertaking the annual autumn fish survey of the lower Darling/Baaka River. The survey commenced last week, with a range of native species over different size classes detected. The survey will be completed this week and provide critical, up-to-date information on fish populations. A decision on a winter environmental flow will be made based on the best available science (including the [NSW long-term watering plan](#)), together with careful consideration around water availability and critical Menindee Lakes drought reserve. For further information regarding winter environmental flows please email

ewater@dcceew.gov.au and info@environment.nsw.gov.au, alternatively Tim Field, Local Engagement Officer will be in Menindee on Wednesday at the Menindee Review drop in session.

Previous native fish monitoring and advice from fish ecologists on flows to support native fish in the lower Darling/Baaka River is available here: [Darling and Warrego River Systems science publications - DCCEEW](#).

Fisheries – fishway trial update

Season 2 of the temporary fishway trial is coming to an end with plans to close the fishway on 18 May. Seasonal decommissioning will commence the following week, with the Fishheart unit to be removed for off-season maintenance before being installed again for Season 3 in spring 2026.

Over 25,000 fish have moved through the fishway so far in Season 2, dominated by Bony Herring and Golden Perch, as well as the first recordings of Murray Cod and Silver Perch for the trial.

For more information and interim results for 2026 visit [Tales from the Tube | Department of Primary Industries](#).

Menindee Review

The MDBA Menindee Review team will visit **Sunset Strip and Menindee this Wednesday 13 May**. Veronica Silberschneider, Allan Raine and Kate McBride will be in attendance from the department and are looking forward to hearing from community about water matters.

Departmental, MDBA, WaterNSW and Essential Water staff will be at Sunset Strip community hall from **9.30am-11am on Wednesday**.

Staff from the MDBA, WaterNSW, CEWH and the department will then move to **Menindee Town hall for a drop in session between 12pm-6pm**.

For further information please contact Richard on 0448 456 237 or Kate on 0458 945 149.

Algae alerts

RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunset Strip, Lake Menindee, Lake Menindee Outlet and Darling River at Weir 32• Louth• Pooncarie, Burtundy and Ellerslie updated to red alert
AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copi Hollow, Lake Cawndilla Outlet, Lake Pamamaroo Outlet and all Lake Wetherell sites• Lake Wetherell Site 1 has been downgraded to amber alert

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darling River Pumping Station (Menindee Town) and Lake Tandure upgraded to amber alert • Tapio and Silver City Highway (Great Darling Anabranch) • Wilcannia
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Pamamaroo centre

Note/s:

- Sites currently on **RED** alert will continue to be sampled weekly by WaterNSW.
- Bold indicates a change since our last community update (April 29).
- For the latest algal alerts and information, 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>