

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

No change to Weir 32 releases

The current releases of ~400 ML/day over Weir 32 will continue and consist of 200 ML/day of environmental flow that has been protected to Menindee, on top of the 200 ML/day of minimum baseflows. The flows are to support native fish recovery, including providing additional habitat and connectivity to support juvenile native fish survival, in the lower Darling River. The flow started on 1 June 2026 and is expected to continue over winter. Any decisions on environmental water use after winter will be made based on climatic and river conditions, operational flows, scientific advice, and the pending July allocation announcement for 2026-27. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH), which initiated the release, will balance the critical environmental needs to support the river and native fish survival through spring and into the hotter summer months.

The community has raised concerns regarding the impacts of this environmental flow on critical needs in coming months. Environmental water holders recognise these concerns, especially in dry conditions, and considered this in making their decision. More information is available in CEWH's media release: [Murray cod to be given fighting chance – DCCEEW](#).

You can also contact the CEWH via email: ewater@dcceew.gov.au

Current conditions

Despite cooler air and water temperatures, significant algal activity is persisting at many local sites. The Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator remains closed to avoid seeding algae in the weir pool and exacerbating algal blooms in the Lower Darling. Please see updated algal alerts for the region below.

The most recent [inflow forecast from 11 June](#) indicated a further 10-15 GL is expected to reach Menindee Lakes by the end of July. At this stage there are no further significant flows identified across the Barwon-Darling atachment. Upstream, flows at Wilcannia are currently 280 ML/day and Bourke is experiencing an increase of discharge to 776 ML/day.

Temporary Water Restrictions in the northern Basin

In April, 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 falling below 250 GL active storage. already

As previously communicated, the restrictions were temporarily lifted while the storage rose above this trigger. The upper lakes are currently at 254 GL (active storage) and the most recent forecasting expects the upper lakes to fall below 250 GL in early-mid July. Restrictions will be reinstated once below this trigger and community can monitor combined active storage of the upper lakes (see below) at: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#). While the restrictions are temporarily lifted, water sharing plan rules remain in place. For more information visit our website: [Temporary water restrictions | Water](#)

Combined Upper Lakes Active Storage



[View historical dam storage data](#)

[Read more](#) 



Figure 1 Screenshot of Combined Upper Lakes Active Storage from the WaterInsights page.

H5 Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)- message from the NSW Government

High pathogenicity H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) has been confirmed in several vagrant migratory seabirds on Australia's southern coast. This strain of avian influenza has had significant impacts overseas, causing widespread mortality in poultry, wild birds and some mammals. **There have been no detections of H5 bird flu in NSW to date**, however it is important that we all continue to remain vigilant and report any sick or dead poultry, wild birds or wildlife.

NSW has been preparing for the potential arrival of H5 bird flu in Australia and continues to strengthen its preparedness and response capabilities. This work includes planning for the possible impacts on animal health, human health and the environment. For more information please visit [H5 bird flu preparedness | NSW Government](#).

What do you do if you suspect avian influenza?

If you observe any unusual signs of disease or abnormal behaviour consistent with H5 Avian influenza symptoms:

- **AVOID** contact with sick or dead animals
- **RECORD** time, date, location and other evidence i.e. photos, video.
- **REPORT** mass bird mortalities (five or more) via:
 - the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline (EAD Hotline) on 1800 675 888
 - [this form to report sick or dead birds](#).

When to report?

- Five or more sick or dead wild birds of any species, anywhere in NSW.
- Two or more sick or dead backyard poultry or pet birds.

Or one or more individuals from a high-risk species:

- Sick or dead pelicans, birds of prey (for example, hawk, owl, eagle) or dead black swans

Algae alerts

RED	• Sunset Strip, Lake Menindee, Lake Menindee Outlet and Lake Cawndilla Outlet • Tolarno and Ellerslie
AMBER	• Copi Hollow, Lake Pamamaroo Outlet and all Lake Wetherell sites, including Lake Tandure • Darling River Pumping Station (Menindee Town) and Darling River at Weir 32 • Pooncarie, Burtundy and Tapio • Wilcannia
GREEN	• NA

Note/s:

- Bold indicates a change since our last community update.
- Local residents and landholders are encouraged to sign up to the WaterNSW [WaterInsights](#) portal for automated BGA notifications, or monitor the [WaterNSW Algae Alerts Map](#).

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.dcceew.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 Phoneline 1800 043 536** or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: 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](#).
- Additional information is also available on the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website at: mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths 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: 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: waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data