

Community update on response to fish deaths in Menindee and Lower Darling-Baaka

Pulse flows of water commence today to address water quality conditions

Our water monitoring has shown that the water quality is deteriorating between Lake Pamamaroo and Weir 32 due to persistent stratification.

To help maintain water quality and reduce the potential for a large fish kill event, a pulse flow will commence today for 2 days at 1000 ML/day from Lake Pamamaroo and 300 ML/day from Lake Menindee. The additional volume from Lake Menindee is to address low DO conditions from Menindee town to the Menindee Creek junction, which will move downstream when the pulse from Lake Pamamaroo commences.

NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies continue to carefully monitor the situation and are adjusting releases of good quality water from Lake Pamamaroo to help prevent hypoxic conditions in the Weir 32 weir pool. Monitoring has continued throughout the Christmas/New Year break.

This has included five pulses on 10-13 November, 23-25 November, 6-7 December, 13-16 December, and 22-28 December of up to 1000 megalitres per day when deadly destratification events were threatening, which successfully improved dissolved oxygen throughout the water column and assisted fish health.

As mentioned in the previous community update, given the dynamic nature of water quality in this stretch of river due to current weather conditions, we have needed to act rapidly by altering flow rates from both Lake Pamamaroo and Lake Menindee to prevent or lessen the water quality impacts and risk of fish deaths. This means we have been unable to provide three days' notice of any possible changes to flows rates.

Emergency Operations Centre on standby

An Emergency Operations Centre is on standby should a mass fish death event occur, and a contractor has been stood up to be available to remove dead fish from the river immediately which is vital because the process of fish decaying uses up more dissolved oxygen in the water.

Lake Wetherell

There are no reports of fish deaths or fish struggling in the last week and even with low dissolved oxygen in Lake Wetherell, fish are able to move upstream and into Lake Tandure and other upper lakes where DO is likely to be better.

Additional information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: waterqualitydata@dpie.nsw.gov.au
- To view community updates issued, visit [Community updates and frequently asked questions | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- To report dead fish, fish struggling or gasping at the water surface, or crayfish leaving the water please call the NSW DPI Fisheries Phonenumber 1800 043 536 or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: <https://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 DCCEEW Water website at: [Hypoxic blackwater | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- Additional information is also available on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website at: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/water-management-101-factsheets>
- Operational updates are available at: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#)
- Water quality data collected after the fish deaths at Menindee is available on the Environment Protection Authority web page at: <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill>