

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

## Update on positive impacts of flows being released

A pulse flow of 1500M/L from Lake Pamamaroo was released on the afternoon of 23 January 2024 and ran for 24 hours. This was very successful improving dissolved oxygen throughout the water column and supporting fish health.

We have now reverted to a flow of 800ML/day which is being maintained, comprising 750ML/day from Lake Pamamaroo, and 50ML/day from Lake Menindee to support water quality and reduce the potential for a large fish kill event.

With heat wave conditions anticipated next week, algae, and other contributing factors, water releases continue to be assessed and adjusted as needed.

NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies are continuing to carefully monitor the situation and adjusting releases as required to help prevent hypoxic conditions in the Menindee town weir pool upstream of Weir 32.

Given the dynamic nature of the current dissolved oxygen conditions, we may not be able to provide 3 days' notice of any changes to flow rates.

## Lake Wetherell this week

Lake Wetherell is experiencing a drop in dissolved oxygen which may be further impacted by current heat wave conditions. Unfortunately, options are limited to prevent or mitigate water quality issues and fish death risks in Lake Wetherell. Due to the size and limited access to waters within the lake, if a fish death event does take place, it will not be feasible to remove dead and dying fish. There is also still a lot of water within the lake that is spread across the floodplain, meaning it is very shallow in parts of the lake and oxygen depletes in those areas very quickly.

However, given the large volume of water in the lake, increased flows, and upstream connectivity, there is the opportunity for fish to move to find better water quality refuge so if a fish kill was to occur, it may not be large.

## Algae alerts

There are Amber alerts for blue green algae in the Menindee Lakes. An Amber alert means that levels of blue-green algae may be multiplying in numbers. The water may have a green tinge and musty or organic odour. The water should be considered as unsuitable for potable use and

alternative supplies or prior treatment of raw water for domestic purposes should be considered. The water may also be unsuitable for stock watering.

The water remains suitable for recreational use, however algal concentrations can change rapidly. Water users should use caution and avoid water where signs of blue-green algae present.

WaterNSW provides detailed information which is available on the website:  
<https://www.watnsw.com.au/water-services/water-quality/algae-alerts>

## 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 as soon as possible if a mass fish death event were to occur in the reach.

## 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](mailto: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/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths>.
- 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>