

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

Pulse flows of water commenced today to address water quality conditions

Monitoring of water quality has shown that conditions are deteriorating between Lake Pamamaroo and Weir 32 due to persistent stratification. A two-day pulse aimed at improving water quality conditions was completed yesterday (5 January), however despite this, the consistent hot temperatures and other climatic factors have meant that dissolved oxygen levels throughout the reach are rapidly deteriorating again. This is inconsistent with previous releases, where the pulse event has provided good water quality conditions for at least five days after the event.

A larger flush will now be undertaken from Lake Pamamaroo, and include plans for two days at 1,500ML/day, two days at 1,000ML/day, and two days at 750ML/day.

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

The planned release is consistent with previous actions to mitigate water quality risks in the reach, which has included six pulses. These events occurred during 10-13 November, 23-25 November, 6-7 December, 13-16 December, 22-28 December, and 3-5 January, and included peak releases of up to 1,000 ML/day when high risk destratification events were threatening. The previous releases successfully improved dissolved oxygen throughout the water column and assisted fish health.

Given the dynamic nature of water quality in this stretch of river we have been unable to provide three days' notice of any possible changes to flows rates so we can act rapidly to prevent or lessen the water quality impacts and risk of fish deaths.

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.

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 along the Lower Darling-Baaka and associated habitats, where dissolved oxygen 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>