

Operations update



Update on Releases from Menindee lakes

18 March 2020

WaterNSW advises customers and stakeholders that water release from Menindee Lakes system shall commence today, Wednesday 18 March, from Main Weir.

WaterNSW delayed commencement of releases from Lake Wetherell after a fish kill occurred over the period Thursday 12 March to Saturday 14 March.

The delay to release allowed for further water quality data to be collected and WaterNSW to work with DPIE – Fisheries and MDBA to further assess the risks for commencement of releases. Water quality data collected yesterday (Tuesday) has shown an improvement in dissolved oxygen levels upstream of Main Weir.

The improvement is the result of better-quality water arriving in storage and mixing with the initial poor-quality water that arrived at the start of the inflow.

Release will be made from Main Weir initially, as this will draw water from higher in the water column, which monitoring has shown to have a higher dissolved oxygen level. Water quality monitoring has been ongoing since water arrived at Wetherell. At present, results are showing the worst water quality to be located at the Wetherell outlet.

Releases from Main Weir are likely to be limited to only 200 ML/day so as not to impact the road crossing immediately downstream of Main Weir.

Water quality monitoring will continue through the release process so that risks to remaining native fish can be reviewed.

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

Removal of the Lower Darling block banks has now commenced. It is expected that all banks will be removed by 7 April. All privately licenced banks within the bed of the Lower Darling River should now be removed in preparation for the connectivity flows.

It is expected that releases over Weir 32 will commence in the week 23 March, with flows increased over 3-4 days to a release rate of at least 2,000 ML/day. The higher release is likely to be maintained for a period of days and may be adjusted based on how quickly or slowly water is moving through the system and the water quality results. The releases will then be reduced gradually to 300 ML/day.



WaterNSW is continuing to consult with customers and community regarding the shape of release from storage, with the key aims of minimising risks to remaining native fish and provide a flushing of the river.

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