

# Community Information Communiqué

## Management of Menindee Lakes 2011-2012 – Issue 9. 4 May 2012

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### Introduction

After almost three months travel time, the flood peak in the Darling River has arrived at the Menindee Lakes. Inflows of nearly 60,000 megalitres per day were experienced during the third week of April, but are now falling and have now reduced below 40,000 megalitres per day. Airspace in the lakes minimised the flood impact around Menindee township and downstream. Upstream at Wilcannia, the river is falling steadily and no further rises are anticipated from this event.

The next communiqué, Issue 10, will be the final in this series, however, a summary report of this flood will be prepared.

### Current water levels and flows (as at 2 May 2012)

Location	Height (m)	Flow (ML/d)	Comment
Bourke	4.72	5,297	Falling (Peak 240,000 on 05/03/12)
Louth	3.63	6,215	Falling
Tilpa	4.30	7,495	Falling
Wilcannia (Main Channel)	7.55	19,493	Falling (Peak 40,500 on 13/04/12)
Talyawalka Ck (Barrier Hwy)	3.11	3,628	Falling (Peak 53,000 on 07/04/12)
Menindee Town	8.61	-	Falling slowly (Peak 9.53m on 12/04/12)
Weir 32	6.40	22,295	Falling slowly (Peak 35,600 on 12/04/12)
Pooncarie	7.51	20,355	Falling slowly
Burtundy	7.41	19,977	Steady



Above is a view looking northeast across the main weir to Lake Wetherell (which extends to the right of the picture) with Lake Tandure to the top, and Lake Pamamaroo to the left. Taken on 24 February 2012, 35,000 megalitres per day was passing through the main weir and Lake Wetherell was at 60 per cent capacity. Photo courtesy of Harry Philp, State Water Corporation.

## River operations

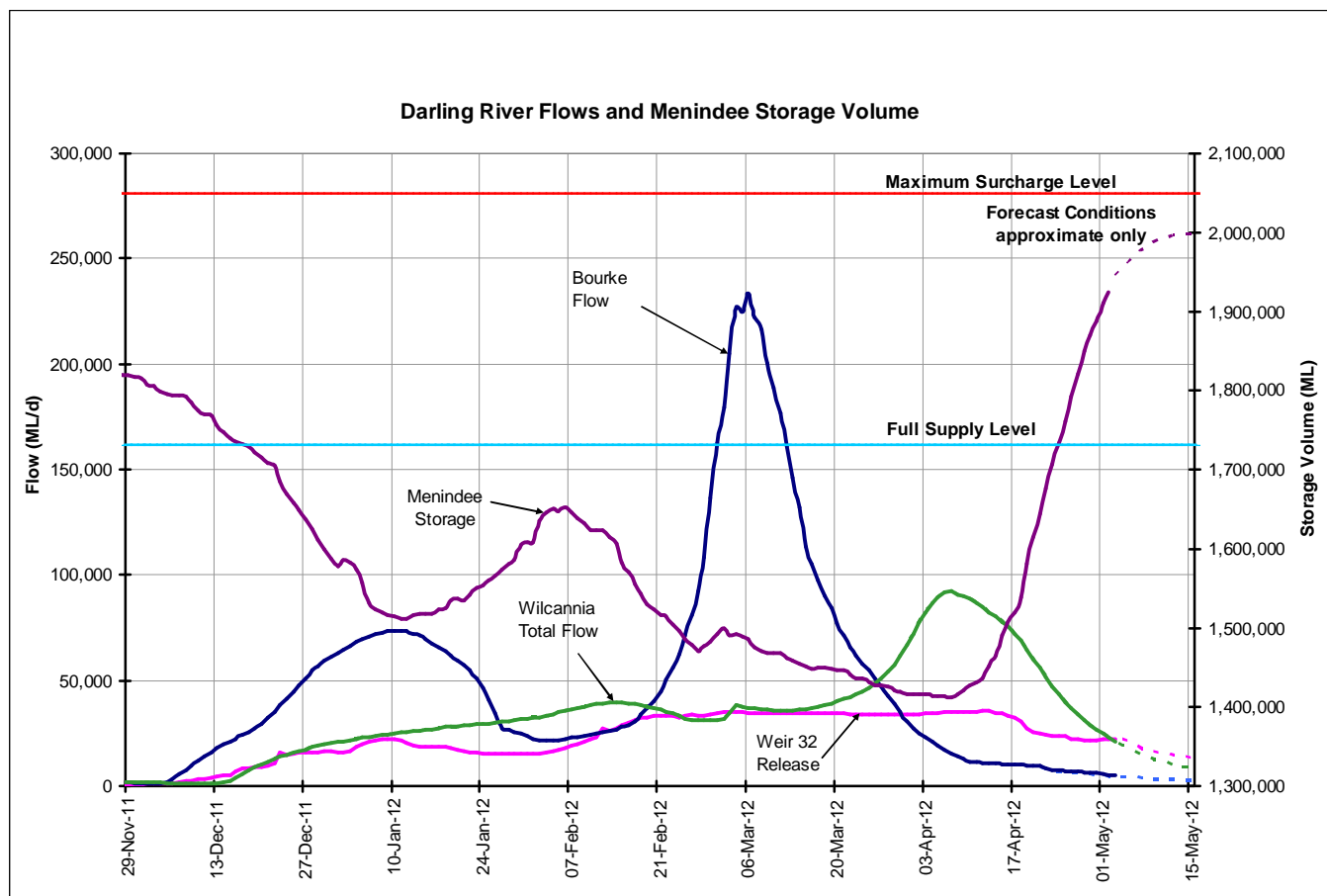
### Darling River flows and Menindee storage volume

The flow in the Darling River at Wilcannia has now fallen below 20,000 megalitres per day and is within channel, while the flow in the Talyawalka Creek is now only 3,500 megalitres per day. Flooding has eased around Wilcannia and upstream, however, the floodplain is slowly draining and will contribute base-flows to the Darling River over the coming weeks.

The main weir gate at Menindee was used to limit flows at Weir 32 to around 35,000 megalitres per day during the peak of the flood. Airspace in the lakes system was used to protect Menindee township from more extensive flooding, and to the capture of the peak flow so the lakes were full after the flood.

Outflows were reduced to 22,000 megalitres per day by 27 April, and were held at that level for 10 days while inflows from floodplain drainage persisted. Releases are being reduced down to 17,000 megalitres per day at Weir 32 and by early next week local flooding will have passed.

The lakes are currently surcharged to 111 per cent of capacity. With inflows now steadily falling and outflows being reduced, a storage peak below 2,000,000 megalitres (around 115 per cent) is being targetted around mid-May. The maximum surcharge capacity of the lakes is 2,050,000 megalitres or 118 per cent of capacity.



### Lower Darling River flows

Flow in the Lower Darling below the Great Darling Anabranch is currently around 20,000 megalitres per day. Water level at Pooncarie is 7.5 metres and beginning to slowly fall, while at Burtundy water levels are about 7.4 metres and steady. Although releases from Menindee are now being reduced, the impact of inflows from the ungauged lower Talyawalka Creek system on flows in the Lower Darling (below Weir 32) remains uncertain. Maximum levels are expected to peak over the next two weeks at a little below those of the 1998 event. That is, peak flows of no more than about 24,000 megalitres per day at Pooncarie and 22,000 megalitres per day at Burtundy.

After reducing flows at Weir 32 to 17,000 megalitres per day, a slower reduction down to 9,000 megalitres per day is planned for the Lower Darling through to about 25 May to minimise the risk of river damage through bank slumping.

Releases of unregulated water from Cawndilla Outlet for the Anabranch will continue at least until the flow at Weir 32 is reduced to about 9,000 megalitres per day and is within channel capacity.

At the bottom of the Lower Darling River, flow in the Murray River at Wentworth is currently 55,100 megalitres per day and slowly falling after a peak on 10 April of about 57,300 megalitres per day.

### Great Darling Anabranch flows

Flow in the Lower Darling at the Great Anabranch effluent has been steady throughout March and April at around 18,000 megalitres per day and 9.5 to 9.6 metres, commensurate with the steady flows through Weir 32. Currently it is 18,030 megalitres per day (9.35 metres) and falling slowly after reaching 19,100 megalitres per day (9.68 metres) on 11 April. In the Anabranch at Wycot the flow is also now falling. It is currently 10,740 megalitres per day (3.9 metres) after a peak of about 4.3 metres on 23 April.

A few thousand megalitres per day continues to flow in the lower reaches of the Anabranch with at least 1,000 megalitres per day reaching the Murray River. It is anticipated that this connected flood through the Anabranch system will last at least through May.

## How this flood compares to previous events

The table below shows a comparison of the current flood events with previous floods.

Year	Max height at Bourke (m)	Total Volume at Bourke (GL)	Max height at Wilcannia (m)	Total flow at Wilcannia (incl. Talyawalka Ck) (GL)	Max height Weir 32 (m)
1971	13.73	7,700	11.0	5,800	7.6
1974	14.09	8,200	11.07	6,450	7.63
1976	14.17	14,000	11.59	10,500	8.07
1983	13.27	7,200	10.65	5,500	7.06
1990	12.99	9,000	11.0	8,150	7.37
1998	13.78	9,700	10.83	6,700	7.45
2010	10.78	2,370	9.43	2,400	5.44
2011	12.56	5,800	10.5	5,000	7.10
<b>2012</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>10.63</b>	<b>3,800**</b>	<b>7.05</b>

\*\* Value predicted by the NSW Office of Water

## Releases from the Menindee Lakes at 3 May 2012

Location	ML/d
Main weir	14,500
Lake Wetherell outlet	3,200
Lake Pamamaroo outlet	2,500
Lake Menindee outlet	2,100
Lake Cawndilla outlet	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,300</b>

## Communication and additional information

As conditions vary from day-to-day, the NSW Office of Water and State Water will continue to monitor the situation carefully and provide regular information to the community as appropriate.

## Where do I go for additional information?

**Central Darling Shire** (Road and Asset information) Reece Wilson T 0429 915 992

**NSW Office of Water:** Bunty Driver T 0407 403234 or visit the website [www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au)

**State Emergency Service** Far West Region Head Quarters T 02 6879 7100 or visit website [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

**State Water:** Menindee Officer on Duty: T 0429 784334