



2 February 2012

NSW Office of Water increases releases from the Menindee Lakes

Persistent heavy rainfall in northern NSW and south west Queensland over recent weeks has caused localised flooding across parts of the northern Murray Darling Basin. In particular, a stationary trough system has delivered intense rainfall over the last two days to the Gwydir and Namoi rivers.

NSW Water Commissioner David Harriss announced today that releases from the Menindee Lakes will be increased immediately.

“The Lakes are soon expected to fill due to current high inflows from rainfall late last year and with significant flooding now being experienced in the north we can expect additional significant inflows in a few months time.”

Mr Harriss said that these higher releases will ensure that the Lakes are drawn down below surcharge, with airspace to provide some mitigation to these large anticipated inflows.

“Releases to the lower Darling River and the Anabranche are currently 15,000 megalitres per day through Weir 32 but will be increased to 20,000 megalitres per day over the next few days. Further increases are possible as inflow forecasts become clearer.”

With further rainfall continuing today, the flood events in the Gwydir and Namoi valleys are not yet over.

“In the Gwydir, up to 150 millimetres fell during the 24 hours to 9am on Thursday 2 February, with similar falls over the last two days in parts of the Namoi catchment. Rivers are still rising and record flows of over 300,000 megalitres per day are being measured on the Gwydir River upstream of Moree”.

The NSW Office of Water has extensive experience in managing flood flows and boasts one of the largest telemetered monitoring systems in Australia. By visiting <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au> you will be able view a variety of information on the current water levels and flows in the Menindee Lakes and surrounding areas. This information is updated consistently providing “real-time” information for critical decision making on flood warnings and securing of personal stock and property.

Mr Harriss explained that the NSW Government manages the Menindee Lakes system under drought and flood conditions.

“With the drought breaking so convincingly about 18 months ago – we have transitioned quickly into flood operations.”

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Mr Harriss said that the NSW Office of Water has well-established technical and community advisory groups around the management of Menindee flood flows to ensure that reliable information prepared and efficiently communicated.

“The Office of Water, along with State Water Corporation have been managing releases from Menindee since December last year to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the community from floods and maximum environmental benefit in the Lower Darling,” he said

“Approximately 850,000 megalitres of water has been released from Menindee. This water has provided environmental benefits to the Lower Darling, the Great Darling Anabranch and the lower reaches of the Murray River and into South Australia.

More information on water management can be obtained from the NSW Office of Waters website at www.water.nsw.gov.au

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