

Securing water for Broken Hill and surrounding communities

What is the current water situation?

The government is determined to take the time to find acceptable, long term solutions that will provide a secure supply of fresh potable water to the families of Broken Hill and surrounding communities for decades to come.

Resolving the long term water supply situation for Broken Hill and surrounding communities is an extremely high priority for the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government.

The Government has already committed half a billion dollars to determine the best short and long-term solutions for Broken Hill and surrounding communities' water security.

DPI Water, in conjunction with WaterNSW and Essential Water, are currently implementing projects to secure town water supplies for Broken Hill, Menindee and Sunset Strip as well as measures to secure water for Lower Darling water users.

How have short term water needs been secured?

A high quality water supply is now secured for the short term. This is through a combination of activities, including water restrictions, stockpiling, water embankments, and the recommissioning and upgrading of a reverse osmosis plant in Broken Hill.

There is also a short term emergency plan which involves identifying new water sources to supplement town water if required. This includes potential sites for shallow bores in the Lake Menindee bed and Talyawalka floodplain.

This first stage of the short term water supply project is backed by a \$42 million investment by the Government.

The combination of all of the short term activities, including desalination of existing surface water and accessing groundwater at Menindee Lakes, will ensure Broken Hill's supply until at least 2019.

This effectively gives the community and government some breathing space to find the best possible long term solutions that provide essential water security as well as protect the amenity of the Menindee Lakes.

What about the long term?

The Government has now taken the lead in putting in place a robust process to find a long term solution that will address the water security issues and minimise water resource risks for the Broken Hill and surrounding communities.

This process is underway with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu appointed to develop a preliminary business case.

Any solution must recognise the importance of the Menindee Lakes in the history and culture of the region. It is a multi-use amenity loved by the community and widely used for boating, swimming and fishing as well a source of water for drinking and industry.

The business case will also need to include consideration that some of the existing infrastructure is near the end of its operational life, including waste water treatment and the pipeline from Menindee and its associated balancing storages.

The preliminary business case will be developed by the end of November 2015.

What options are being considered for long term water security?

The business case for long term water security solutions will be developed over the next three months and nothing has been ruled in or out – all options will be on the table.

Some of the long term options being considered include road and rail water carting, effluent re-use, deep mine water extraction, two separate pipelines and additional bore fields.

Will this work increase the cost of water to the community?

Pricing for water is managed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and there is no review of prices until 2017. Regardless of whether water infrastructure is repaired or rebuilt there will always be an element of cost recovery in water pricing.

The long-list of long-term options

Option type	Option
Demand management	Third pipe system and rainwater tanks to reduce water demand on Menindee Lakes
	Subsidy to move from evaporative cooling to Reverse Cycle AC
	Water licences buyback to secure Menindee Lakes supply
Recycle	Effluent re-use, of potable standard, to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
Cartage	Road carting to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Rail carting to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
Continued use of the Menindee Lakes, supplemented by groundwater	Shallow aquifer at Talyawalka to supplement Menindee Lakes supply (i.e. augmentation of the short-term solution)
	Groundwater (Lake Menindee Deep Aquifer) with Reverse Osmosis Plant and brine fields at Menindee to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Deep mine water extraction to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Managed aquifer scheme to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Great Artesian Basin bores and pipeline to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Lower Renmark bores and pipeline to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	Spencer Gulf – Pipeline and Desalination to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
Surface water	Pipeline from Murray River NSW (multiple route options)
	Pipeline from Booraburra SA
	Expansion (lower) of Stephens Creek Reservoir storage capacity to supplement Menindee Lakes supply
	New major upstream dam to secure Menindee Lakes supply
	Weir raising at Wilcannia, Bourke, Walgett, Mungindi and/or Boomi to secure Menindee Lakes supply
	Anabran pipeline retrofit to supplement Menindee Lakes supply

Where can I go for more information?

- » WaterNSW at www.watnsw.com.au
- » DPI Water at www.water.nsw.gov.au
- » Local water delivery including quality and water restrictions: Essential Water at www.essentialwater.com.au