



Media Release

30th January 2019

Fish Kill at Redbank Weir, Murrumbidgee River, Balranald.

On Tuesday 29th January 2019 up to 2000 dead fish were reported in a small section of the lower Murrumbidgee River upstream from Balranald. The fish kills were restricted to the still water immediately upstream of Redbank Weir. Carp and Native Perch seem to be the majority of dead fish with small number of native bony bream and Murray Cod.

It is suggested low oxygen levels in our river system maybe the cause, although Department Primary Industries are working to understand the cause.

During summer, when river flows stop or are very slow, the water in weir pools can stratify, this means the water forms a layer of cold water and a layer of warm water. Each layer has different oxygen levels, It is believed, with the cooler weather on the weekend with the wind has mixed the two layers of water resulting in a lowered amount of oxygen in the water.

Council is working closely with State and Commonwealth agencies to prevent or minimise future fish kills. Fish refuge flows using water for the environment are being provided into the lower Murrumbidgee River, water holders are working with river operators, water scientists, fisheries managers and ecologists to manage beneficial low flows into the lower Murrumbidgee River. The purpose of these flows is to turn the still water at Balranald Weir into a slow flowing river. General Manager said "We intend that these water deliveries will provide important refuges for native fish and promote movement of fish and other aquatic animals to those refuge areas."

Weather forecasts for next few months indicate hot and dry conditions with some cool weather changes suggesting a continued risk of fish mortality. Water Managers and scientists are working to develop flows to minimise this risk. Oxygen levels in the river are being monitored to help guide water deliveries.

Community members are encouraged to report any similar incidents or observations to Fishers Watch Phonenumber 1800 043 536.