



**Adam Marshall**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Western NSW

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday, 9 September 2019

### **FIRST RESCUE UNDERWAY AHEAD OF HORROR SUMMER OF FISH KILLS**

The State's largest ever fish rescue and restocking program is now underway, with NSW Government specialist teams embarking on a two-week operation in the Darling River at Menindee.

Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall said the unprecedented action would provide a lifeline for key native species ahead of an expected summer of horror fish kills.

"We're staring down the barrel of a potential fish Armageddon, which is why we're wasting little time rolling out this unprecedented action," Mr Marshall said.

"By starting this operation today we're getting on the front foot while we still have the chance to rescue and relocate as many fish as possible."

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) fisheries scientists will conduct rescue operations for fish contained within drying pools that are not expected to last through the summer. Fish will then be relocated downstream to a section of the Lower Darling, which will offer a more secure habitat.

"By moving these fish, such as Murray Cod and Golden Perch, we're providing the best possible chance of survival," Mr Marshall said.

"With record low rainfall and high temperatures predicted over the coming months, this action will help protect our iconic species in the midst of the worst drought on record.

"When flows do return to normal, the fish will be able to migrate to their 'homes' back upstream, without the need for additional intervention. "

The operation comes less than two weeks after the Liberals & Nationals Government announced a \$10 million plan to create a modern day 'Noah's Ark' to save the State's native fish species from ecological disaster.

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### **The \$10 Million Fish Rescue Strategy includes:**

- Extra dedicated fish teams to conduct rescue and relocation operations
- An unprecedented breeding program, utilising government and private hatcheries, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the iconic Murray Cod and other native species, such as Trout Cod and Golden Perch;
- Artificial aeration, oxygenation and chemical treatments to support water quality and fish survival across river systems;
- A \$4 million expansion of the Department of Primary Industries' flagship Fisheries Hatchery and Research Centre in Narrandera, as well as other facilities, which will house many of the rescued fish; and
- The State's largest restocking program in history of rescued and bred native fish once normal water conditions return.