



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 15 January 2018

BREATHING LIFE INTO FISH AS DROUGHT WORSENS

The NSW Government will support aeration work to minimise the risk of further fish kills across the state.

Visiting Lake Keepit today, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Water, Niall Blair said the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and WaterNSW will oversee the installation of aeration technology at Lake Keepit, the Lower Darling and Lake Burrendong to reduce further fish kill events.

“Unfortunately the conditions we’ve seen across NSW are leading to more and more fish kills which are caused by algae-blooms, black water and oxygen depletion from Port Macquarie and Lake Burrendong to Keepit and Menindee,” Mr Blair said.

“Aeration is not a silver bullet solution, but it does provide localised areas where fish can get more oxygen which ultimately gives them a better chance of surviving.

“We’ve been monitoring the situation at Lake Keepit closely, especially following the fish kill in December where thousands of fish perished downstream in the Namoi River.

“We do expect more fish kill events here in New England which unfortunately is a harsh reality of drought conditions but we’re committed to helping to prevent further devastation to local ecosystems across NSW.

“Regional dam storages have extended supply and flow for as long as possible, but unless good rainfall occurs this summer, it’s likely that Lake Keepit and many other catchments will remain dry for the foreseeable future.”

Member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson welcomed the new technology at Lake Keepit to try and reduce further fish kills.

“I thank the Minister for his quick action and making sure we do all we can to minimise the impact on our region,” Mr Anderson said.

“Fish kill events are common but unfortunately the impact of this drought has seen kills which are more severe and more devastating.”

Mr Blair called on the NSW Labor Party to start supporting our vulnerable regional communities as they grapple with the severe drought.

“You can’t dismiss the impact of drought when in the last six months, we have had record low inflows into northern NSW rivers, with many waterways ceasing to flow and the summer heat placing further pressure on the dwindling water supplies,” Mr Blair said.

“Yet we have the Member for Maroubra, standing in Sydney, blaming the very farmers who this Government have supported with more than \$1 billion in drought assistance.

“The Opposition Leader needs to stop his political posturing and with just 67 days to go until the State election, he needs to get dust on his boots and come out and see the devastating effects of the very same drought that he is denying exists”.

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