

## **Statement from Dharriwaa Elders Group 27 January 2025**

Dharriwaa Elders Group (“DEG”) is worried about the health of the Baawan (Barwon) and Ngamaay (Namoi) Rivers at Walgett. For this reason the Walgett River Rangers<sup>1</sup> conduct weekly water quality testing. The rangers test multiple sites on the Baawan and Ngamaay Rivers.

DEG does this work in its long-term Yuwaya Ngarrali partnership with the University of New South Wales, with the assistance of Gulbali Institute of Charles Sturt University and NSW Fisheries. The rangers test for pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and salinity, and are expanding this to include nutrients, chemical oxygen demand, metals, pesticides, and algae. These reports are available [on the DEG website](#).

In their Weekly River Monitoring Report from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 the rangers reported that the dissolved oxygen was below 3mg/L at the Walgett Weir which is a dangerous level for fish.

DEG tests the river water to find out for ourselves what is happening in the rivers. This knowledge helps us advocate for the health of the Baawan and the Ngamaay.

For example, the December 2024 fish kill at Walgett was caused by lack of oxygen in the river. Oxygen levels in the water fluctuate and low levels kill native fish. Oxygen levels have risen since the fish kill but we know they will fall again, maybe killing more fish. We disagree with claims that it was mostly carp killed. While some of the fish were carp, we saw many dead native fish and yabbies.

The Walgett River Rangers are experienced in this work. The rangers and DEG know what these results mean. Low oxygen is not the only concern that we have with the health of the rivers. Our concern is that the main causes of poor river health upstream are not being addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Dharriwaa Elders Group’s Ngarrangarra-li Walaaybaa Rangers (Look After Home Country Rangers) project is proudly supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency.