



If I am your Darling, Why do you treat me so?

Response to the mass fish deaths in the Lower Darling, downstream from the Menindee Lakes, NSW

Ceramic installation by
Lizzie Tongway, 2019

December 2018 - January 2019

The Traditional owners of the lands around the Menindee lakes are the Barkandji people. I wish to pay my respects to their elders, past and present, acknowledging the invasion of their land and waters by colonial settlers.

Between December 2018 and January 2019, over one million fish died in the Lower Darling river. This installation of clay fish represents a very small fraction of the devastation. Events such as this occur as a result of drought and human interference with the waterways normal flow. This stretch of water is a nursery for young fish of several species, therefore the impact of this massive fish death event will impact fish populations for several generations.

The Murray Darling Basin is Australia's largest and most complex river system. Allocation of water for agricultural use has supported food production for many decades. However, the combination of drought, mismanagement, and over-allocation of water causes the slow moving water to stagnate and lose oxygen, resulting in the deaths of aquatic life.