



Tuesday, 6 August 2013

Chaffey Dam environmental flow releases

Water releases from Chaffey Dam will be increased from tomorrow to improve river health and productivity of the Peel River

NSW Water Commissioner, David Harriss, said daily releases from the dam would be increased over a seven day period starting tomorrow under the environmental provisions of the Peel Valley water sharing plan.

“There will be a total of 1,600 megalitres released across the week-long flow event, with a peak flow of 500 megalitres per day occurring on 8 August,” said Mr Harriss.

“Flows from the dam will gradually increase from 100 megalitres per day on 7 August, reaching a peak the following day and then slowly subsiding back to 80 megalitres per day by 13 August.”

“While there will be river level rises downstream of the dam as a result of the increased releases, it is not expected there will be any major impact on downstream landholders concerning access and irrigation infrastructure.”

Mr Harriss said this was the fourth release of water triggered under the environmental provisions since the commencement of the new water sharing plan in 2010.

“The flow event is intended to replicate natural flows and will flush the system and improve aquatic habitats.”

“The size and duration of this event should move fine-grained sediment and mobilise algae, bacteria and other organic matter in-stream, which will stimulate food growth for fish and aquatic organisms.”

“Scientists from the NSW Office of Water will be measuring and investigating the effects of the increased flows and will then compare these findings against data collected prior to this flow event.”

“Over time this will show both the type and size of benefits gained from the releases and how future environmental flows may be altered to provide even greater benefits for the river system,” Mr Harriss said.

Anticipated river levels at the following locations are expected as a result of the planned environmental releases:

- Peel River downstream of Chaffey is expected to peak at approximately 1.64 meters on 8 August 2013
- Peel River at Piallamore is expected to peak at approximately 1.17 meters on 9 August 2013
- Peel River at Tamworth is expected to peak at approximately 1.05 meters on 11 August 2013

Landholders should note that these are estimated river heights only and exact heights may vary due to possible inflows from tributaries of the Peel River, such as Dungowan Creek and Cockburn River, or local rainfall runoff.

Media contact: Bunty Driver – 0407 403 234

Our news releases are on the web: www.water.nsw.gov.au Follow us on Twitter @OfficeofWater