



Wednesday 23 May 2012

## Chaffey Dam releases to improve river health by mimicking natural flows

Water releases from Chaffey Dam will be increased from today, to improve river health by mimicking natural flows.

NSW Water Commissioner, David Harriss, said daily releases from the dam would be increased over a seven day period starting today, 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 release of 500 megalitres per day occurring on Thursday 24 May,” said Mr Harriss.

“Water releases from the dam will gradually increase from 100 megalitres per day on 23 May, reaching a peak the following day and then slowly subsiding back to 80 megalitres per day by 29 May.”

“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 second release of water triggered under the environmental provisions since the commencement of the water sharing plan.

“Similarly to the release last April, this flow event is designed to replicate natural flows as closely as possible to improve aquatic habitats.”

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

He said the flows should also trigger improvements in the health and abundance of aquatic invertebrates, as well as growth and an increase in riparian vegetation.

“Scientists from the NSW Office of Water at Tamworth 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.”

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

- Peel River down stream of Chaffey is expected to peak at approximately 1.70 meters on 24 May 2012
- Peel River at Piallamore is expected to peak at approximately 1.21 meters on or about 24 May 2012
- Peel River at Tamworth is expected to peak at approximately 2.33 meters around 25 May 2012.

**Media contact:** Bunty Driver **M:** 0407 40 3234