



16 March 2011

## Lake Jindabyne to see pressure ease off

The NSW Office of Water and Snowy Hydro Limited have reached an agreement on the release of water that will enable levels in Lake Jindabyne to be reduced over the coming weeks.

NSW Water Commissioner David Harriss said that flows would be released from Lake Jindabyne to the Snowy River in a pattern that would mimic 'natural' flow patterns expected at this time of year, albeit higher which, in turn, reflects the inflows over the past weeks.

"Lake Jindabyne is currently at full supply level, which has not been seen since early 1974. The current levels are the result of record inflows over the past couple of months and changed operations to enable Snowy Hydro Limited to deliver 'flushing flows' this coming spring."

Mr Harriss said that the reduction in lake levels would remove pressure on businesses and facilities that are impacted at full supply or near full supply.

The creation of airspace in the lake would also provide some potential flood mitigation capacity for landowners and towns on the Snowy River downstream of Jindabyne Dam during the coming winter.

"I stress, however, the agreement is not about flood mitigation, which is only one issue that has to be considered along with securing water supplies to towns and industries and maintaining the health and productivity of rivers in a highly variable climate subject to extended droughts and extreme floods."

The current proposal is for 80,000 megalitres to be released over a 19 day period commencing Tuesday 20 March with a maximum release of 12,000 megalitres per day for one day.

The pattern of releases is designed to provide some environmental benefit immediately downstream of the dam to Dalgety, but given the recent high natural floods there is minimal incremental environmental benefit further downstream.

Mr Harriss said that the figure of 80,000 megalitres was the median inflows that would be expected over the coming months to the end of winter.

"The agreement effectively pre-releases what would be expected to come into the dam and spill anyway, while full supply was maintained. This means that water availability to the Snowy River environment and irrigators west of the ranges are highly unlikely to be reduced in the coming year."

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# Media Release

“While the release pattern has been agreed, the Office of Water and Snowy Hydro Limited along with the SES and the Bureau of Meteorology will carefully monitor river flows and weather forecasts so that these releases do not exacerbate natural floods that may occur downstream during or in the weeks following the releases”, Mr Harriss said.

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