



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

MEDIA RELEASE

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CLOUD SEEDING TRIALS BEGIN

Cloud seeding in parts of Kosciuszko National Park began this past weekend, as the season's first major snow front hit the region.

Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, said trial operators began seeding Friday evening, following favourable conditions in the region.

"Cloud seeding began around 5 p.m. on Friday, and continued until around midnight Saturday," Mr Macdonald said.

"Snowy Hydro, the company funding and administering the cloud seeding research, had 16 ground-based generators operating during that time.

"Snow samples were collected and will be sent for analysis to confirm that the seeding process did produce additional snowfalls.

"However, all instruments and recordings indicate the winter storm clouds targeted contained an abundance of supercooled water and that seeding has been effective.

"This is a fantastic start to the five-year project – and welcome news for the Snowy region, which has seen declining snow cover in recent years."

According to Mr Macdonald, the cloud seeding project involves the use of ground-based generators to send minute amounts of silver iodide into winter storm clouds. An inert tracer agent helps measure and evaluate the snow generated.

In April, the State Government passed legislation allowing the five-year research project go-ahead. The program aims to increase the amount of snow coverage in targeted areas of the Kosciuszko National Park by up to 10 per cent each season. The extra snow will also deliver 70 gigalitres of water (or the equivalent of 70,000 Olympic-size swimming pools) into the Murray River once the snows melt in the spring.

"Snowfalls in the region have been shrinking about 1 per cent per year for the past 50 years," Mr Macdonald said.

"In addition, temperatures have been rising by 0.2 degrees per decade.

"This research project is about finding safe, innovative ways to minimise the impact of global warming on our unique alpine environment."

The project targets a 1,000 km² area in the Kosciuszko National Park. Seeding will take place only in alpine areas (above 1400m elevation) and will exclude the Jagungal Wilderness area.

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