

Snowy Hydro Limited

Snowy Scheme Water Storages Update

7 December 2006

Q) Why are the Snowy Scheme water storages so low?

A) Unfortunately, like all water storages across south-east Australia, the water storage levels of the Snowy Scheme are also suffering from the major drought sequence that has been occurring since 1996. Snowy Scheme water storage levels are currently at their lowest December level since the Snowy Scheme was completed in 1973.

In addition, water inflows have continued to be only around 25% of long-term average. In fact, water inflows for this year are only around 80% of that of the worst year recorded in the last 100 years.

Overall, below average water inflows have occurred since 1997 with the exception of 2000 when water inflows were only 200 gigalitres (GL) above average.

As previously announced by State water authorities, the impact of the current drought on Snowy Scheme storages has resulted in the Snowy Water Licence dry inflow sequence clause being activated. This formula has projected a reduction in Snowy Scheme releases to the Murray River for this water year.

Because of the extremely low water inflow pattern over the last 10 years and demand for water, water levels in Snowy Scheme storages have steadily decreased since 1997 and are currently around 17% of active capacity.

Q) What are the expected water levels into the future?

A) It is difficult to predict the extent or length of the current drought sequence that is affecting Snowy Scheme water storage levels. However, water inflows from the Winter/Spring snowmelt have been well below average and water levels at all Snowy Scheme storages continue to drop.

If the current drought conditions continue it is forecast that by the end of Summer, Lake Jindabyne water levels may drop a further 2.2 m to RL 897 metres and Lake Eucumbene water levels may drop a further 1 m to RL 1128 metres.

With no forecast improvement to water inflows in the foreseeable future, water storage levels are not expected to rise unless there is a marked improvement in rainfall over Summer.

Q) What is Snowy Hydro doing to facilitate access to the Lake Eucumbene?

A) Snowy Hydro is assisting Snowy River Shire Council in maintaining a boat ramp in the Old Adaminaby area that can be used to access the Lake. As heavy frosts can create very slippery conditions at some of the traditional boat launch sites, Snowy Hydro advises Lake Users to take care when launching boats.

Up to date information on water levels can be found on the Snowy Hydro web page at www.snowyhydro.com.au