

Snowy Hydro Limited

Snowy Scheme Water Storages Update

18 December 2007

Q) What is likely to happen to Lake Jindabyne water levels over summer?

A) Overall, since May this year water inflows into Scheme storages have been well below long term average and Snowy Scheme storages are still at around their lowest levels since construction. Prolonged above average inflows will be required to return water levels to those seen prior to the start of this drought cycle in 1996.

It is very difficult for anyone to accurately predict future weather patterns and associated water inflows. However, it is anticipated that, under this continuing drought scenario, major water storage levels at Lake Jindabyne and Lake Eucumbene are likely to drop, as they did last year.

Lake Jindabyne is an essential operational component of the Snowy Mountains Scheme and accordingly, as is normal for this time of the year, water from the lake is pumped over the mountain to storages on the western side in preparation for releases to irrigators and farmers along the Murray River.

This means that Lake Jindabyne could drop by around 0.5 metre by the end of this year, another metre over January 2008 with water levels gradually declining over summer into autumn.

Q) What are the likely water scenarios for Khancoban Pondage and Swampy Plains River during summer?

A) Achieving the balance that the Snowy Scheme has traditionally achieved between the sometimes competing water demands for farms, townships, electricity, the environment and recreational users is extremely difficult, particularly under these current drought conditions.

Control of water releases from Khancoban Pondage into Swampy Plains River and the management of Khancoban Pondage levels is an example of the careful balance that Snowy Hydro strives to achieve.

At this stage, based on current inflows and expected electricity generation patterns, it is anticipated that Khancoban Pondage can be maintained at a suitable level for recreational users and flows into the Swampy Plains River can be sustained during the upcoming summer holiday period of December to early January.

However, if inflows conditions become worse during this holiday period it may become necessary for Snowy Hydro to both reduce flows into the Swampy Plains River (to levels below 5 cubic metres per second) as well as reducing Khancoban Pondage to much lower levels.

While water releases from Khancoban Pondage into Swampy Plains River are expected to remain at around 5 cubic metres per second, subject to inflow patterns, there still may be times when it is necessary to significantly increase flows (up to 100 cubic metres per second or above) to allow for increased generation from the Snowy Scheme or local storm events.

This will normally occur when the Snowy Scheme is required to provide additional electricity to the National Electricity Market under hot weather or when the electricity network is under stress.

Up to date information on water release flows into the Swampy Plains River can be obtained on the recorded Khancoban Pondage water release information line on (02) 6453 2098.

Q) How can we get information on lake levels and water releases from Snowy Scheme dams?

A) Snowy Hydro has a website based water resources information service so that the public can access information on water resources data relating to the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

This service can be accessed via the homepage on the Snowy Hydro website at www.snowyhydro.com.au. It provides information on lake levels, snow depths and releases into local rivers including the volume of environmental releases into the Snowy River from Jindabyne Dam.