

Snowy Hydro Limited

Snowy Scheme Water Storages Update

8 August 2008

Q) What is the latest update on Snowy Scheme water storages?

A) Unfortunately, water inflows into Snowy Scheme storages have continued to be below average over the months of May, June and July. These below average inflows coupled with average to medium electricity market demands, typical of this time of year, has meant a decline in Snowy Scheme storages to a level slightly higher than that of the same time last year.

As typical of this time of the year, water levels in Snowy Scheme storages, including Lake Jindabyne and Lake Eucumbene, have stabilised and it is expected that lake levels will now gradually increase with the usual seasonal improvements in inflows starting to occur in winter and spring.

However, even though we are currently experiencing very good snowfalls and some localised rainfalls our overall water position for the year still remains below average and storages are still around their lowest levels since construction. It will take several years of above average inflows and good snow seasons before our water storages return to levels seen before the start of the current drought cycle.

Q) What are the details regarding ACTEW's proposal to release additional water from Tantangara Reservoir for Canberra?

A) As a response to drought and climate change predictions ACTEW have, over the past few years, been working on several new water supply options for Canberra. One of these options involves the release of additional water from Tantangara Reservoir into the Murrumbidgee River.

Water users such as local councils and irrigators have the right to extract water from rivers and use it. This is what everyone refers to as "ownership of water". Snowy Hydro does not hold extraction rights (hence why we say Snowy Hydro does not own water). Snowy Hydro only has the right to collect, store, divert and release water on the terms of and subject to the obligations set out in, the Snowy Water Licence.

The water in Tantangara, like all water in the Snowy Scheme, is therefore not owned by Snowy Hydro. To implement this proposal, ACTEW will need to buy or otherwise source extraction entitlements from holders of those entitlements on the western rivers.

We envisage that Snowy Hydro's role in implementing any such proposal would be to physically release the water from Tantangara. At this stage ACTEW are still only exploring the feasibility of releasing additional water from Tantangara and have initiated preliminary discussions with Snowy Hydro in that context.

This option, if pursued, would involve additional water from Tantangara being released down the Murrumbidgee River, flowing past Cooma at Mittagang Crossing and being extracted by ACTEW at a point near Williamsdale.

At this stage, it is only early days in the feasibility discussions and we suggest that you direct any request for further information on this or the other Canberra water options to ACTEW.

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.