

Snowy Hydro Limited

Snowy Scheme Water Storages Update

9 December 2008

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

A) While the month of September saw some above average inflows due to good rains and snowmelt which resulted in an increase in lake levels, the month of October and the first few weeks of November have been extremely dry.

Except for some good rains towards the end of November, which slightly increased lake levels, overall inflows for the past month and since May this year have been below average.

It is expected that if the current drought conditions continue then Snowy Scheme storages will now start to drop as the normal seasonal cycle of electricity market and water demands increase.

The only way lake levels will either stabilise or increase from this point on will be if the Snowy Mountain catchment receives well above average summer rainfall over December and January.

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/mid 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 currently around 5 cubic metres per second, 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 may 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.