

m e d i a r e l e a s e

Date: 14th September 2012

Subject: CLOUD SEEDING IN THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS NOW PERMANENT

The NSW Government announced today that the Snowy Hydro Cloud Seeding Trial would become a permanent operation during winter in the Snowy Mountains.

Under the current NSW Legislation, the Snowy Hydro Cloud Seeding Trial would have concluded in 2014. Despite several independent reviews confirming cloud seeding has boosted snowfalls by an average of 14% without negative environmental or downwind impacts, the long-term future of the program was in doubt.

During the 1950's a cloud seeding trial that operated in the Snowy Mountains showed positive results but was not continued. This technology and expertise was lost to the United States when the CSIRO disbanded its earlier programs. Snowy Hydro foresaw a future decline in precipitation around the Snowy Mountains, supported by independent data and snow pack measurements over a significant time period. In response, Snowy Hydro brought back some of this expertise to Australia and developed a new and more sophisticated seeding technology and best practice experimental design in order to cloud seed even more effectively in the Snowy Mountains.

Snowy Hydro CEO Terry Charlton said, "This is a great boost for the region and all stakeholders, reflecting the overwhelming community support for the project. The Snowy Hydro cloud seeding project is independently recognised as the best cloud seeding project in the world. We have achieved an average increase of 14% in snowfalls and higher in some recorded events to date. Today's announcement means that the benefits from cloud seeding will continue well into the future and importantly the technology and expertise will stay here in the region".

Under trial conditions, many opportunities for seeding were lost due to the design of the experimental trial. As an operation, cloud seeding for snow will be used on all suitable weather systems in winter further maximising the benefits to the ski resorts, local economy and run off into lakes and rivers. Mr Charlton added, "Given evidence that snow packs are declining, the continuation of cloud seeding will also be a great boost for the alpine environment".

Environmental monitoring, community updates and reporting annually to the NSW Government will continue as part of the new arrangements. Mr Charlton concluded by saying, "We acknowledge the work done by local MP John Barilaro to achieve this positive outcome for all stakeholders, the tourism industry and the local community."

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