

Snowy Advisory Committee Communiqué 4-6 July 2019

The Snowy Advisory Committee met in Orbost, Victoria on 4-6 July 2019 to work on its long-term plan for Snowy environmental flows.

The committee noted Associate Professor Terry Bailey's resignation as Independent Chair and acknowledged his leadership and input to developing the committee's approach for providing advice and engaging with the Snowy community.

Graeme Enders provided an update on the process to appoint a new chair before the committee moved to appoint Aunty Iris White as the Acting Independent Chair in the interim.

Aunty Doris Paton formally opened the meeting with a Welcome to Country and presented a wattle flower to explain how local Aboriginal people have traditionally used it and other seasonal indicators to identify the availability of foods in the lower Snowy River and surrounding Country.

The committee then held a moment of silence to pay respect to Rupert 'Max' White and Aunty Margaret Dixon who recently passed away. Aunty Margaret was a senior Ngarigo elder and Mr White played a significant role in the campaign to return flows to the Snowy River.

The committee noted recent river operations and the release of the [first high-flow event](#) in late June. It sought more information on landholder access issues and other flow constraints to inform long-term planning and stressed the importance of publishing the [Snowy River increased flows safety management plan](#) early in the water year. The committee also discussed recreational values associated with the release of flows.

The committee was updated on recent [machinery of government changes in NSW](#). The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is now responsible for managing and receiving the advice of the committee.

Expert facilitator Richard Davies then led discussions on a long-term plan for Snowy River flows. The committee built a picture of the future of the river, identifying important environmental and public values and management outcomes. A meeting with Gil and Heather Richardson and a trip to the estuary and Lower Snowy River Wetlands, provided valuable insights into what the river means to the local community and to flora and fauna in the lower section of the Snowy River.

The scope of the committee's advice will centre on the flow patterns and river health, but also aim to take a wider and more connected view of the river and its people.

The next meeting is planned for November 2019 in Jindabyne, where the committee will continue to develop its long-term plan for Snowy flows and start considering its flows advice for 2020/21.