

Snowy Advisory Committee - meeting No.11 - 13 October 2020

The Snowy Advisory Committee met via video on 13 October 2020 to discuss the current Snowy and montane flow releases, communications and to welcome new staff.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has appointed Emma Wilson to provide support to the Committee and Snowy environmental water management.

Victoria Arthur has joined DPIE to support the Snowy Water Licence review implementation team for the next two years.

The committee noted that the largest flow peak for the Snowy River below the Jindabyne Dam occurred in early September. The last of the four high peak flows for this water year will occur on 28 October 2020.

Increased stream velocity of the flow peaks creates scouring of pools and riffles (steeper rocky and shallow sections of the river where water flow is turbulent and there are lots of hidden spaces for insects and fish), improving the health of the Snowy River.

The flows also provide cold, oxygenated water and carry food to native animals including insects, fish, water birds and Platypus.

The Committee noted that water allocations are insufficient to provide for the full environmental flow in Middle Creek this water year. Middle Creek is a natural tributary of the Geehi River located west of the Geehi Dam in the Kosciuszko National Park and is one of the selected montane rivers that receives environmental water.

Six gigalitres less water was made available for Middle Creek flows and to make this required saving, some Middle Creek flow is again being diverted to Geehi Dam.

Information for the Committee about the current health of these creeks is important for its decision making. DPIE has scheduled macroinvertebrate surveys at Middle and Diggers creeks for early December to identify if there have been any observable effects on water bugs from the decreased flows in Middle Creek, as an indication of stream health.

The committee discussed communication opportunities and some products currently being developed to help inform the community about the Snowy Advisory Committee and Snowy and montane river flows.

A community engagement plan is being developed by DPIE to identify and prioritise communication and engagement activities.

The committee noted that work has commenced on a new DPIE Snowy and montane rivers website page, which is expected to provide a fresh platform for Snowy and montane river information, with links to other relevant websites.

A short video is also being developed in consultation with the Committee to communicate information about the Snowy and montane rivers, as well as their cultural and community connections.

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