



Snowy Advisory Committee

Meeting no.9

25th June 2020

Communique

The Snowy Advisory Committee met via videoconference on 25 June 2020 to discuss this year's releases for the Snowy and montane rivers and to look to the future. The meeting noted with respect the passing of Auntie Deanna Davison, Ngarigo Elder, and the contribution she had made in recent years to the care of her country.

The Committee heard from Snowy Hydro Limited that Lake Jindabyne is managed at a lower level in winter to provide storage airspace for the dam to receive expected river inflows. On current BOM forecasts for improving winter-spring precipitation, inflows can be expected to be higher than in recent years, so more storage space could be required.

The environmental flows provided this year to the Snowy River at Jindabyne and to the Murrumbidgee River from Tantangara are far lower than in previous years. The dry conditions leading into this year reduced the water available for release - to its lowest volume since the Snowy Water Initiative was fully implemented. This will require active management of montane releases by Snowy Hydro Limited to selectively restrict water use to the amount allocated.

The Committee heard that the Snowy 2.0 development would not affect future releases of environmental water to the Snowy or montane rivers required under the Snowy water agreements. A key concern raised in planning submissions was the risk of transfer of the Redfin pest species from Talbingo reservoir to Tantangara reservoir.

This risk is being addressed by the planned installation of large outlet screens to prevent any redfin that did establish in Tantangara reservoir being passed to the Eucumbene dam, or to the upper Murrumbidgee River - where there is a population of the endangered Macquarie perch. Population enhancement through captive breeding of Macquarie perch is also being planned.

The Committee discussed whether there could be scope for flexibility in delivery arrangements from Jindabyne to better align flow releases to catchment conditions during lower flow periods. Further analysis is required to ascertain feasibility and benefits of this concept.

The Committee revisited the development of a long-term strategy to guide its future advice on the Snowy and montane rivers. This will build around cultural and community values and stories and the river flow outcomes being sought.

The Committee thanked Auntie Iris White for her guidance of the group in the role of interim Chair, pending appointment of a new independent Chairperson.