

Dalgety Chamber of Commerce Inc
Submission to 10-year review of the Snowy Water Licence review

To:
Snowy Water Licence review
Inter-Governmental & Strategic Stakeholder Relations
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The Dalgety Chamber of Commerce has real concerns as to the continued commitment of NSW Government and DPI Water to environmental flows to the Snowy River as well as the delivery and accounting of environmental flows to the Snowy River.

We are seeing some real economic benefits to our region as River health improves but the lack of High Security Water is of concern to us as we look to the future for steady economic benefits through employment opportunities and visitation for recreational use which of course comes about from consistent environmental improvements to the Snowy River. We are coming from a very dire situation, that being just 1% of original flow.

We have come a long way and appreciate the efforts to this point. With the threat of climate change into the future we seek commitment to guaranteed environmental flows of 28% annually to keep the Snowy River alive.

Some of our key concerns are:

- Reliability of water (high security) every year
- Scientific Monitoring
- Transparency of information relating to quantity/measurement of flows
- Ongoing revegetation and weed control
- Community and scientific input to water release timing and volumes through Advisory Panel.

Reliability of water

Our community has been seeking for some time, the decommissioning of the Mowamba Aqueduct. After attending the recent Snowy River Day and hearing from Scientist Therese Rose PhD, our local knowledge was confirmed as Dr Rose made clear the importance of connectivity throughout the Snowy River. Simon Williams spoke about his scientific work and the benefits of dissolved carbon to feed the River also. We also know that water temperatures are important to the health of the River, particularly to re-establish a healthy fish population. We require Mowamba Aqueduct to be decommissioned and Mowamba River opened to overcome water temperature concerns, water quality concerns and enable variations in river flows.

Transparency

There needs to be transparency and publication of the flow rates through the gauging station at Pats Patch, otherwise a DPI gauge set up elsewhere for this information to be available to the general public.

After the March 2012 floods in the Snowy River there was spill of 16GL from Jindabyne Dam. Snowy River Increased Flows are being deducted for four years from 2015-2016 to repay Snowy Hydro Ltd for a release of additional water that was due to a natural spill event in 2012-13. This release was due to a natural spill event and therefore should not have to be repaid.

The Snowy Initiative Website needs to post information on all Rivers earlier than is currently posted on this site. Again, this gives some transparency to the water allocation process.

Scientific Monitoring

The Annual release plan, as it reports on catchments, comes out too late. The Snowy Scientific Committee which no longer exists should have been the body to oversee this plan. We are still waiting for an advisory body to be established by NSW State Government after more than 3 years. The community is very concerned not only at the delay to this body being established but to the dismantling of the Snowy Scientific Committee and therefore any independent state of environment reports for us to access information on the Snowy River. We believe there is still a legal obligation for the Snowy Scientific Committee to exist and importantly to be funded.

We no longer have a Snowy Benchmarking monitoring program and there is not enough of a link to the Victorian end of the River. This is our only true insight into environmental improvements to the whole River and how best to deliver most meaningful releases. There are real concerns for the health of the Snowy River at Marlo and the recurring situation of a closed River mouth.

The three governments need to work towards restoration of full 28% flows and identify water infrastructure projects to find the final 7% which is in all commitments e.g. Heads of Agreement 2000 and Snowy Water Enquiry Outcome Implementation Deed 2002 which state that post 2012 will deliver the extra 7% environmental flow. The Mowamba flows should be part of the extra 7% of flow that we need to get to the 28%. We need High Security water for the Snowy River.

Revegetation and Weed control

There will be a need to undertake revegetation and perhaps implement fencing partnerships between LLS and landholders along the Moonbah and Mowamba Rivers and Cobbin Creek to lessen silt runoff and improve water quality. We need to continue these programs all along the Snowy River.

When we add up the many hundreds of millions of dollars that have been made from both power generation and agricultural productivity it is only reasonable that the Snowy River and its communities benefit from some of this profit both environmentally and economically. Ongoing maintenance of the River is essential and should be funded from these profits. There has been so much done to eradicate willow and blackberry but this is an ongoing issue that requires continued

funding. Our Government can and should be able to afford to spend money to achieve 28% High Security water for the Snowy River.

Community consultation and Scientific input

Further consultation with the Community is required as there has been minimal consultation from DPI Water to this point. We do not consider attendance by your department representative to the Snowy River Day as community consultation and it unreasonable to expect community members to travel to Sydney to participate in consultation. As a community we have much to contribute to the process of improved River health and can work in partnership with Government. It is such a shame that the Scientific Committee was let go as the science is Government's and communities reassurance that we are doing the right things for River health.

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