



Snowy Advisory Committee

Meeting no.10

28th August 2020

Communique

The Snowy Advisory Committee met via videoconference on 28 August 2020 to welcome the new committee chair and discuss this year's flow releases for the Snowy and montane rivers.

The new chair, John Rodger, Emeritus Professor at the University of Newcastle, CEO and Executive Director at FAUNA Research Alliance enjoyed meeting his fellow committee members. He expressed his desire to work with the committee to seek strategic improvements in the flows of the Snowy and montane rivers that benefit not just the rivers' environments but also their communities.

The committee noted that the lower Snowy River had experienced high flows from heavy rainfall in the tributaries below Jindabyne Dam. These flow events, the first since the summer bush fire activity in the catchment, have helped to improve water quality and create a more substantial river mouth opening to the sea. The construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme reduced flows in the Snowy River, leading to the river's mouth being closed more often and for longer. River mouth closures raise water levels and flood surrounding farmland and can create water quality issues that can be threatening to the fish that live in the estuary. Maintaining the river mouth opening is an important part of river health. It allows fish and other animals to move and complete their life cycles. Important species, such as Australian grayling, eels and Australian bass are likely to benefit from maintaining the river's connectivity to the sea.

The committee noted the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has appointed a new officer to work on the Snowy and montane rivers. This will enable further progress on a number of issues the committee advises on, including the investigation of opportunities for more flexible flow releases from Jindabyne and the monitoring of benefits from these flows.

The committee also discussed future communications opportunities to inform and engage the community about flows in the Snowy and montane rivers and their importance to the environment, the community and Indigenous culture.