

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

## WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #7

It will be painfully apparent to you all that there has been no relief from the weather over the last three weeks and our lake storage situation has become very precarious as a result.

We have reviewed our storage predictions and have brought forward our estimation of when we will be faced with tighter restrictions and potentially no supply.

**Our current predictions are that we may run out of supply completely around February 20<sup>th</sup>.**

### WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The lake level is currently at 377.6m (17%) and falling at around 0.75% every day.

The continuing drop off in flows throughout the catchment has put real pressure on our lake and has brought forward our forecast of reaching the 10% lake level by about four days and the 0% level by at least 6 days.

It is in the interest of all parties that we avoid an empty lake scenario whereby the river flows revert to natural inflows and there is no water available for abstractive use (except for essential domestic supply).

Given the situation, we will be engaging again with OEFRAG and considering options to extend the time before we run out. Unfortunately, at this end of the scale, the levers we have are limited in number and short in effect.

The next lake trigger level is at 10% full (375m) and, on our current forecast, we may reach this level around 6<sup>th</sup> February. The previous proposal had been that we would need to tighten to 75% restriction. I am not convinced that this will provide the savings anticipated because of the problems with delivering this limited amount of water and of course, whether it represents a viable supply to most of our shareholders (it would likely have to be a 2 on – 6 off regime) so we will be considering this carefully as we look at our options but it may still be something we need to implement.

### PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS

At this stage, the 50% restriction regime will continue but may be revised in about ten days' time.

We need to start seriously anticipating a no supply situation (currently around 20<sup>th</sup> February). The best advice I can give at this stage is that once we hit 0% and supply ceases, we should anticipate it being some time before we can resume any supply to irrigators. February and March are both traditionally low rainfall months in our region so it may be beyond this period before we can recover any lake storage.

As part of our discussions with all parties over the next few weeks, we will be considering the 'return to service' regime and just how we can best provide relief as soon as possible.

### WATER ORDERING

I cannot stress enough the importance at this time of ensuring your water order is accurate. Many of you will be operating on a roster that has been presented to you so you do need to stick with this regime. The key for us making the water from the lake go as far as possible is keep the flows as consistent as possible and avoid any unplanned or sudden changes in use. We feel we have the current 50% regime operating reasonably efficiently from a water release aspect so we require all our irrigators to be watching their own operation very carefully please.

**Please continue to ensure that your water orders accurately reflect your intended water use so that we can deliver the right amount of water, limit wastage or shortages and preserve the lake storage as much as possible.**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the extreme conditions you are all facing as a result of the severe weather conditions.

We are well aware of the very serious consequences of the restricted supply and how these consequences increase markedly in the 'no supply' situation. There are quite a number of you that are already dealing with a no supply situation – above the dam and on the Opihi and Te Ngawai rivers where your feeder river has already fallen below minimum flow.

The dam storage has performed virtually flawlessly since it was commissioned in 1998 but it was always recognised that a very severe weather sequence (such as was experienced in the 1980's) would likely result in shortages of supply.

I can assure you that we are doing what we can to prolong the availability of water.

Regards



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