

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

## WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #7

As we had signalled in our previous update, we have moved to a 50% restriction regime effective from 23<sup>rd</sup> December. I would anticipate this regime will remain in place throughout January.

Despite the rain on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> which saw 20mm – 30mm across the catchment, the drawdown on the lake is still significantly higher than last season as we would be quickly using up the buffer in lake storage we have been able to establish through the earlier restrictions and reduced river flows we have implemented this season.

The 50% restriction regime will be on a volumetric basis which seems to be providing better flexibility to many of our irrigators.

**Irrigators should now be managing to a 50% allocation regime and planning that this regime will remain in effect through-out January.**

### WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The rain on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December provided a short respite to the steady decline in lake level, however we are still drawing down the lake on a daily basis. The lake is now at 65% and this compared with 40% at the same time last year.

The inflows to the dam have steadied over the last week but our overall average for December is well below that from last December and our average drawdown for the month is well ahead of last season.

There appears to be little rain forecast for the remainder of the month so we can expect to see conditions deteriorate faster with the lake storage.

### RESTRICTIONS

We have implemented a 50% allocation regime, effective 23<sup>rd</sup> December. This is a reduction down from the 75% regime we had in place from 1<sup>st</sup> December.

We will again be working on a volumetric allocation regime so that we will require irrigators to work within 50% of their entitlement for the remaining week of December and through January.

We have had a few enquiries as to how this works for the remainder of the month as some were aiming to finish up with 75% by month's end and they are unclear what is required for the final week under 50%. It tends to be different for every irrigator and depends on how they have been operating to date this month – some are slightly ahead of the average and said they were going to back off for the final period (which of course they can still do) others are saying they had been going light at the start and were aiming to be watering harder in the final week. As an overall guide, with 23 days at 75% and 8 days at 50% allocation – the overall allocation for the month works out at 68%. I really do expect that all irrigators are keeping a close eye on their overall use and, to be fair to everyone, will make the necessary adjustments to stay within the restrictions.

The idea of the volumetric regime is to enable some flexibility with instantaneous application rates and the timing of irrigation in contrast to a restriction on the instantaneous take rate like we operated under last season. It is apparent, and explainable, that this volumetric allocation regime, does in fact

enable and result in a greater actual water use compared with a time-of-use restriction. I hadn't fully appreciated this when we introduced this alternative regime and we will need to be mindful of this as we monitor and forecast the remaining water in the lake storage in our objective to be able to maintain a continuous supply for the river and some irrigation through the season.

We have also now set an allocation restriction for above dam users. We recognise that it is highly likely that they will face river imposed restrictions (Te Ngawai and Opihi irrigators have had several periods of full restriction already) but we believe that the volumetric allocation regime can ensure that these irrigators are still able to maximise the opportunities they have to irrigate when their rivers and tributaries allow.

We have been pleased with the response of most of our irrigators in working with the restriction regime and keeping their water orders up to date. It is imperative that your water orders are accurate so that we can ensure that the releases from the lake match demand and that we can continue to be as efficient as possible in getting water from *"lake to land"*.

### OPERATIONS OVER THE XMAS/NEW YEAR PERIOD

Our Operations team will still be out every day ensuring water supply is maintained. The office will remain unmanned (unwomaned?!) until 5<sup>th</sup> January.

Our Ops staff will check water orders each day for any changes so it is important please to ensure that you use (preferably) the on-line system or alternatively either the Water Phone (021 433522) for voice or text messages or emails to [water@opuha.co.nz](mailto:water@opuha.co.nz). Water Orders shouldn't be emailed to Christine or left on her phone and please only contact the Operations staff for any operational issues, not for routine changes in water orders.

As always it is also very helpful to have water orders in well ahead of time to enable all our staff to enjoy a bit of downtime over the holiday period.

Finally, on behalf of all our team here, I would like to wish you all a happy and safe Xmas and New Year. – *Regards, Tony*

