

IMPORTANT NOTICE

WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #8

Well I'm not sure anyone quite that amount of rain coming!? It certainly puts a bit more punch into a Happy New Year greeting to you all!

The rain events we have had in January, but in particular the high rainfall on the 19th had a very positive impact on the lake storage. We are now very confident of our ability to be able to maintain continuous supply through to the end of the season but we are taking a precautionary approach at this stage as far as lifting restrictions altogether.

I provide an update on the storage and supply situation below and our current proposed operating regime that we will continue to review regularly with a view to ease irrigation restrictions as soon and as far as we can.

We are still mindful of our two key objectives:

1. To maintain continuous supply through the whole season with no restriction regime greater than a 50% constraint (*I am now confident that we will not have anything more restrictive than a 75% allocation (25% constraint) for the remainder of the season*)
2. To be able to provide reasonable river flows in the March and April periods. (*last season the lake had effectively 'run-out' by March and the river flows were limited to only 2 cumecs through March and April which is well below the required minimum for this important ecological period for the river*)

Irrigators should anticipate resuming initially on a 75% allocation but can be confident that this is the highest level of restriction we should need to get through the season. We will review regularly with a view to easing restrictions as soon and as far as we can.

(note this means that since most irrigators have currently shut down from the 19th, there will be the opportunity to operate at nearly 100% for the remainder of January and remain within 75% overall – assuming irrigators have remained off for at least 3 days)

WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The rain on since the start of January has seen river flows in the lower catchment lift considerably and provide the opportunity to reduce releases from the dam. The rain on the 19th has also lifted inflows to the dam. As a result the storage situation and outlook has improved markedly compared to the start of the month when we had implemented the 50% allocation regime.

As at 21st January, the lake is at 66% which means we have actually increased storage from our position at the start of the month. The average lake level for January is 86%. We are watching carefully to determine how long the improved inflows that are enabling us to 'bank' water in the lake are likely to be sustained – the flows are all steadily decreasing throughout the catchment.

There appears to be some further rain forecast over the next 10 days but it is not evident that it will deliver significant additional water to the storage. It does appear that the previous dry El Nino weather pattern has changed.

RESTRICTIONS

The OEFRAG group meet on the morning of 19th January – the day when we experienced the very heavy rainfall later in the day.

At the time of the meeting, the rain over the previous four days had lifted the river flows below the dam but had not significantly impacted on the lake inflows. With the information

available, the group felt that there was sufficient confidence to relax the water restrictions to 75% while retaining the 3 cumec minimum flow constraint on the river.

As a result of the rain later that day and potential improvement on the lake storage, the group proposed that the Water Shortage Direction limiting the river to 3 cumecs would not be renewed this week (we anticipate the river flow will stay well above 3.5 cumecs for more than a week) and that there did not need to be any restriction on irrigation use for the week ahead.

My interpretation of this is that we are in a 75% allocation regime but there is an opportunity over the next week (in fact to the end of the month) for irrigators to operate at 100%.

We will review next week by which time we will have a better handle on how the storage has responded and I will update as soon as we have that clearer view and agreed outcome.

We currently have all the sub-schemes shutdown as we are currently waiting for the river to clear somewhat before resuming operations. This is our normal practice to avoid bringing large amounts of sediment into the schemes. Craig and the team anticipate that the conditions should enable the schemes to be re-started by the end of the week.

FLUSHING FLOW

We took the opportunity with the high flows in the catchment to release a short flushing flow from the dam on Tuesday evening with the objective of removing the relatively high didymo in the upper section of the Opuha River. Getting on the back of the high river flows and timing the dam release so that the flush 'surge' reached the lagoon on a low, outgoing tide gives us the best chance of reducing any potential nuisance in the lower river and lagoon from the scoured didymo debris. With the extra rainfall that occurred later on Tuesday, we had ideal conditions when we released 30 cumecs at 5.30pm.

KAKAHU SCHEME – SEDIMENT PROBLEMS

We have been experiencing problems this season with high sediment loading within the lower sections of the Kakahu scheme that has been restricting some off takes. Even though the water in the scheme is relatively clear in the initial section of the scheme, it appears to be picking up a lot of sediment prior to getting down to Eugene Casey's Riverdale property.

We cannot track the source of this sediment and would appreciate receiving any information that might help us resolve this problem.

SHUTTING DOWN IN RAIN EVENTS

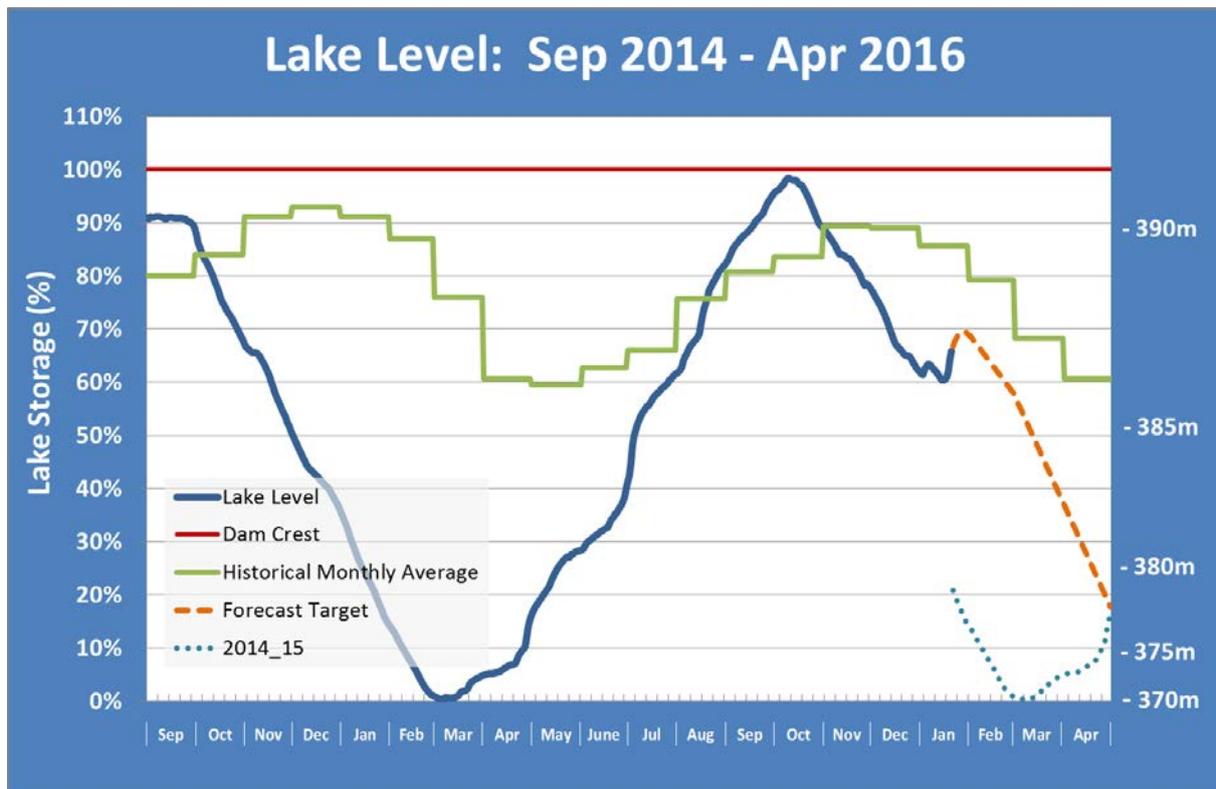
For many irrigators, we have a 24 hour restriction period on shutting down their irrigation off-take. The reason for this restriction is that a sudden shutdown (within a sub-scheme) can cause problems downstream where the sudden increase in flow can be disruptive or, in worst cases, result in local flooding. It also typically results in water being 'wasted' since the water has been released from the dam well before hand and there is no opportunity to utilise the water at short notice elsewhere within our system.

When there is a major rain event such as occurred on Tuesday, we do not expect irrigators to stay operating just to see out their 24 hour notice period before shutting down. Under these high rainfall events, we are typically out working on the schemes and winding back intake flows in anticipation that irrigators will be shutting down. We still appreciate advice from you that you are intending to or have just shut down so please contact Chris or Richard or the office if you can in these circumstances.

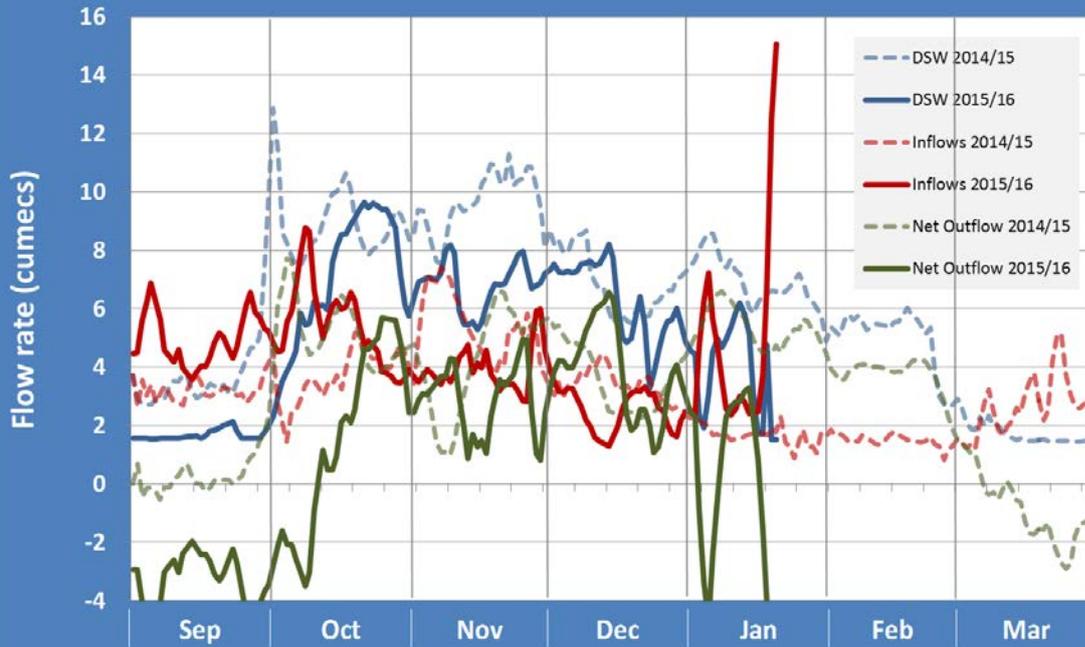
Regards



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Lake Inflows and Releases: Sept-Mar



Opuha Water Order Summary Oct to Apr

