

**INQUIRY INTO THE CONTINUED PUBLIC OWNERSHIP
OF SNOWY HYDRO LIMITED**

Organisation: Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc.
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Date Received: 20/06/2006

Theme:

Summary

From: "Symes, Julie"
To: <snowyhydro@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 20/06/2006 10:35 am
Subject: Letter re Snowy Hydro

CC: "Kerr, Deborah" <DKerr@rga.org.au>, "Laurie Art...
Please find attached letter to "Select Committee on the Continued Public
Ownership of Snowy Hydro Limited" from Laurie Arthur, President, RGA

<<Snowy Inquiry Submission.doc>>

Regards
Julie Symes
RGA Office Manger
20/6/06

20 June, 2006

The Director
Select Committee on the Continued Public
Ownership of Snowy Hydro Limited
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

Inquiry into the Continued Public Ownership of Snowy Hydro Limited

The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc (RGA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Select Committee's inquiry on the Continued Public Ownership of Snowy Hydro Limited.

Under the terms of reference for this inquiry, the area of interest to the RGA is that of control of water regulation.

Under the terms of the water licence issued to Snowy Hydro Limited, Snowy Hydro can collect, divert, store and release water. Each year, Snowy Hydro must deliver 1062 gegalitres (GL) and 1026 GL into the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys (less water delivered to the Snowy River as part of the Water For Rivers project). **It is important that these current water management arrangements are maintained into the future.**

The RGA notes that the gazetted Water Sharing Plans for the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers are based on modelling which provides for the required annual releases described above. Furthermore, the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement and its underpinning legislation is dependent on the delivery of these releases. Under the Agreement and legislation, if NSW makes changes to these arrangements, then NSW must adjust Murray River flows so that Victoria and South Australia are not negatively affect. Any such action can only impact on NSW Murray Valley general security access entitlement licence holders.

This group of NSW irrigators have and continue to be affected by any number of decisions at a Murray-Darling Basin level, including the Lake Victoria Operating Plan, movement of the Hume Dam wall, implementation of the MDB cap on diversions, the Barmah-Millewa Forest allocation, and environmental flows where these are not sourced from infrastructure and efficiency investments. In many instances described, Victoria may experience a neutral impact and South Australia a positive benefit, whereas NSW is most often negatively affected.

Therefore, it is important that the current management arrangements for water diverted, collected, stored and released by Snowy Hydro remain and are further enshrined to protect the interests of irrigators in the NSW Murray and Murrumbidgee River.

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In saying this, there are two further issues of importance to irrigators. Firstly, NSW irrigators have failed, despite many Ministerial promises, to gain access to the NSW Government's legal advice regarding the surety of the Snowy Hydro water licence, water management arrangements and the underpinning legislation. In order to assist us in providing detailed advice to the Committee on the impacts of potential future ownership structures of Snowy Hydro Ltd, it is important that we have access to this information, as promised.

Secondly, during the Snowy Hydro Ltd corporatisation process, irrigators failed to have enshrined in legislation a "delivery envelope" for water released by Snowy Hydro. This means that a monthly minimum and maximum release pattern failed to be included in the Snowy Hydro legislation, corporatisation deed and water licence.

If this Inquiry were to deliver a tangible benefit to NSW Murray and Murrumbidgee irrigators, then the enshrinement of a delivery envelope would be of immense benefit and provide much needed security and certainty to water users particularly in drought.

I trust this submission is of benefit to the Inquiry and welcome any opportunity for further explain the views of the RGA at the public meeting to be held in Deniliquin on 7 July, 2006.

Yours sincerely



LAURIE ARTHUR
PRESIDENT