

# SNOWY RIVER JOURNAL

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT



JOURNAL ENTRY  
04/11/2002

# RESTORING HEALTH TO THE SNOWY RIVER

## WHY THE SNOWY NEEDS RESTORING

The construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme in the 1960s resulted in the diversion of 99% of the Snowy River's natural flow at Jindabyne Dam. The result of this and other human activities has been a build-up of sediment in the river, weed infestation and reduced habitat for native flora and fauna.



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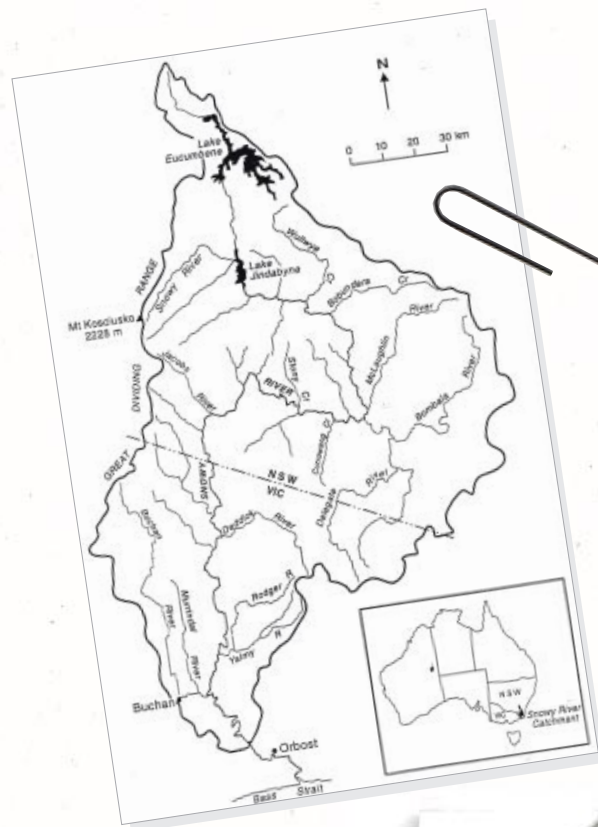
# WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE SNOWY RIVER



No other river in Australia flows through such diverse vegetation: alpine meadows and Snow Gum Woodlands near Mt Kosciusko, the Montane Grassy Woodlands and grassland of the Monaro Tableland, tall wet mountain forests, Warm Temperate Rainforests of the lowland floodplain, wetlands and coastal scrubs and Littoral Rainforests on the coast at Marlo.

Much of the Snowy valley and its remnant vegetation and wetlands continue to be important resting, feeding and breeding areas for migratory species from tropical rainforests in south-east Asia and wetland birds from Russia, China and Japan.

The lowland floodplain of the Snowy River and its rich wetlands are the traditional land of the Krowathunkoolong clan of the Gunai (Kurnai) people. This area still retains cultural significance for these people.



# THE HISTORY

1958 Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority Act

1998 Snowy Water Inquiry

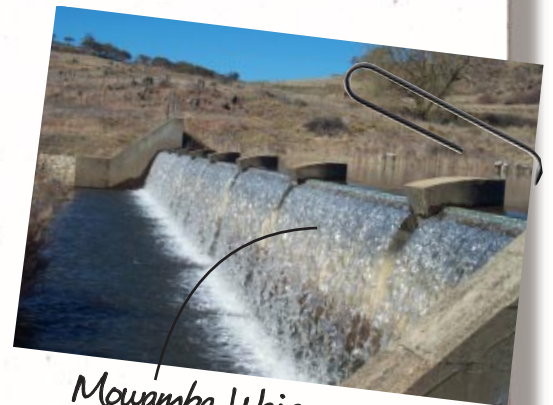
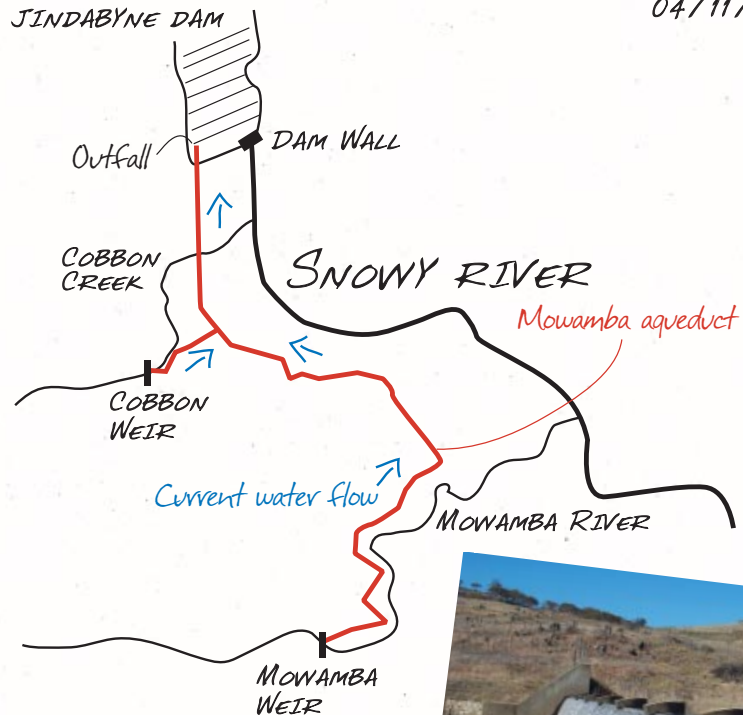
DEC 2000 Agreement of Victorian, New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments to increase the Snowy River flow by 2% within ten years of corporatisation of Snowy Hydro-electric Authority, and 28% in the longer term, as well as 70 gigalitres to the River Murray. The increased flows will be achieved primarily through water savings. In making these water savings, the existing water entitlements of irrigators and South Australia will be protected.

JUNE 2002 Corporatisation of Snowy Hydro Limited allowing increased flows down the Snowy.

AUG 2002 Environmental flows commenced when the Mowamba aqueduct was closed. The aqueduct previously diverted water from the Mowamba River to the Jindabyne Dam.

## NEXT MILESTONE

DEC 2002 Establishment of the Joint Government Enterprise, an entity owned jointly by NSW, Victoria and Commonwealth governments, with \$375 million of funds to source the required water.



Mowamba Weir

N.B. In addition to providing \$150 million for the enterprise, Victoria has allocated \$40 million over 10 years for studies and related environmental works along the Snowy River and in Northern Victoria.

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04/11/2002

# THE SNOWY PROJECT

This Project aims to restore flows to the Snowy River through implementing water savings improvements in Northern Victoria and New South Wales, and undertaking associated environmental works.

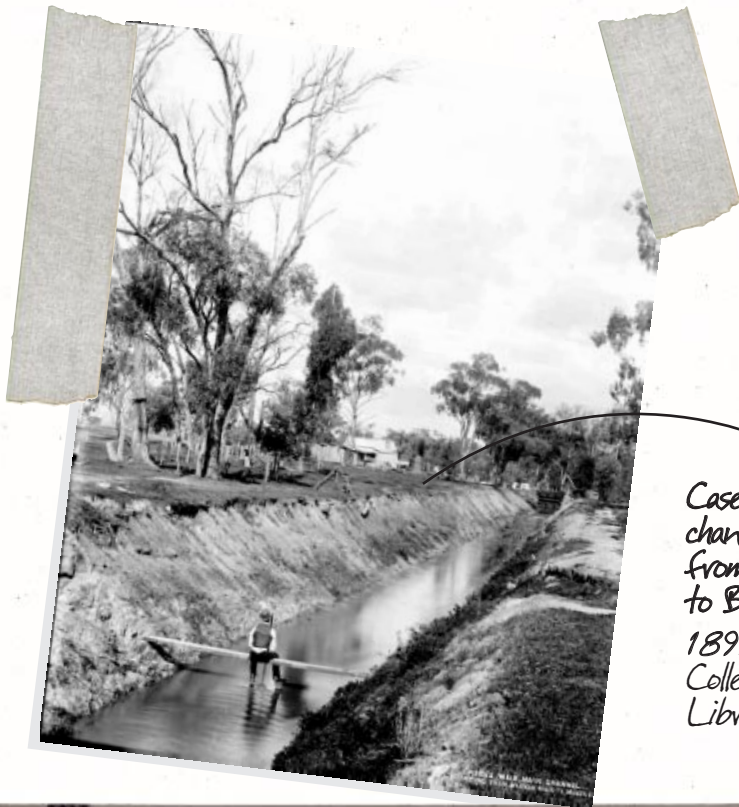


## WATER SAVINGS PROJECTS

In February 2001, the Victorian Government announced a \$25 million package of water savings projects in Northern Victoria to be implemented as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring increased flows to the Snowy River.

## INITIAL PACKAGE OF WATER SAVINGS PROJECTS

- Tungamah Pipeline Project – replacing the dilapidated channel system (such as Casey's Weir main channel) that supplies domestic and stock customers and three small towns north of Benalla, with a continuous piped supply. Preliminary design is being finalised, drawing upon recent studies of local environmental issues and alternative water supply sources. A reassessment of tariff arrangements is required before full-scale community consultation can proceed. Community acceptance is required for the project to go-ahead. Completion is planned for the end of 2004.



Casey's Weir main  
channel diverting  
from Broken River  
to Broken Creek  
1892 La Trobe  
Collection State  
Library Victoria

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04/11/2002

# THE SNOWY PROJECT

## INITIAL PACKAGE OF WATER SAVINGS PROJECTS

- Normanville Pipeline Project – replacing the channel system that provides an annual dam fill (for domestic and stock purposes) to rural properties north of Boort, with a continuous piped supply to on-farm tanks. The project was officially launched on 1 August. Construction will start shortly and is scheduled to be complete in late 2003.
- Domestic and Stock Metering Project – installation of meters on small pipe outlets to domestic and stock customers in the region around Shepparton. The trial of meters has been completed. Following evaluation of meter performance, quantity of the amount of water used through small pipe outlets and customer consultation, the plan is to install meters on the biggest water users. Completion is planned for 2004.



Laying new pipeline at Woorinen



Goulburn-Murray  
Water Project Officer  
reads a combined  
instruments magnetic  
flow meter.

## OTHER PROJECTS

- Woorinen Pipeline Project - replacement of the leaking concrete channel system, which supplies the irrigation district near Swan Hill, with a new pumped pipeline system. The Government is contributing \$9 million to the project. It will yield about 2000 megalitres of water savings. Construction is ahead of schedule and should be complete before June 2003.

Aerial view of Snowy River & Orbost



Demonstration site

Photo Credit:  
Snowy River Mail

Anchored large woody debris at the Orbost demonstration site for the Snowy River Rehabilitation Trial



# RIVER HEALTH

Improvement to the ecological health of the lower Snowy River requires a combination of increased flow rates and river rehabilitation works.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE LOWER SNOWY RIVER

A new spillway and outlet will be constructed on the Jindabyne township side of the existing dam wall. Environmental releases will be drawn from near the reservoir surface to avoid adverse temperature problems.

The Government is also funding a \$1.7 million trial by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority of in-stream and riparian rehabilitation techniques.

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04/11/2002

# RIVER REHABILITATION OF WORLD IMPORTANCE

The Victorian Government's ten-year budget for the Snowy Project is a very large commitment. The scope of the project is also large. It makes it one of the most important river restoration projects in the world, and presents a range of opportunities beyond the immediate benefits to the Snowy and Murray Rivers. In particular, the project is:

- a case study/learning process for both governments and communities to improve the health of other rivers;
- stimulating efficiency improvements in water supply infrastructure; and
- leading to a better understanding of how to share our precious water resources between environmental, social and economic purposes.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Visit:** [www.nre.vic.gov.au](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au).

Click on Land and Water Management, then Water & The Snowy Project.

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This is an occasional newsletter published electronically by NRE. The newsletter will keep the staff of NRE, Catchment Management Authorities and Goulburn-Murray Water up-to date with the progress of the Snowy Project.



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