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G-MW Clears Up Lake Rumours

There has been a lot of speculation about the prospect of water for Lake Boga. Goulburn-Murray Water area manager for Torrumbarry Lester Haw sets the record straight.

There were some community expectations that water would be regulated into Lake Boga following good rains in Murray catchments in October.

However, the rain events could not deliver a meaningful volume of water into Lake Boga this year as the River Murray was too low to gravitate water through Fish Point Weir into the Little Murray River and into Lake Boga, and the No. 7 Channel south of Lake Boga has minimal capacity. This channel will be upgraded if Little Murray Weir is decommissioned.

Consideration was also given to ensuring a significant volume i.e. greater than 15,000 megalitres was provided into Lake Boga rather than a small volume which would have evaporated in 2010 summer, resulting in the risk of a reoccurrence of gnats and dead fish.

The Victorian tributary flows from the October rains saw Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Kow Swamp all topped to close to capacity.

Should significant inflows into Lake Boga occur in 2010, temporary arrangements will be made to extract Mid Murray Storage water.

Under the current operating rules, Lake Boga is not part of the Torrumbarry Irrigation system, although it is designated as a component of the Mid Murray Storage Project.

Lake Boga currently receives inflows from two sources – the Avoca River, which is the primary source of water and the River Murray, but there have been no inflows from the Avoca River system to Lake Boga since 1996.

There have been a number of occasions when inflows from the River Murray to Lake Boga have taken place, but those inflows have occurred under a set of rules that are quite rigid because Lake Boga does not have an entitlement of water under the Victorian Bulk Entitlement Order.

On every occasion this has occurred, the River Murray has a substantial flow at Swan Hill, normally greater than 12,000 ML/day.

Fish Point Weir is generally opened when the surplus flow events are declared because the river is high enough to spill over the top of the Weir.

Under these circumstances, the gates at the outfall structure located at the North end of Lake Boga are opened and flows can enter the Lake at over 1,000 Megalitres per day.

The current proposal to decommission the Little Murray Weir, if it is accepted and put into place, will require Lake Boga receive more water through the Torrumbarry system.

The No 7 channel from Lake Kangaroo has quite a high capacity from Lake Boga to Lake Tutchewop; however the reach from Lake Tutchewop to Lake Boga will require a substantial capacity

upgrade – mostly in the form of undertaking remedial works such as desilting and re-battering.

The current capacity of this reach is less than 200 ML/day and a minimum of 500 ML/day would be required.

Progress on determining the future of Little Murray Weir continues with referral agencies providing comment on several studies.

If the weir is retained the bypass outfall channel from Lake Boga to the Little Murray River downstream of Little Murray Weir will be constructed mid 2011.

Alternatively, if the weir is decommissioned i.e. retained but the gates removed with works to facilitate pumping of the No. 9 Channel and alternative supply arrangements for diversions customers upstream of Little Murray Weir, will be completed in a similar time-frame.

FURTHER INFORMATION OR ENQUIRIES

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