

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

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## WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #4

We have been operating through November with an irrigation restriction based on 75% of monthly volume for below dam users. This was implemented in response to feedback from irrigators to enable individuals the flexibility of a day by day basis as to how they used their limited allocation.

Our overall water use month to date is tracking very close to 75% (74% as at 20<sup>th</sup> November) and the daily water use appears to have tracked up recently so there is going to have to some restraint from everyone. We have identified a number of irrigators who, based on our water order information, are tracking well ahead of the 75% target and we have sent them notices advising of the need for them to review their use urgently.

We continue to get very constructive support from OEFRAG and have been able to operate the river at around 60% of the normal minimum flow since our last meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> November. If we are able to maintain this level of 'concession' we will end the month with an average river minimum 63% lower than the Regional Plan level and this will have saved just over 10% of the lake storage. It is imperative that these efforts to conserve the storage are matched by similar constraints by our irrigators.

**For the remainder of the month of November, irrigators are required to moderate their water use such that they use less than 75% of their volumetric allocation for the month.**

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### WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The lake level has continued to fall steadily since reaching its maximum 98% on October 10<sup>th</sup>. It is now at 82.5%.

Inflows to the dam have averaged 3.9 cumecs for November which is nearly 15 cumecs less (35% less) than the average for November last year. So the evidence is clearly there that this year is even drier than last year.

The small amounts of rain we have had during the month have provided some benefit on the land but we have seen little of this rain in the river flows.

There was a small drift of snow which settled on the Two Thumb range for a couple of days but the thaw of this had little effect on inflows.

So inflows are significantly down on last season and it is mainly through the reduced environmental flows (now 3 cumecs below the Plan) that we have been able to reduce the drawdown of the storage to a level less than last November.

I have included a new graph with this notice that shows a comparison of the lake inflows and outflows (downstream weir releases) compared with last season. It is a 'busy' graph but presents a rather sobering picture. There is no room for complacency especially when we consider that from December 1st last year we implemented a 50% restriction regime so we are looking at restrictions around this level being necessary if we are to keep ahead of last year's storage position and have enough water to provide a (restricted) supply right through the season.

The lake level graph now includes a comparison with last year's position and you will see that the storage is currently still about 20% higher than at the same time last year. We need to maintain this position if we are to avoid a cessation of supply as occurred last season. The orange 'forecast' line must be treated as indicative only as it is based on our experience last year moderated to reflect actual conditions this

year as we move forward. It therefore assumes potential restrictions similar to last year.

### RESTRICTIONS

The restriction regime remains the same as previously advised but, given the month to date use, there is an urgent need for irrigators to review their individual use as we are sailing very close to our 75% limit.

It is essential that your Water Orders reflect your intended water use so that we can accurately match releases from the dam with water demand and, as I mentioned last notice, a maximise the *"lake to land"* transfer efficiency.

We do try and check, as best as we are able, that water orders match actual water use but it is ultimately individuals' responsibility to ensure we have accurate information.

So to reiterate the message from our last notice:

We are requiring all irrigators below dam to manage their water use for November within an overall limit of 75% of their volumetric entitlement. The intention of this form of restriction is to provide farmers with some flexibility as to when and how they irrigate, but within a capped allocation of water.

To make this restriction effective however we need your cooperation.

- Please ensure you keep your Water Order up to date
- You can choose how you schedule your irrigation – for instance you might choose to stay on 100% for up to three weeks and then shut down for a week or you might go two weeks at 100%, two weeks at 50%. If you are able to operate your system continuously at 75%, that's a good option.
- We prefer longer periods of downtime - ideally a minimum of 4 days off – so we can avoid releasing stored water when you shut down or can redirect the water.

- 75% is a cap, not a target!
- It is our expectation that all irrigators are considering their irrigation operations very carefully and are making all efforts to limit water use and preserve storage.
- You may get a request from the Operations team to juggle a day or two to assist with the operation/distribution. We would appreciate your assistance in helping us operate efficiently.
- We acknowledge that there are some irrigators, especially those with crops rather than pasture, who have different seasonal water needs. The volumetric cap is intended to assist these different needs but if you still find this does not match your overall season expectations please contact us to discuss.
- We will monitor individual water orders and use but, in the first instance, we expect everyone to be monitoring their own use and manage within the limit. We will be able to provide an update from our Water Order System of your use to date for the month.

• **Water Ordering**

We are still seeing a significant number of irrigators expecting our Racemen to be relaying their water orders back to the office and into our Water Order system. This is not fair on the Racemen and I would remind you all that YOU are responsible for getting your water order to the office. We are continuing to run three methods to enable you to do this – via the internet (our preferred method), via email or via the Water Phone.

By all means keep the Racemen informed of your intentions if you have the opportunity, as this can often enable them to identify earlier opportunities within the operation, however unless you get the water order into the office yourself, you cannot expect that the water you require will be available.

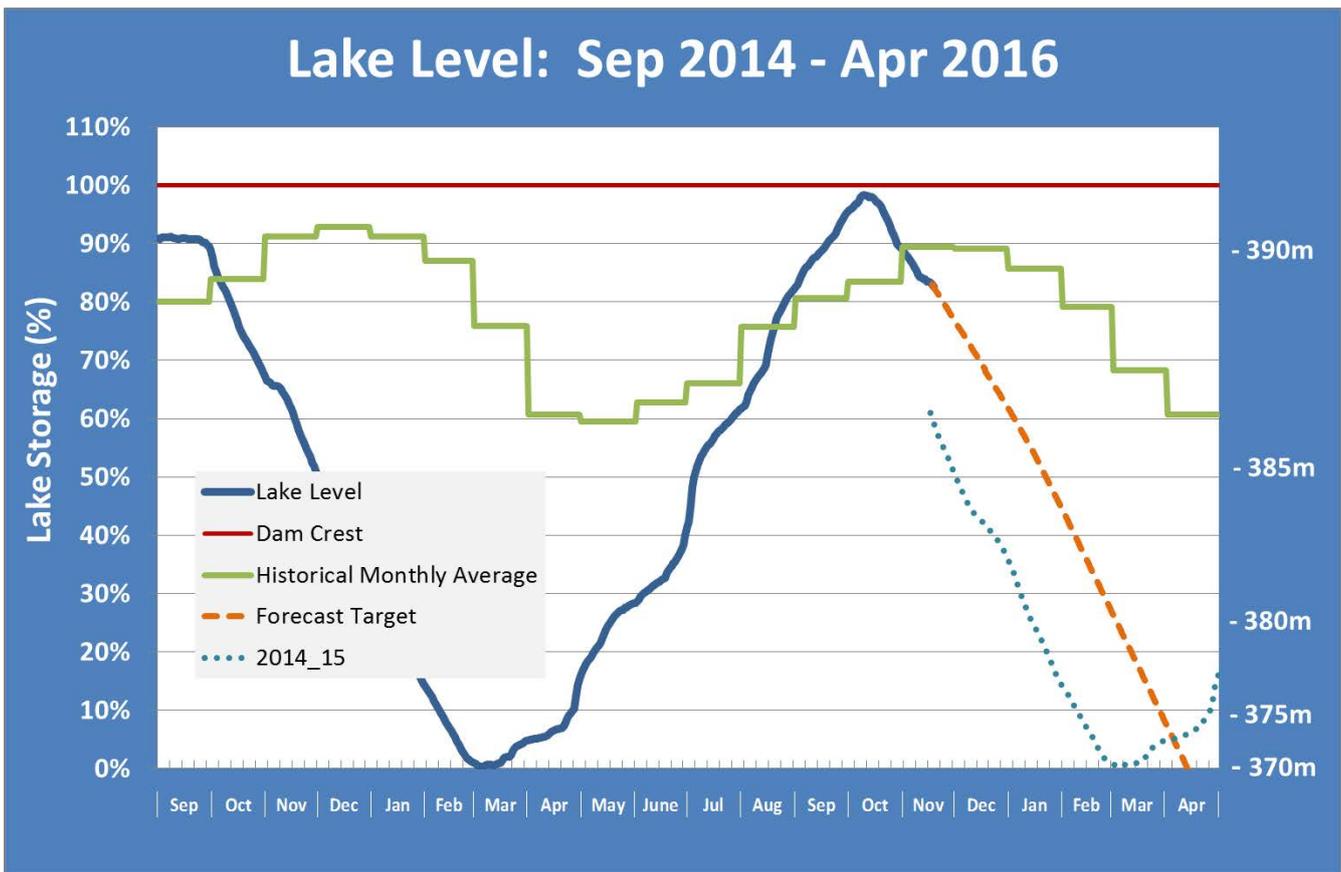
We do appreciate early advice (to the office or the Racemen) if you experience difficulties with your own system – i.e. an unforeseen breakdown of your equipment or perhaps problems with water supply at your take point. Early advice provides us with the best opportunity to minimise the waste of released water.

**NEW OPERATIONS & ASSET MANAGER**

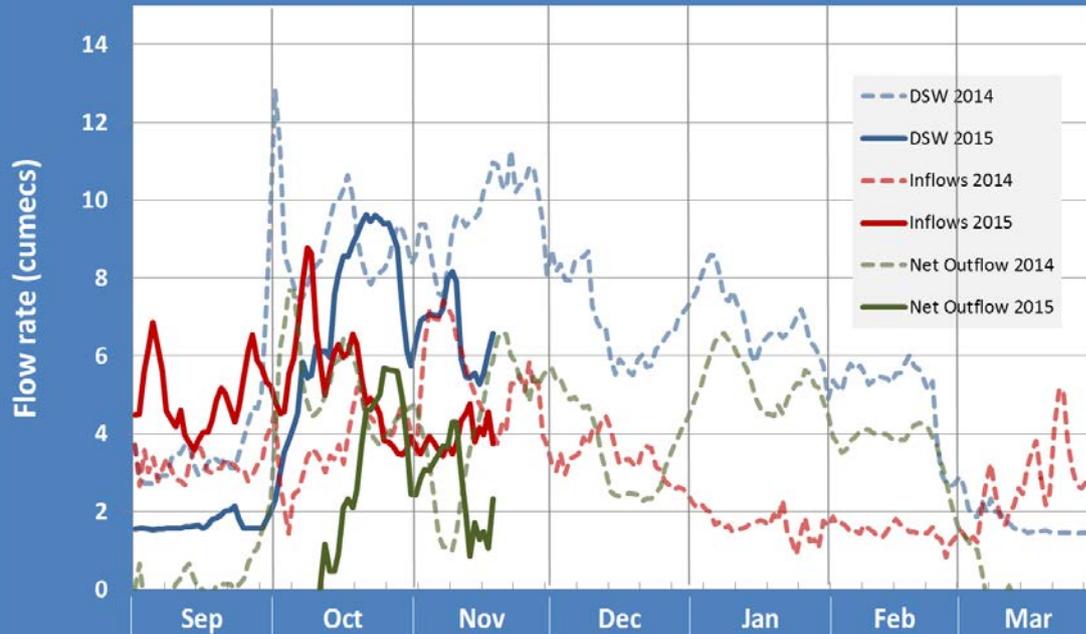
I advised last month that Steve Pagan will be finishing with us before Xmas to return full time to the farm in Beautiful Valley on the Kakahu scheme. I am pleased to be able to advise the appointment of a replacement Operations & Asset Manager.

Craig Moore will start with Opuha Water on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. Craig joins us from a career in the Air Force and has most recently been based at Whenuapai in an engineering role supporting the Hercules aircraft. (This made for an interesting recruitment process when we interviewed Craig recently when he was on location in the Middle East trying to get our PM safely in and out of Iraq!).

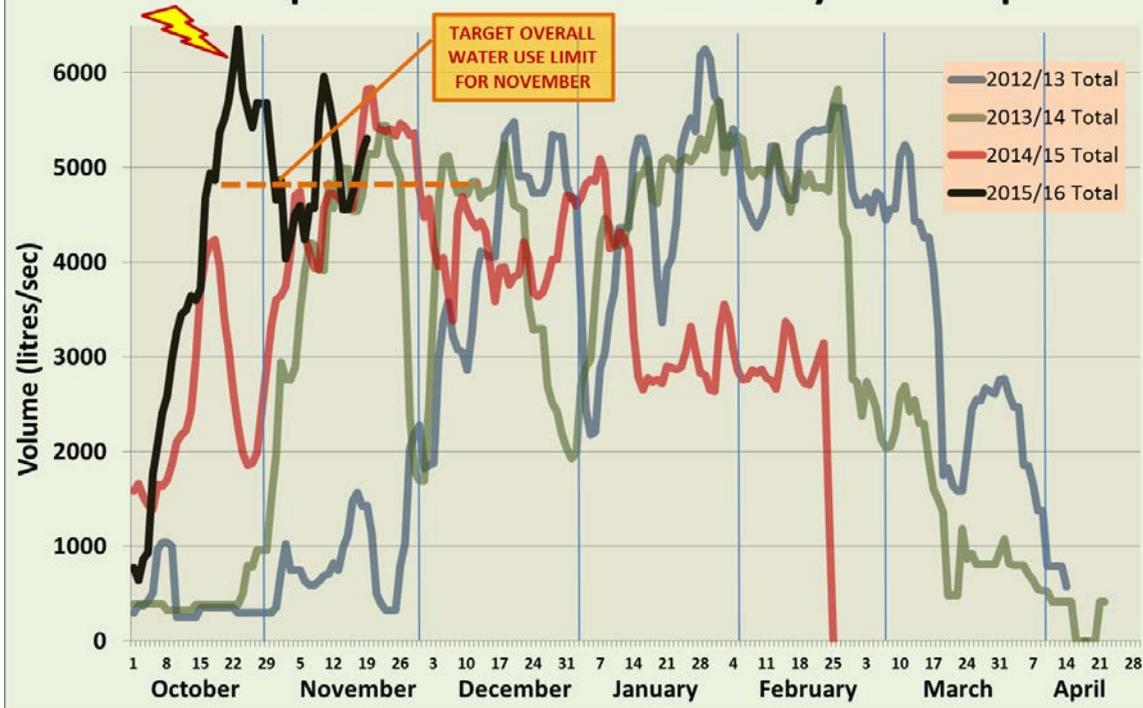
Craig has been down for a familiarisation week and impressed us with his ability to quickly gain an understanding of our operation. I am confident that Craig’s proven technical and organisational skills and his obvious interpersonal skills, will have him quickly getting up to speed in his new role. Please make the opportunity to introduce yourself to Craig as he comes on board.



## Lake Inflows and Releases: Sept-Mar



## Opuha Water Order Summary Oct to Apr



### REMINDER - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A reminder of our AGM – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 4pm, at the Pleasant Point Golf Club. We will have refreshments available from 3.30pm. Please note that the facility is required for another function soon afterwards so there will be limited opportunity to stay on at the Club after the meeting (but there is always the carpark to continue discussions if required!)

Regards

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