

Feedback from Lindis minimum flow meeting #4

30 November 2011

ORC Staff present: Chr Woodhead, Cr Eckhoff, Graeme Martin, Fraser McRae, Susie McKeague, Matt Hickey, Nikki Penno

Apologies: Cr Butcher, Alan Pritchard-Jones, Bruce Lambie, Bruce Jolly, Pete Jolly, Sam & Ben Purvis

Comments / questions

Please note the comments in [...] are additional comments and answers not given at the time.

- What values are there in the tributaries which aren't already protected? Why do these need additional protection by residual flows?
 - DOC working in this area
- What would people take water in winter for?
 - Storage mainly
- Even in a dry year, flows are low and only the irrigators are suffering – could the minimum flow be relaxed during these years?
 - Other values are suffering as well. That option has been looked at.
- How do you know what the natural flow at Ardgour Road site is as there are no records of what the river is like without abstraction?
 - When takes turn off at the end of the irrigation season Ardgour Road automatically jumps to match Lindis Peak. In puts between the Lindis Peak and Ardgour Road monitor mean that flows would naturally be higher at the downstream site.
- How much of an interaction is there between groundwater and surface water?
 - In the lower reaches and the ribbon aquifer there is a lot of interaction, so much so that takes in these areas are effectively surface water takes. Taking of groundwater when surface flows are low increases the length of time that the river runs at low flow or is dry.
- How many more fish will be gained with more flow?
 - Could be thousands. But it is more about ensuring habitat for fish survival i.e. preventing strandings of fish due to the river going dry for kilometres.
- What would the impact of days off be with the 450 l/s and the 750 l/s?
 - This would be variable depending on the season and the rationing regime developed.
- If this regime is implemented in 2014 as suggested and applied to mining privileges, are you planning to overrule mining privileges? How can you do this?
 - Those still on the river will have to meet minimum flows. Mining privileges will be controlled by a water shortage directive *[if they did not voluntarily work with other takers to meet the minimum flow]*.

- The RMA gives the Council ability to do this
- Will this mean that lower priority takes will be off first and potentially go without water in dry years?
 - Yes *[especially if the high priority takes decide to continuing taking all their share and choose not to share and ration the water with all takes – it is up to the higher priority takes to decided whether the lower priority takers get any water. Top priority takes do not have to take all of their allocation.]*
- Clarification given regarding supplementary allocation and how it works.
- F&G believe that the Lindis is a highly valued fishery river and do not feel that 450 l/s is enough to maintain the fishery to its best.
 - F&G are undertaking a study at the moment about the fishery and its role in sustaining the wider upper Clutha fishery
- DoC – February to May is an important time for long-finned eel migration. If and when eels are released into the Clutha catchment there is some doubt about whether 450 l/s would be sufficient.
- Economic assessments done by the farming community indicate the minimum flow would mean an increased loss in income. (ref. Economic presentation).
- There was discussion around the effect of willows on flows in the river.
 - Australian study indicates that 15 l of water is lost from every 100 ha of willows growing alongside a river. This is minimal compared to the amount being taken out by irrigators.
 - ORC has a programme in place for the management of willows related to flooding and bank stability.
- If the minimum flow regime implemented is not right then the impacts on the next generation could be devastating. This is one of the most important things to happen to the area for generations.
- Where is the 'line' for determining out-of-catchment takes?
 - There is no line. It is assessed as part of consenting where available sources of water are looked at. [The catchment boundary line helps to identify in-catchment vs out-of-catchment use. If water is being taken out of the catchment the question is asked – could this water be better used within the catchment, and, does the out-of-catchment take have a closer, more appropriate source it could be taking from]
- When the minimum flow is in place, how will it work and be enforced?
 - There is a legal requirement for takers to abide by the minimum flow regime once it is in place.
- If the minimum flow is hit and the river naturally drops and disconnects can people start taking again?
 - No. Taking cannot start again until the river rises above the minimum flow.
- What are the storage opportunities?
 - Work is being done to investigate this. Previous studies showed that the costs were too high. There are not many suitable locations for storage within the catchment.
- What happened to the dual flow option suggested in earlier stages of this process?
 - Will go back and look at this.
 - [This option was investigated but was considered too complicated and unworkable in a practical sense – potentially the minimum flow could be bouncing around from day to

day. Targeting the flows for when values need water, and structuring the time around this, creates a stable regime that farmers can plan to each year rather than have the uncertainty of not knowing what the minimum flow is going to be from day to day, week to week. A dual flow has the potential to be more restrictive on irrigators.]

- Where are the wider community at these meeting?
 - The wider community includes environment and people. Because someone doesn't attend the meetings does not mean that they don't have a right to have a say. People often communicate via phone or email in preference to attending a meeting.

- A comment was made that we need to remember that farmers do not own the river or the water in it. It belongs to everyone. Water is important to everyone in different ways so we need to make sure that we have a balanced approach where everyone has the opportunity to have their say.