



Mersey-Forth Water Management Review

FACT SHEET

Recreational Releases Study



White water rafting guide training on the Mersey River at Alum Cliffs.

The lakes and rivers of the Mersey-Forth Hydropower Scheme have been used for recreation from the time the scheme was commissioned.

Hydro Tasmania supports recreational activities and events on an ongoing basis. However, it was recognised that there was room for improvement. Feedback received through the Mersey-Forth Water Management Review consultation process raised a number of issues that could be addressed in Hydro Tasmania's ongoing review of its recreational releases improvement plan.

Aim of Study

The aim of the study was to improve processes for managing recreational water releases in the Mersey-Forth catchments.

Key objectives were to:

- Review the existing recreational release management process;
- Identify opportunities to improve this process;
- Liaise with paddling groups to advise of the proposed process and seek comments and understanding; and
- Trial and implement the new recreational release process.

Process

To achieve the study objectives a number of actions were undertaken:

- Internal management and communication processes associated with receiving, assessing and prioritising recreational water release requests were reviewed and updated;
- The Hydro Tasmania website was updated to improve the information available to the public; and
- Liaison with kayaking and canoeing groups provided the opportunity for Hydro Tasmania to meet with stakeholders, to discuss recreational release requirements and processes, and attain mutual understanding of issues.

Outcomes

A number of improvements have been made in our communications with stakeholders regarding water release requests:

- There is now a dedicated email address for recreational release requests and communications thereby ensuring greater consistency in the continuity, content and timing of communications – water.recreation@hydro.com.au;
- The clarity and consistency of release notifications has improved in the Hydro Tasmania outage management system. Rowing events are also now recorded in this system;
- Recreational water releases accommodating existing requests, and identifying paddling opportunities and periods of water unavailability, are now routinely discussed in the Hydro Tasmania generation planning meetings;
- The paddling community are better informed of operational constraints associated with hydropower generation. As a result, discussions between Hydro Tasmania and paddlers are more constructive in terms of highlighting risks and examining alternatives in flow, timing and location of releases in order to optimise water usage and increase the likelihood of water releases occurring as planned;
- There are more open and earlier discussions with stakeholders on the issues impacting, or with the potential to impact, recreational water releases;
- There is active promotion of paddling opportunities, outside of formal releases, including encouraging this information to be shared on public forums. There is similar promotion of periods where recreational releases will not be available; and
- More information is now available on the Hydro Tasmania website including:
 - An overview of the issues associated with accommodating recreational water releases and the process to be followed for submitting a formal water release request; and
 - Additional river flow and lake level data enabling users to monitor and assess river and lake level conditions for themselves.



Recreational water releases by Hydro Tasmania provide exciting paddling experiences.

Commitment

Liaison with the paddling community, and the paddling experience, has significantly improved Hydro Tasmania's understanding of how paddlers utilise the rivers and lakes and the issues experienced by paddlers when planning and running a paddling event or excursion.

Hydro Tasmania is proud to support recreational activities on its land and water and is committed to continue this support.

For More Information

For information on recreational releases contact Hydro Tasmania at water.recreation@hydro.com.au or visit www.hydro.com.au/water.

To see all the Mersey-Forth Water Management Review technical and social studies go to www.hydro.com.au/MFWMR-studies.

Find out more about the Mersey-Forth Water Management Review at www.hydro.com.au/MFWMR.

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