

Tuesday 19th November 2013

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SNOWY RIVER ALLIANCE SEEKS SUPPORT FROM THE SENATE TO PROTECT AND FULLY FUND THE SNOWY SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

The Snowy River Alliance seeks support from the Senate and Federal Parliament to protect the Snowy Scientific Committee established under Section 57 of the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Act.

The beleaguered Snowy Scientific Committee (SSC), charged with conducting science into the Snowy Catchments and Snowy River, has suffered successive blows since the Snowy Mountains Authority was corporatised in 2002.

Spokesperson for the Snowy River Alliance Acacia Rose said that "the latest body blow to the SSC is the plan by the NSW Government to remove the Committee altogether, and repeal or amend its governing legislation."

"The Snowy Scientific Committee is vital to providing expert, frank and impartial advice to the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation on the health of the Snowy Catchments and Rivers and the jobs of the Committee scientists are vital to the long term outcomes for the Snowy."

"The NSW Government is only one shareholder of Snowy Hydro P/L, however, appears to have undue influence over the fate of the Snowy Scientific Committee and a 'fait accompli' plan and process to replace the SSC with a body under the direct control of a NSW Minister."

"The Snowy River Alliance therefore sought the assistance of the Commonwealth Parliament and approached Senator Hanson-Young from the Greens to assist in protecting the Snowy Scientific Committee."

Vice Chair for the Snowy River Alliance Vickii Wallace said 'this is another example of how the NSW Government is driven to 'dumb down science' by defunding or removing science jobs across a range of NSW Government Departments. The public is entitled to know exactly how many science jobs will be axed and why and how the NSW Minister intends to deal with the damage this brain drain does to projects such as the restoration of the Snowy.'

"Almost half a billion dollars of public money has been spent on this national project that has spanned a period of time of two decades, that is, restoring the Snowy River, and the NSW Government must honour that commitment by the Australian people."

"The work of the Snowy Scientific Committee underpins public confidence in terms of outcomes for the Snowy River" said Ms Wallace.

Senator Hanson-Young proposes to move in the Senate the following motion.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

I give notice that on the next day of sitting I shall move that the Senate:

- a) Notes with concern the New South Wales Government's intention to abolish the Independent Snowy Scientific Committee established under s57 of the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Act 1997 (NSW);
- b) Notes that the Independent Snowy Scientific Committee was established with the purpose of maintaining political and scientific independence in conducting research and providing advice to the Minister in relation to Snowy catchments, Snowy montane systems and the Snowy River; and
- c) Calls on the New South Wales government to reverse its decision and to reinstate and fully fund the Independent Snowy Scientific Committee and all its legislative functions.

Ms Rose said "We trust that the Commonwealth Parliament, is able to see the wisdom in retaining and fully funding the independent Snowy Scientific Committee."

"The Snowy River Alliance supports the additional formation of a Snowy Technical Advisory Group to act alongside the Snowy Scientific Committee, and calls on the NSW Minister Katrina Hodgkinson to make a seat available on that advisory group, for the Snowy River Alliance."

"There is sufficient income arising to the three government shareholders from Snowy Hydro P/L earnings to be sequestered into an independently managed Snowy Trust Fund that may fund the Snowy Scientific Committee and also, the Snowy Technical Advisory Group, along with catchment and river restoration along with other worthy regional projects."

### MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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