

Concerns about the Environmental water

Eildon and the Goulburn River usually experience low rain falls and inflows during the winter period. There are however exceptions that occur usually 6-8 years apart, even at those times the Goulburn would not be running at 9,000 plus megalitres.

The damage that is caused by these so called environmental flushes is proving that they are anything but helpful to the environment; they cause erosion, kill off native vegetation, and make it difficult for all aquaculture to survive.

1 Anglers are wondering why bother closing the Goulburn river for trout to spawn when environmental flows rip up weed and stir up silt destroying the beds of trout and kill off any chance of natural stocking. I don't believe those in charge of the environmental flows consult fisheries agencies in regard to when and how these flows are beneficial to natives or salmonoids.

2 I have had reports from farmers stating that these flows are responsible for major damage and erosion to the banks of the river course. I believe there is a lack of consultation with those whose livelihoods depend on river flows. Farmers from down the Goulburn river have reported that high water flows are not just eroding the banks but killing trees and causing them to collapse into the river course. One local farmer has been consulted by a rep from GMW and a person believed to be in charge of the environmental for the last two years and has told them both how detrimental the flows are, only to have them try and say otherwise. River red gums that are used to the occasional flood are dying because flood conditions are being emulated far too frequently.

3 I believe that Black water events could have been prevented by not messing with river flows. But now we find ourselves being told that we need even more water to try and fix the problem. Recent surveys on the Ovens River prove that if you leave nature to look after itself you will reap the benefits. Aquatic life has proven to be 10 times more successful in procreation in the unregulated ovens compared to the Goulburn and Campaspe rivers.

4 Lastly I don't believe the environmental flows are governed by the environmental needs but more by whether or not there is a charge on storage or a reduction of allocation if the water is not used. It does seem strange that for the last 2 years large environmental allocations have been sent down the river just prior to the end of the financial year. If all the bodies controlling the flow and water levels of the Goulburn River and Lake Eildon do not, cannot or will not work together in the best interest of our waterways then there is no future or point to environmental flows.

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