



Andrew Stoner MP
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Trade and Investment
Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 14 September 2012

CLOUD SEEDING TO BOOST SNOW ECONOMY

NSW Deputy Premier and Nationals Leader Andrew Stoner and Member for Monaro John Barilaro today announced the full operation of cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains, providing a welcome boost to the local economy and tourism.

Mr Stoner and Mr Barilaro made the announcement at Blue Cow in Perisher, where they were joined by Perisher CEO Peter Brulisauer and Snowy Hydro CEO Terry Charlton.

The announcement follows a trial cloud seeding program by Snowy Hydro since 2004 which demonstrated an average increase of 14 per cent in snowfall in the region. The NSW Government will soon introduce legislation to Parliament to allow ongoing cloud seeding to take place over the entire Snowy water catchment of 5,117 square kilometres.

“Ongoing cloud seeding is great news for tourism operators and communities in the Snowy Mountains,” Mr Stoner said.

“Full operation of cloud seeding is expected to improve snow depth and the length of the ski season, making the area more attractive to tourists.

“While this year we’ve seen the best season in the Snowy Mountains for a long time, we want to give local business every chance of bumper seasons in years to come, particularly as we appear to be moving into another El Niño cycle which is associated with an increased probability of drier conditions.

“Maintaining good snowfall will enhance the significant contribution alpine recreation makes to the local and NSW economy, and provide a boost to the many businesses which rely on the ski season and tourism.”

Mr Barilaro said cloud seeding is a weather modification technique which involves the introduction of a seeding agent into suitable clouds to encourage the formation and growth of ice crystals or raindrops, enhancing the precipitation falling from the cloud.

“Cloud seeding will also result in more consistent energy production and improved water security for irrigators and the environment,” Mr Barilaro said.

“With the expansion of the operational area, there is potential to increase the amount of extra precipitation produced by more than 50 per cent than was produced through the trial area.

“This is a big win for the NSW ski fields and the whole Monaro region.

"This will play a large role in fulfilling my commitment to make the NSW skifields number one again," Mr Barilaro said.

The Natural Resources Commission, which has monitored the cloud seeding trial, found no evidence that cloud seeding operations have had any adverse environmental impacts or that the chemicals used have accumulated in soils, sediments, water or moss.

The Government is committed to maintaining the high environmental integrity of the cloud seeding operations.

The forthcoming legislative changes include requirements for Snowy Hydro Limited to prepare and implement an Environmental Management Plan to be approved by the Government and regulatory oversight of cloud seeding operations by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr Stoner said the Snowy Mountains attracted more than 1.3 million visitors in the year to March 2012, injecting \$463 million into the local economy.

"The NSW Government, through Destination NSW, is committed to enhancing and promoting tourism opportunities in regional NSW including the Snowy Mountains," Mr Stoner said.

"Tourism plays a vital role in regional economies, with almost half of the 150,000 direct jobs in the State's tourism industry based in regional NSW.

"Last financial year Destination NSW contributed \$730,000 towards co-operative marketing campaigns, event funding and product development to boost tourism in the Snowy Mountains.

"Increasing visitation to regional NSW is a key component of the NSW Government's goal of doubling the State's overnight visitor expenditure by 2020."

MEDIA: Office of the Deputy Premier 9228 5209 | Monaro Electorate Office 6299 4899