



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment

ANDREW METCALFE AO
SECRETARY

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Senator the Hon David Fawcett
Chair
Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Parliament House
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Dear Senator Fawcett

Ahead of next week's Senate Estimates hearings, I am writing to draw the attention of your Committee to an unintentional omission in the 2021-22 Agriculture, Water and Environment Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS), and to provide advice about the matter.

The department has identified that a section of *Table 2.2.3: Budget expenses for Outcome 1*, on page 55 of the PBS was inadvertently omitted from the document tabled in Parliament on 11 May. The missing section of Table 2.2.3 describes the administered expenses for *Program 1.2: Environmental Information and Research*. I apologise on behalf of the department for this mistake.

I can assure you this was a publishing omission only; there are no funding implications for the program. Entities receive resources from the annual appropriations acts and special appropriations – not through information published in portfolio budget statements.

However, as the PBS facilitates understanding of proposed annual appropriations in Appropriation Bills (No 1 and No 2), it is important the omission is rectified.

The PBS has been reviewed and no further errors identified. All estimates for the portfolio in the financial statements tables and appropriation bills are accurate. Finally, the tables published on data.gov.au are correct (include Program 1.2 in Table 2.2.3) and available to the public.

I understand the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, will table the addendum in the Parliament shortly. The addendum – enclosed in this letter – will be a replacement page 55 to the PBS, including the omitted Program 1.2 administered expenses table.

I again apologise for any confusion caused by this unintentional error.

Best wishes


Andrew Metcalfe AO

Table 2.2.3: Budgeted expenses for Outcome 1 (continued)

	2020–21 Estimated actual \$'000	2021–22 Budget \$'000	2022–23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023–24 Forward estimate \$'000	2024–25 Forward estimate \$'000
Program 1.2: Environmental Information and Research					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)					
Australian Biological Resources Study	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030
Harry Butler Environment Education Centre	8,000	8,000	8,000	-	-
Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining	1,393	1,035	1,035	1,035	1,035
National Centre for Coasts, Environment and Climate	8,000	8,000	8,000	-	-
National Environmental Science Program	25,352	24,352	24,802	24,867	25,087
Total Program expenses	44,775	43,417	43,867	27,932	28,152
Program 1.3: Commonwealth Environmental Water					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)					
Commonwealth Environmental Water Office	52,064	44,127	45,322	46,548	47,808
<i>Less special account</i>	(52,064)	(44,127)	(45,322)	(46,548)	(47,808)
Murray-Darling Basin Environmental Knowledge and Research	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Administered total	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Special account					
Environmental Water Holdings Special Account	61,772	44,127	45,322	46,548	47,808
Total Program expenses	64,272	46,627	47,822	49,048	50,308
Program 1.4: Conservation of Australia's Heritage and Environment					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)					
Australian Heritage Grants Program	6,042	5,347	5,347	5,347	5,347
Administered total	6,042	5,347	5,347	5,347	5,347
Payments to corporate entities (Draw-down)^(b)					
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust	20,584	2,465	1,044	536	-
Payments to corporate entities total	20,584	2,465	1,044	536	-
Total Program expenses	26,626	7,812	6,391	5,883	5,347
Program 1.5: Environmental Regulation					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)					
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act – Water Resources Amendment</i>	518	259	259	259	259
Total Program expenses	518	259	259	259	259

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