

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2019

Cross Portfolio Murray Darling Basin Plan Matters

Environment and Energy Portfolio – Friday 25 October 2019

Question No	Program: Division or Agency	Senator	Title	Question	Proof Hansard Page & Hearing Date or In Writing	Comment
1	CEWO	Senator Patrick	Ecological state of the forest	<p>CHAIR: Senator Patrick, you've had a good go. Can we pass on the call. Lots of people have questions, so we'll come back to you.</p> <p>Senator PATRICK: Can you, on notice, please provide the reports in respect of the ecological state of the forest that you talked about before?</p> <p>Ms Swirepik: Yes, I'm happy to do that</p>	Page 24 Friday 25 October 2019	SQ19-000581
2	CEWO	Senator Davey	Water use South Australia	<p>Senator DAVEY: Is that reported anywhere publicly so that the public can have confidence that, indeed, when South Australia defers water their extractions are reduced by the same equivalence to ensure that what is your water actually stays your water?</p> <p>Mr Hilton Taylor: I think that is something I will have to take on notice as to where South Australia publishes their water use and things like that. We certainly have internal checks and balances now so we are increasingly confident that we can see where our water is being used and how it is being transferred through the system.</p> <p>Ms Swirepik: There might be a question that Mr Reynolds can answer. I think if they don't take their full entitlement there is a reduced amount from the 58 gigalitres, or whatever the formula is, every month. But, as far as I am</p>	Page 64 and 65 Friday 25 October 2019	SQ19-000582

				<p>aware, the South Australian government has chosen at this point in time to not to actually forward publish their deferral plan, because they see that as a strategic water security issue. We have been in discussions with them about whether that might be a good idea to provide that public transparency and I know that the South Australian government is also working on things including a possible application that would be on your phone where you could see what barrages are open, what they are doing and what the rationale is for the decisions that they are making.</p> <p>Mr Reynolds: When South Australia defers water, they can do this for the purpose of protecting critical human water needs or to provide for private carryover. When that happens there is a reduced monthly entitlement flow. We provide detail on that each week in our weekly report. The River Murray operations weekly report talks about the flow into South Australia and if there is any deferral.</p> <p>There is a different issue at play also, at the moment, though, with South Australia having less than their full entitlement flow. In those circumstances, South Australia needs to make a decision about when they take that reduced flow. If they were to take their full entitlement flow now and there wasn't an improvement in the resource position, they'd get to the peak through summer and wouldn't have sufficient water to meet their needs. What they would then do—it's not deferral—is: to request that MDBA deliver a reduced entitlement in the current month so that they would have water later in the season, based on their entitlement flow. If conditions were to improve, they wouldn't get to make up the water that they've elected not to take at this point in time, because they're not allowed to request more than their monthly entitlement flow defined in the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. That's what is happening in the current circumstances, but that is quite different from them deferring water and leaving it in storage under their storage right.</p>		
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3	CEWO	Senator Patrick	Water from overland flow licences	How does CEWH ensure that water from overland flow licences are protected from extraction further down the floodplain or downstream, if they flow into the river?	Written	SQ19-000600
4	CEWO	Senator Patrick	Legal recognition – water from overland flow licences	What legal recognition does CEWH have on water from overland flow licences outside the property where the overland flow licences are located?	Written	SQ19-000601
5	CEWO	Senator Patrick	Open letter from scientists on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan	<p>With reference to an open letter from scientists on Murray-Darling Basin Plan</p> <p>https://ingenium.eng.unimelb.edu.au/2019/07/19/an-open-letter-from-scientists-on-the-murray-darling-basin/</p> <p>How much has been paid in total to each of the following persons or entities since 2012 by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, MDBA or CEWH (including their predecessors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rob Vertessy - Michael Stewardson, The University of Melbourne - QJ Wang, The University of Melbourne - Angus Webb, The University of Melbourne - Andrew Western, The University of Melbourne - Rory Nathan, The University of Melbourne - John Langford, The University of Melbourne - Marcia Langton, The University of Melbourne - Neil Byron, University of Canberra - Ian Prosser, University of Canberra - Glen Walker, Grounded in Water - Ross Thompson, University of Canberra - Mike Grace, Monash University - Ian Rutherford, The University of Melbourne - Shane Brooks, Consulting Ecologist - Stuart Bunn, Griffith University - Fran Sheldon, Griffith University 	Written	SQ19-000602

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robyn Watts, Charles Sturt University - Justin Brookes, The University of Adelaide - Alison King, La Trobe University / Charles Darwin University - Skye Wassens, Charles Sturt University - Samantha Capon, Griffith University - Jennifer Hale, - CSIRO Land and Water - Australian Rivers Institute at Griffith University, - Melbourne School of Engineering at the University of Melbourne, - Institute of Applied Ecology at University of Canberra, - School of Environmental Sciences, Charles Sturt University, - School of Life Sciences, La Trobe University - the Centre for Freshwater Ecosystems, La Trobe University. - Grounded in Water, - Natural Capital Economics, - Global Change Advisory - UOM Commercial Ltd. - Alluvium - Barry Hart - Garry Smith - DG Consulting 		
6	CEWO	Senator Farrell	Monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many metres are currently in place in the Murray Darling Basin and where are they located. 2. How often does the department inspect metres. 3. How many times has data collected on water by the Bureau of Meteorology been provided to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Murray Darling Basin Authority or the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. Please provide a figure for the following: 	Written	SQ19-000603

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In the past month; b. In the past two months; c. In the past six months; and d. In the past year. <p>4. Please provide the volume of water across the entire Murray Darling Basin for the following years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2013 b. 2014 c. 2015 d. 2016 e. 2017 f. 2018 g. 2019 <p>5. Please provide the total volume of water allocated to licensee holders on average in the Murray Darling Basin for the following years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2013 b. 2014 c. 2015 d. 2016 e. 2017 f. 2018 g. 2019 		
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