



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Budget Estimates 2024–25  
Friday, 7 June 2024  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.01am until 4.30pm.

The committee called the following departments and agencies:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Inspector General of Water Compliance
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

The committee released:

- Geoscience Australia

Inspector General of Water Compliance (IGWC)

- Usage of the \$28.6 million allocated to the IGWC in the 2024-25 budget;
- Developments in Queensland to bring water measurement standards in line with IGWC requirements;
- 14 of 20 NSW water resource plans have been accredited with a further two being assessed;
- Installation and ownership of measurement equipment/facilities in states, notably Queensland; and
- Maintaining and improving community sentiment regarding the IGWC to help assist in engagement with the wider community.

Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC)

- ACCC progress on strengthening insider trading rules and making them more transparent; and
- ACCC interlocking responsibilities with the IGWC in relation to new regulations and future legislation that will affect the water market.

Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation

- Progress on the update and re-establishment of the Sustainable Rivers Audit following an increase in funding from the 2024-25 Budget; and
- Progress on the five modules for the Murray Darling Basin (MDB).

Outcome 4: Program 4.1, Murray Darling Basin Authority, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

- Greater South East Irrigation Scheme and decisions surrounding projects in Tasmania;
- Restoring our Rivers – funding utilised, draft framework, consultation with industry stakeholders;
- Funding spent on advertisement campaigns for the Murray Darling Basin Plan and concerns surrounding the use of images that are not from the MDB or are digitally altered;
- Issues surrounding the quality of drinking water within the MDB;

- Funding allocated to the Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program (RRWIP);
- Progress on and costings of water infrastructure construction projects in NSW;
- Water infrastructure programs in New South Wales and the accreditation process for those programs;
- Water infrastructure management for ensuring that the Warrego river continues to flow and remains connected to the Murray Darling river;
- Health of the Coorong basin due to higher levels of algae and salinity;
- Monies spent outside of relevant area to be funded. Migrating birds in relation to water sources;
- Arrangements surrounding using the water within the Snowy 2.0 Hydro Project as a contingency for low water levels in the upper Murrumbidgee river;
- Plan for the \$17 million to support water birds that were affected by flooding events;
- Steps that the Australian Capital Territory has taken to meet its water recovery obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan;
- Research on threats to the Macquarie perch in the Upper Murrumbidgee river;
- How the government intends to meet its yearly 100 gigalitre target of water that they wish to reclaim and how much of it comes from voluntary water purchases; and
- State of the Barmah Choke, and potential steps to be taken to mitigate the water loss over time that will happen due to the narrowing of the choke.