



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2024–25
Friday, 8 November 2024
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.02am to 1.14pm.

Inspector-General of Water Compliance (IGWC), Commenced at 9.00am, Concluded at 10.20am

- New IGWC inquiry into the Northern Basin Toolkit, a program designed to improve water management and environmental outcomes in the upper part of the Murray-Darling Basin.
- IGWC Audit into DCCEEW's water purchasing programs to ensure there was no misuse of information;
- Contaminated water flows in Queensland;
- IGWC collaboration and oversight of relevant state bodies;
- Cases undertaken by the IGWC, and how the IGWC measures performance regarding those cases; and
- IGWC yearly metering report.

DCCEEW Outcome 4, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, Murray Darling Basin Authority: Commenced at 10.20am, Suspended at 10.58am, Recommenced at 11.16am, Concluded at 1.14pm

- IGWC audit and the department's response to the findings;
- Pollutants in waterways, and the responsibilities of state bodies to manage them
- Travel undertaken by Murray-Darling Basin Authority staff;
- Water flows in the Murray Darling Basin;
- The National Water Agreement Draft, including how free prior and informed consent of Indigenous Australians factors into water decisions;
- Use of commonwealth environmental water to manage salinity in the Murray-Darling Basin;
- Bridging the Gap program – socioeconomic impacts from the water purchases. Current tender to obtain the remainder of the water required to meet the target;
- Large amounts of water that was used in South Australia, and the breakdown of the water that was reported on by the SA Government;
- Ways in which the Commonwealth Environmental Activities Framework achieves better environmental outcomes;
- The Goolwa Institute, investments and reporting. Dredging in the Goolwa area;
- Funding for the National Water Grid;
- Budget allocations for the future funding of the Murray Darling Basin Plan; and
- MDBA Constraints Roadmap.

Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Commenced at 2.02pm, Suspended at 3.26pm Recommenced at 3.41pm

- Provision of information to the committee;
- Dismissal case of a former BOM employee and BOM decision not to pursue an appeal of the Federal Court's decision in favour of the employee.
- Legal matters involving the BOM;

- Agency staffing levels;
- ROBUST Program funding;
- Contract extensions of ROBUST Program;
- BOM use of Comcover;
- Whistleblowing of agency staff;
- Australian Space Weather Forecasting Centre;
- The Australian Climate Service;
- Flood gauges and purchasing of them from the states;
- Budgeting and expenditure as it relates to the ROBUST system including staffing and administration; and
- New and improved weather forecasting.

The committee will be holding a spillover hearing at a yet to be determined date for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority