

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 167  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 4  
**Programme:** Science  
**Topic:** INDEPENDENT EXPERT SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE - FOUR RESEARCH PRIORITIES  
**Hansard Page:** 82  
**Question Date:** 20 October 2014  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Singh asked:**

**Senator SINGH:** An independent expert scientific committee has recommended four research priorities—hydrology, ecosystems, chemicals and cumulative impacts. Can you advise the committee how these recommendations will be acted upon?

**Dr Kennedy:** They are being acted upon, in a general sense, as part of the Office of Water Science's research program. Again, my apologies, as I let the officer who has the detail on this go. I can provide you with some detail around how each of those is being addressed within the Office of Water Science's research program. Perhaps that is the best way. They are all being pursued to varying degrees, but perhaps it would be better if I provided that information on notice.

**Answer:**

The Department has adopted the four research priorities recommended by the IESC.

The Office of Water Science has funded and published a range of reports, 16 in total, that address elements of the four research priorities on the Department's website.

In addition to the published work there are a number of ongoing activities in the Hydrology, Ecosystems and Water and Chemicals themes which will be published over the coming months. Cumulative impacts are a cross-cutting issue that will be informed by ongoing research in the three priority themes Hydrology, Ecosystems and Water, and Chemicals. The Bioregional Assessments will further inform our understanding of potential cumulative impacts of coal seam gas and large coal mining developments on water-dependent assets, through developing a framework for analysis and applying it in specific geographic areas.

The Office of Water Science is currently working with potential research partners on the details of new research under the Hydrology and Ecosystems and Water themes.