

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

Question No: 178
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Water
Topic: SDL ADJUSTMENT SUPPLY MEASURES
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Rhiannon asked:

Is the Department aware of the commentary in the Independent Review Panel report on the SDL adjustment 'environmental elements' methodology highlighting the risks associated with the concept of supply measures in delivering equivalent environmental outcomes? What is the Department's response to this assessment?

Answer:

Yes. Chapter 7 of the Basin Plan requires the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to determine that the supply contribution of notified measures result in equivalent environmental outcomes compared to the benchmark environmental outcomes.

The MDBA is conducting trials to test and validate the ecological elements methodology and the modelling framework that will underpin the operation of the Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Adjustment Mechanism in 2016.

The trial is taking into account the Independent Review Panel report and will fully test and quality assure the scoring method. Refinements to the scoring methodology will be made if the trial demonstrates that they are needed.