

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

Question No: 187
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Commonwealth Environmental Water Office
Topic: LAKE ALBERT
Hansard Page: 26
Question Date: 20 October 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Xenophon asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Can you take on notice whether there has been any assessment or scoping for any consideration given as to the likelihood of that water being fit for purpose for livestock at some time in the future or whether it is highly unlikely, given the state of play at the moment.

Senator Birmingham: I will certainly have a look at what extent that was considered during the review work that the SA government undertook.

Answer:

The impact of elevated salinity levels on the agricultural sector as a result of drought is considered as part of the Lake Albert Scoping Study Options Paper (the Scoping Study). The Scoping Study notes that current salinity levels are adequate to supply drinking water for dairy cattle, which is the primary agricultural activity in the region.

As of 20 November 2014 salinity in Lake Albert was averaging approximately 2300 EC. This is less than the maximum concentration for healthy growth for sheep, beef cattle, dairy cattle and horses, and less than the maximum concentration to maintain condition for pigs and poultry – as reported in the Scoping Study.