

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

Question No: 413
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: National Water Commission
Topic: USE OF RIVER MURRAY IN MINING PROJECTS
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

I recently met with a number of constituents in regional areas who are concerned about a number of proposed mining projects across South Australia impacting on the state's sustainable agricultural land.

A key concern relates to the proposed use of River Murray water for these projects. In open-cut mining processes there are considerable amounts of dewatering required. In particular, Rex Minerals Hillside mine project near Ardrossan on the Yorke Peninsula proposes 3.2 gigalitres per year from groundwater and 0.4 gigalitres per year from the SA Water pipeline.

What is the National Water Commission's position on the use of water, particularly River Murray water, in large scale mining projects?

Answer:

The Commission considers that water for extractive industries needs to be planned and managed by jurisdictions within National Water Initiative consistent regional water frameworks to mitigate impacts on other water users and the environment.

In regards to the use of River Murray water resources, extractions are capped under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and all water use must fall within those limits. As such, projects such as this will not cause any additional impacts on the River or its communities.