

**Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation  
Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 1  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** 1  
**Program:** Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO)  
**Topic:** Size of area in south-east of South Australia  
**Hansard Page:** 47  
**Question Date:** 26 May 2017  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Roberts asked:**

Senator ROBERTS: Turning to the south-east of South Australia, I understand that the water direction used to flow towards the Murray parallel to the coast and, since channels were or ditches were dug in the 1920s or 1930s—

Senator Ruston: Drains.

Senator ROBERTS: Drains. Thank you. That is the word. It goes straight to the ocean. Is that correct?

Mr Papps: Broadly speaking that is correct. You would have heard this morning—I think it was Mr Parker and his colleagues—talk about the expenditure of Commonwealth funds on a project in that area to address that issue. That is, water that used to flow through that system and make its way eventually partly into the Coorong had been modified by agricultural practices, and there is now a project looking at remediating that.

Senator ROBERTS: What is the size of that area in the south-east of South Australia? Someone said it is equivalent to Tasmania.

Mr Papps: I do not have those figures. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator ROBERTS: Okay. I would be interested in that.

**Answer:**

The Upper South East region of South Australia covers an area of approximately 680,000 hectares (6,800 square kilometres). The area of Tasmania, excluding islands, is 6,451,900 hectares (64,519 square kilometres).

The South East Flows Restoration project under the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Recovery Project, aims to divert additional water from the Upper South East region of South Australia into the Coorong South Lagoon to manage salinity in the lagoon, using a combination of natural watercourses, new and upgraded constructed flood-ways and drains. The works associated with this project commence at the Blackford Drain and continue approximately 90 kilometres to Salt Creek (Coorong South Lagoon).