

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 224

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Do complementary measures such as carp eradication and thermal pollution projects count towards the SDL adjustment? If so how?

**Answer:**

At present, complementary measures do not count towards the SDL adjustment. As requested by all Ministers at the Ministerial Council meeting on 22 April 2016, Basin Officials have been investigating the scope for complementary measures (such as fish ladders and other measures that boost native fish populations), to contribute triple bottom line benefits under the Basin Plan, including whether such measures might support an SDL Adjustment.

At the Ministerial Council meeting held on 18 November 2016, Ministers noted progress in developing these environmental projects. Acknowledging that much of this work is in its early stages, Ministers requested officials to provide the next Council meeting with further advice.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 225

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Is there a clear methodology for when they could contribute to SDL adjustment?

**Answer:**

There is no agreed methodology for determining the extent to which complementary measures might contribute to an adjustment to sustainable diversion limits (SDLs).

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 226

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Where would funding for complementary measures come from? Hasn't funding for carp eradication already been provided (for example)

**Answer:**

No decision has been made on funding for implementation of complementary measures. The \$15 million in funding for the National Carp Control Plan announced by the Government on 1 May 2016 is to develop a comprehensive plan for a potential release of Cyprinid herpesvirus (carp herpesvirus). Any funding provided for the release of the carp herpesvirus and any subsequent removal of dead carp from river systems will be determined following the completion of this plan.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question: 227**

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

What licences are in the Barwon-Darling? Are they pumping licenses?

**Answer:**

The department does not hold information on water access licences in the Barwon-Darling. This is a matter for the New South Wales state government. Information on the NSW Water Register can be found at <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-licensing/registers>.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 228

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

When were licences issued?

**Answer:**

The department does not hold information on water licences in the Barwon-Darling, known as the Barwon-Darling Unregulated Water source. This is a matter for the New South Wales state government. Information on the NSW Water Register can be found at <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-licensing/registers>.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 229

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

What is the commonwealth investment in increasing storage sizes for irrigators in the Barwon-Darling?

**Answer:**

The Commonwealth is investing in irrigation modernisation infrastructure projects on farms in the Barwon-Darling catchment. The projects deliver water savings by preventing leakages, evaporation and water loss. Funding of \$8 million is invested in the Barwon-Darling for projects that include installing lateral channels and pumping stations, upgrading channels, banks and dams; raising the height of a dam wall, re-battering channel banks, raising embankments and for storage construction. Following completion of a project, an irrigator is required to transfer at least 50 per cent of the water savings to the Commonwealth which is used for environmental watering to improve the health of the Murray Darling river and wetlands.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 230

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Complementary measures and the SDL

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Is it correct that under the existing arrangements, the Commonwealth has invested to recover water for contributions to the Barwon-Darling and the Lower Murray. Is it true that this water is extracted by irrigators under their licences? Do these licences need to be reviewed?

**Answer:**

The Commonwealth has invested in the recovery of water from the Barwon-Darling and the Lower Murray to bridge the gap to reach the Sustainable Diversion Limits for the Murray-Darling Basin, as set in the Basin Plan.

Overall water diversions for irrigated agriculture must remain within these Sustainable Diversion Limits, which take effect from July 2019. The Commonwealth is also working with state governments on a range of environmental measures to complement the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Water licencing is a matter for the New South Wales state government. State governments are responsible for metering, monitoring and compliance of rules associated with water access licences. Information on the NSW Water Register can be found at <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-licensing/registers>.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 231

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Greenhouse Feasibility Study

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator XENOPHON asked:**

Referring to a report “Storm-hit growers facing threat of foreign investors being allocated critical water supplies” in Adelaide’s Sunday Mail on 9th October that SA Water has commissioned a feasibility study into the development by a Spanish consortium that has plans to set up a hi-tech greenhouse (which will utilise 20 GL of water to produce and then flood the local market with an oversupply of produce like capsicum, cucumbers and tomatoes) in the Virginia, north of Adelaide:

Can the Department confirm that the feasibility study is being funded by the Federal feasible study funding announced by Senator Ruston at the Virginia Horticulture Centre in late May?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government announced on 27 May 2016 that it would provide funding of up to \$2.5 million to the Government of South Australia to undertake a feasibility study to determine the economic and engineering feasibility of expanding the Northern Adelaide Irrigation Scheme (NAIS). The feasibility study is being led by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia (PIRSA) who is working with SA Water to deliver the Commonwealth funded feasibility study. The outcomes of the Commonwealth funded feasibility study will be used by the Government of South Australian to inform its decision on the preferred option for future expansion of the NAIS. Water allocation decisions are a matter for the state government.



**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 232

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Greenhouse Feasibility Study

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator XENOPHON asked:**

If this project goes ahead, the 350 irrigators who operate in the region and spend their profits in the region may be forced from the market by a consortium that who will likely take the profits of their sale back to Spain to stimulate the European economy. Is this a factor that will be considered by government before any further funding is granted?

**Answer:**

Guidelines for capital funding applications were released by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister on 27 October 2016 and provide information on factors that will be considered by the Australian Government. The Guidelines for capital funding applications under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund are available at <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/water/national/national-water-infrastructure-development-fund>.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 233

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Greenhouse Feasibility Study

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator XENOPHON asked:**

When Commonwealth funding is being used to produce a feasibility project, can it place a requirement on the State Government to ensure the feasibility study examines broad and fair distribution this water resources?

a) If so, when will this be done?

**Answer:**

State and territory governments are responsible for the planning, management and allocation of water resources. Feasibility studies supported under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund must include a description of the proposed mechanisms for the allocation of new water arising from a potential infrastructure investment. This would include that water allocation mechanisms are open and transparent and consistent with the principles of the National Water Initiative.