

The Senate

Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2010–11

March 2011

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Membership of the Committee

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Additional Estimates 2010–11

Introduction

1.1 On 10 February 2011 the Senate referred the following documents to standing committees for examination and report:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2011 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2010–11],
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2011 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2010–11], and
- Final Budget Outcome 2009–10 and the Issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts for 2009–10.¹

1.2 Standing committees were required to report to the Senate on 23 March 2011.²

Hearings

1.3 The committee conducted public hearings with the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio on 21 February 2011, the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio on 21 and 22 February 2011 and the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio on 22 February 2011.

1.4 Written answers and information provided to the committee in response to questions on notice arising from the hearings are tabled in the Senate and posted on the Committee's web page.

1.5 Links to the transcripts of these public hearings and to answers and additional information are available on the Internet at:

www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec_ctte/estimates/add_1011/index.htm.

Questions on notice – date for response

1.6 In accordance with Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee agreed that the date for the return of written answers or additional information in response to questions placed on notice be Friday, 8 April 2011.

1.7 As in previous estimates reports, the committee again expresses its concern about the time taken to receive answers to questions taken on notice.

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 19, 10 February 2011, p. 581.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 14, 26 November 2010, pp 408–409.

1.8 The committee notes that it had set Friday, 3 December 2010 as the date for the return of answers to questions taken on notice during the Supplementary Budget Estimates held in October 2010. However, at that date there was a total of 290 answers outstanding to 505 questions on notice across the three portfolios, as follows:

- Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio, 117 of 181;
- Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio, 34 of 185; and
- Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio, 139 of 139.

1.9 Most of these late answers were submitted during the days prior to the Additional Estimates hearings and several senators expressed their concerns about their late arrival.³

1.10 The committee reiterates its expectation that answers to questions on notice will be provided to the committee by the due date.

Portfolio specific issues

1.11 On the first day of its examination of the 2010–11 Additional Estimates, the committee called and examined officers from the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (CCEE) and the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) portfolios.

1.12 The committee welcomed Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Finance and Deregulation, representing the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, the Hon Greg Combet MP.

1.13 During its examination, the committee raised a range of matters which are noted below. The page references beside each matter refer to the proof transcript for Monday, 21 February 2011.

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

1.14 General questions were asked of the department about:

- international negotiations on land use, land use change and forestry (pp 3–4)
- impact on departmental staff levels of the deferral of the carbon pollution reduction scheme (p. 5)
- Cyclone Yasi and relationship to climate change (pp 5–10)

3 See *Committee Hansard*, 22 February 2011, Senator Fisher, p. 57; Senator Macdonald, p. 58; and Senator Abetz, p. 80.

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- rising sea levels (pp 11–12).

1.15 At the conclusion of general questions, the committee called agencies and departmental officers in relation to Outcome 1, Reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Matters raised included:

- increase in transport emissions (pp 12–14)
- definition of emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries, compared with the European scheme (pp 14–16)
- impact on electricity prices of the proposed carbon price and the renewable energy target (pp 16–18)
- greenhouse benefits of gas relative to coal (pp 20–21)
- travel behaviour change programs (pp 21–22)
- establishment of the Climate Commission (pp 22–37)
- reporting of facility-by-facility based greenhouse gas emissions (pp 38–39)
- introduction of the Carbon Farming Initiative (pp 39–41)
- revised projections compared with the previously proposed CPRS (pp 41–47)
- newspaper reports on an Australian Industry Group study impacts of a carbon price (pp 45, 46, 50–51, 55, 56)
- global pricing and carbon (pp 47–50)
- Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) created under the Renewable Energy Target scheme (pp 51–53)

1.16 Officers from the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator were called and examined in relation to the increased number of RECs being declared invalid (pp 53–54) and the number of SRECs expected to be created in the current year (pp 54–55).

1.17 Officers were called and examined in relation to Outcome 2, Improving Australia's Energy Efficiency. Matters raised included:

- Home Insulation Program (HIP) (pp 57–63)
- Home Insulation Safety Program (HISP) (pp 63–73)
- instances of fraud (p. 68) and claims for compensation (pp 71–72) under HIP
- making building more energy efficient (pp 72, 73, 74–76)
- Green Loans and Green Start schemes (pp 76–78)
- solar rebate scheme payments (p. 78)
- Cleaner Car Rebate scheme (p. 79).

1.18 Officers were called and examined in relation to Outcome 3, Adapting to Climate Change. Matters raised included:

- departmental advice relating to the proposed citizens assembly (pp 79–80).

1.19 Officers were called and examined in relation to Outcome 4, Helping to shape a global climate change solution. Matters raised included:

- international strategies to achieve emission reduction targets (pp 80–81)
- Australian participation in international working groups (p. 81).

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) portfolio

1.20 At the conclusion of its examination of the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio, the committee called and examined officers from the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio.

1.21 The committee welcomed Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water, representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP.

1.22 General questions were asked of the department about SEWPaC's involvement in the new Climate Commission (pp 85–86).

1.23 The committee called agencies and departmental officers in relation to Outcome 1, The conservation and protection of Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems through supporting research, developing information, supporting natural resource management, regulating matters of national environmental significance and managing Commonwealth protected areas.

Office of Supervising Scientist

Matters raised included:

- installation of monitoring points at uranium mining operations sites in Kakadu (pp 87, 90, 91 and 92)
- impact of above average rainfalls at the Ranger mine site (pp 87–88)
- maximum operating level of the tailings storage facility (p. 88)
- status of the proposed heat leach and release of the heat leach EIS (pp 88–89)
- seepage from the Range tailings facility (pp 89–90)

Director of National Parks

Matters raised included:

- impact of reduced funding for Caring for our Country on the National Reserve System (NRS) program (p. 93)
- recommendations for purchases to add to the NRS (pp 93–94)
- status of the review of the Caring for our Country program (p. 94)
- implementation of recommendations of the expert working group report on Christmas Island (pp 95–96)

Bureau of Meteorology

Matters raised included:

- Cyclone Yasi's damage on Willis Island (pp 97–98)
- visits to the BoM website during December/January (p. 98)
- staffing levels at regional stations (p. 100)
- Director's response to matters raised in Cardinal Pell's letter relating to climate science, tabled during the Supplement Budget Estimates hearing in October 2010 (pp 100–105)⁴
- instruments and devices used around Australia to measure weather events (pp 105–108)

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Matters raised included:

- impacts of Cyclone Anthony and Cyclone Yasi on the reef (pp 109–110)
- role of GBRMPA in the talisman Sabre exercises (pp 110–111)
- access by super yacht operators to tourist sites (pp 111–112)

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Matters raised included:

- appoint of board members (pp 112–113)

4 See *Committee Hansard*, 18 October 2010, pp 143–145 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commtee/S13298.pdf>.

1.24 Officers were called and examined in relation to Program 1.1, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. Matters raised included:

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Structural Adjustment Package (pp 113–114)
- baiting on Macquarie Island (pp 114–116).

1.25 The chair welcomed Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP. Questioning continued.

1.26 Officers were called and examined in relation to Program 1.2, Environment Regulation, Information and Research. Matters raised included:

- status of the dieback threat abatement plan (p. 116)
- draft plans for the bioregional marine parks, funding for developing and finalising and the consultation process (pp 116–119)
- removal of bunds at Narrung in the Lower Lakes (p. 119)⁵
- status of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (pp 120–121).

1.27 Officers were called and examined in relation to Program 2.1, Reduction in management of waste, hazardous substances, pollutants, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gasses. Matters raised included:

- update on the national stewardship scheme (p. 121)
- proposed recycling rates target amounts (p. 121)

1.28 Officers were called and examined in relation to Outcome 3, Program 3.1, Antarctic science, policy and presence. Matters raised included:

- additional funding for international legal action (pp 121–122)
- current research projects (p. 122).

1.29 Officers were called and examined in relation to Outcome 6, Program 6.1, Affordable Housing. Matters raised included:

- status of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (pp 122–124)
- status of the National Housing Supply Council (pp 122–124)
- numbers and sites of vacant dwellings and residential vacancies in Australian capital cities (p. 123)

5 See correspondence between the SA Department of Environment and Natural Resources and DSEWPaC, dated 14 February 2011, re Update regarding Lake Albert management – Bund removal, tabled 22 February 2011, at Appendix 2.

-
- housing aspects of the Building Better Regional Cities program (pp 124–125).

1.30 Due to time constraints, Outcomes 5 and 7, relating to the conservation and protection of Australia's Heritage were not called. The Chair indicated that questions about these outcomes would be put on notice.

1.31 On the second day of hearings, the committee continued its examination of the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio, commencing with agencies and departmental officers in relation to Outcome 4, Adaptation to climate change, wise water use, secure water supplies and improved health of rivers, waterways and freshwater ecosystems by supporting research, and reforming the management and use of water resources.

1.32 The page references beside each matter below refer to the proof transcript for Tuesday, 22 February 2011.

1.33 The committee welcomed Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water, representing the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP, and officers.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

Matters raised included:

- changes to the membership of the authority and proposed new committees (pp 4–8)
- timing of the Basin Plan process, release of the draft Basin Plan (pp 8–14)
- requirements for adopting the proposed final basin plan (p. 14)
- release of the guide to the Basin plan (pp 15–18)
- issue of stranded assets, Productivity Commission working paper *Stranded Irrigation Assets* (pp 19–21)
- criteria for determining water requirements (pp 21–24)
- legal advice provided to the Authority (pp 24–29)
- impact of flood events in Queensland and Victoria on the Basin plan (p. 31)
- issue of early adopters of water saving measures undertaken without the benefit of the infrastructure fund and the water plan (p. 32)
- extra funding to assist with Basin planning activities (p. 34).

1.34 Officers were called and examined in relation to Program 4.1, Water Reform. Matters raised included:

- future role of the National Water Commission which terminates on 30 June 2012 (p. 34)
- review of the National Water Initiative (pp 34–35)
- reallocation of funds from the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (pp 35–36)
- progress of the water purchase program (pp 37–47)

National Water Commission

Matters raised included:

- outline of the public consultation process as part of the 2011 biennial assessment of the National Water Initiative (p. 49)
- state of the Moonie River system in Queensland and the Gwydir system (pp 49–50).

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio

1.35 At the conclusion of its examination of the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio, the committee called and examined officers from the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio.

1.36 The committee welcomed Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

1.37 During its examination, the committee raised a range of matters which are noted below. The page references beside each matter refer to the proof transcript for Tuesday, 22 February 2011.

1.38 General questions were asked of the department. Matters raised included:

- additional funding for legal fees (pp 53–54)
- contractors used to assist with the appointment of the NBN board and an NBN chair (pp 54–55)
- consultancies awarded to McKinsey (pp 55–56)
- process for determining board appointment and remuneration (pp 56–57)
- late return of answers to questions on notice from the Supplementary Budget estimates round in October 2010 (pp 57–8)
- safety and security in the online environment (p. 60).

1.39 Questioning commenced in relation to Outcome 1, Development of a vibrant, sustainable and internationally competitive broadband, broadcasting and communications sector, through policy development, advice and program delivery, which promotes the digital economy for all Australians.

Australia Post

Matters raised included:

- security checks undertaken prior to employing staff or engaging licensees, franchisees or community agents (p. 63)
- assistance provided to flood affected licensed post offices and mail contractors (pp 63–64)
- fees paid to AQIS for quarantine checks (p. 65)
- post office closures, for example Milton Post Office in Brisbane and Glebe Post Office, Sydney, and workforce issues (pp 66–70)
- mail delivery services required under the community service obligation (p. 71)
- criteria for selecting women for the 2011 living legends stamp series (pp 72–76)
- e-services provided by Australia Post (p. 76)
- status of the facility nominated doctors program (p. 77)
- Indigenous employment levels in Australia Post (pp 78–79)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

Matters raised included:

- delay in providing answers to questions on notice (p. 80)
- selection of audience members for *Q & A* (pp 80–81)
- examples of anti-Israel bias (pp 81–83)
- use of Twitter accounts (pp 83–84)
- amount of local content on the new 7.30 program (pp 87–88)
- update on the audio description trial (p. 88)
- percentage of ABC 1 on-air time dedicated to first-run Indigenous content (p. 89)
- departmental savings identified as distribution and transmission efficiencies jointly with SBS (pp 90–91)
- amount of Australian content shown on ABC 3 (p. 91)
- progress of ABC Open (pp 91–92)

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

The Director made a brief opening statement. SBS was then released without questioning.

Matters raised included:

- review of Al-Manar programming (pp 93–95)
- impact of convergence on the regulation of the communications sector (p. 95)

1.40 Officers from the department were called and examined in relation to Program 1.2, Telecommunications, Online and Postal Services. Matters raised included:

- internet filtering (pp 95–98)

1.41 Officers from the department were called and examined in relation to Program 1.3, Broadcasting and Digital Television. Matters raised included:

- VAST satellite platform (pp 98–100, 101–102)
- progress on the anti-siphoning list (pp 100–101)

1.42 *NBN Co* was then called. After Mr Quigley, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Chairman, made a statement about progress of the NBN project (pp 102–105), questioning commenced. Matters raised included:

- broadband versus wireless (pp 105–107, 118–119)
- establishment of a joint parliamentary committee on the National Broadband Network (pp 108–110, 114)
- NBN construction costs, including wages and conditions (pp 110–114)
- provision of NBN services in Tasmania (pp 114–117)
- take-up rate in Townsville (p. 117)
- access to Telstra infrastructure (pp 121–122,)
- infrastructure in fringe developments and greenfields estates (pp 122–123)
- state of discussions around the universal service obligation, and the establishment of the proposed USO Co (pp 123–124, 136)
- effects of power failures on the network and use of battery backup (pp 123–126)
- take up rate in Brunswick, Victoria (pp 126–129)
- operation of the Telstra copper network (pp 130–132, 137)
- provision of services to remote communities (p. 137)
- discussions between NBN Co and energy utilities concerning potential access to their facilities and providing services to them(p. 138)
- negotiations with Telstra (pp 139–141).

Acknowledgements

1.43 The committee thanks Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Finance and Deregulation; Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water, and Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, along with officers from the three portfolio departments and agencies, for their assistance during this additional estimates process.

Senator Doug Cameron
Chair

Appendix 1

The Senate BUSINESS OF COMMITTEES

This document is issued as a guide to Senators
Business listed is subject to change

It should be noted that times allocated for the consideration of outcomes, items and agencies within portfolios are indicative only.

Senators, staff and departments should liaise with secretariats on the progress of portfolios during the estimates process.

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS Legislation Committee

Public Hearings: Additional Estimates for 2010-11

Monday, 21 and Tuesday, 22 February 2011

Committee Room 2S3
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

*To be televised on Channel 11 and broadcast on Radio 91.1 and
<http://webcast.aph.gov.au>*

AGENDA

MONDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2011

	Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Portfolio
	Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE)
9.00 am	General questions of the Department
	Outcome 1: Reduction of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and negotiation of an effective global solution, through the development and implementation of a national response to climate change; and bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement internationally
	<i>Program 1.1: Reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions</i>
	<i>Program 1.2: Improving Australia's Energy Efficiency</i>
	<i>Program 1.3: Adapting to Climate Change</i>
	<i>Program 1.4: Helping to shape a global climate change solution</i>

	<p>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator Outcome 1: Administer and regulate the national Renewable Energy Target scheme to encourage increased renewable electricity generation <i>Program 1.1: Renewable Energy Certificate Management</i> <i>Program 1.2: Managing Compliance with Legislation</i></p>
7.00 pm approx	<p>Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Portfolio</p>
	<p>Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC)</p>
	<p>General questions of the Department</p>
	<p>Outcome 1: The conservation and protection of Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems through supporting research, developing information, supporting natural resource management, regulating matters of national environmental significance and managing Commonwealth protected areas</p>
	<p>Office of Supervising Scientist</p>
	<p>Director of National Parks Outcome 1: Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves through the provision of safe visitor access, the control of invasive species and working with stakeholders and neighbours <i>Program: Parks and Reserves</i></p>
	<p>Bureau of Meteorology Outcome 1: Informed safety, security, and economic decisions by Governments, industry, and the community through the provision of information, forecasts, services and research relating to weather, climate and water <i>Program 1.1: Bureau of Meteorology</i> <i>Program 1.2: Modernisation and Extension of Hydrological Monitoring Systems</i></p>
	<p>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Outcome 1: The long-term protection, ecologically sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef for all Australians and the international community, through the care and development of the Marine Park <i>Program 1.1: Improving the outlook for the Great Barrier Reef</i></p>
	<p>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Outcome 1: Enhanced appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural values of Sydney for all visitors, through the remediation, conservation and adaptive re-use of, and access to, Trust lands on Sydney Harbour <i>Program 1.1: Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Business</i></p>
	<p><i>Program 1.1: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources</i></p>
	<p><i>Program 1.2: Environmental Regulation, Information and Research</i></p>

	Outcome 2: Improved capacity of Australian communities and industry to protect the environment by promoting waste reduction and regulating hazardous substances, wastes, pollutants, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases
	<i>Program 2.1: Reduction and management of wastes, hazardous substances, pollutants, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases</i>
	Outcome 3: Advancement of Australia's strategic, scientific, environmental and economic interests in the Antarctic by protecting, administering and researching the region
	<i>Program 3.1: Antarctic Science, Policy and Presence</i>
	Outcome 6: Advance the sustainability of Australia's population, communities and environment through coordination and development of sustainable population and communities policies and supporting affordable housing⁶
	<i>Program 6.1: Affordable Housing</i>
	Outcome 5: Participation in, and access to, Australia's culture and heritage through developing and supporting cultural expression, and protecting and conserving Australia's heritage⁷ Outcome 7: Increase protection, awareness and appreciation of Australia's heritage through the identification, conservation and celebration of natural, indigenous and historic places of national and World Heritage significance
	<i>Program 5.2: Conservation and Protection of Australia's Heritage</i> <i>Program 7.1: Conservation and Protection of Australia's Heritage</i>
<u>TUESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2011</u>	
	<i>In continuation</i> Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Portfolio (SEWPaC)
9.00 am	Outcome 4: Adaptation to climate change, wise water use, secure water supplies and improved health of rivers, waterways and freshwater ecosystems by supporting research, and reforming the management and use of water

⁶ The SEWPaC Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements, at p. 39, states "Outcome 6 is a new Outcome resulting from the Machinery of Government Change, with Housing moving from the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Population from the Department of the Treasury".

⁷ The SEWPaC Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements, at pp 38-39, states "the Arts and Culture Program 5.1 in Outcome 5 has been transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as a result of the Machinery of Government Changes. Due to the timing of the Machinery of Government Changes and the reporting requirements, all funding appropriated in the 2010-11 Portfolio Budget Statements remains in Outcome 5 for this Additional Estimates process and is reported in these statements. Additions or changes to Program 5.2 appropriations since the 2010-11 Budget, and estimates for the forward years, are reported in these statements as new Outcome 7: Conservation and Protection of Australia's Heritage".

	resources
	<p>Murray-Darling Basin Authority</p> <p>Outcome 1: Equitable and sustainable use of the Murray-Darling Basin by governments and the community including through development and implementation of a Basin Plan, operation of the River Murray system, shared natural resource management programs, research, information and advice</p> <p><i>Program 1.1: Equitable and sustainable use of the Murray-Darling Basin</i></p>
	Program 4.1: Water Reform
	<p>National Water Commission</p> <p>Outcome 1: Informed decisions by governments on national water issues, and improved management of Australia's water resources, through advocacy, facilitation and independent advice</p> <p><i>Program 1.1: Water Reform</i></p>
2.00 pm approx	Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
	Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE)
	General questions of the department
	Outcome 1—Develop a vibrant, sustainable and internationally competitive broadband, broadcasting and communications sector, through policy development, advice and program delivery, which promotes the digital economy for all Australians
	Australia Post
	<p>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</p> <p>Outcome 1: Informed, educated and entertained audiences—throughout Australia and overseas—through innovative and comprehensive media and related services</p> <p><i>Program 1.1: ABC Radio</i></p> <p><i>Program 1.2: ABC Television</i></p> <p><i>Program 1.3: Online</i></p> <p>Outcome 2: Audience access to ABC satellite and analog terrestrial radio and television transmission services is, at a minimum, maintained year-on-year through the management of Transmission Service Agreements</p> <p><i>Program 2.1: ABC Analog Transmission</i></p> <p>Outcome 3: Audience access to ABC digital television services is provided, in accordance with Government approved implementation policy, through the roll-out and maintenance of the associated distribution and transmission infrastructure</p> <p><i>Program 3.1: Access to Digital Television Services</i></p> <p>Outcome 4: Audience access to ABC digital radio services is provided, in accordance with Government approved implementation policy, through the rollout and maintenance of the associated distribution and transmission infrastructure</p> <p><i>Program 4.1: Access to Digital Radio Services</i></p>
	<p>Special Broadcasting Service</p> <p>Outcome 1: Provide multilingual and multicultural services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and in so doing reflect Australia's</p>

	multicultural society <i>Program 1.1: Television</i> <i>Program 1.2: Radio</i> <i>Program 1.3: Analogue Transmission and Distribution</i> <i>Program 1.4: Digital Television Transmission and Distribution</i> <i>Program 1.5: Digital Radio Transmission and Distribution</i>		
	Australian Communications and Media Authority Outcome 1: A communications and media environment that balances the needs of the industry and the Australian community through regulation, education and advice <i>Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing</i> <i>Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information</i>		
	<i>Program 1.2: Telecommunications, Online and Postal Services</i>		
	<i>Program 1.3: Broadcasting and Digital Television</i>		
	NBN Co		
	<i>Program 1.1: Broadband and Communications infrastructure</i>		
11.00 pm	Adjournment		
BREAKS	Morning tea	10.45 am approx	
	Lunch	1.00 pm	2.00 pm
	Afternoon tea	3.45 pm approx	
	Dinner	6.00 pm	7.00 pm
	Tea break	9.00 pm approx	

Appendix 2

Tabled documents

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

Response to Senator Birmingham from Mr Comley, Acting Secretary, DCCEE, dated 22 February 2011, re the administered expenditure for the Home Insulation Program for 2010–11.

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Copy of correspondence between the SA Department of Environment and Natural Resources and DSEWPaC, dated 14 February 2011, re Update regarding Lake Albert management – Bund removal



Australian Government
Department of Climate Change
and Energy Efficiency

Mr Blair Comley
Acting Secretary

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Committee Secretariat
Environment and Communications Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

At yesterday's Additional Estimates Hearing for the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio, Senator Birmingham asked several questions of the Department relating to expenditure on the Home Insulation Program, Home Insulation Safety Program and Foil Insulation Program.

The following response should be provided to Senator Birmingham:

'In accordance with the Department's 2010-11 Portfolio Additional Estimates the administered expenditure for the Home Insulation Program is projected to be \$438.4m for the 2010-11 financial year. Note that this encapsulates expenditure for the Home Insulation Program, Home Insulation Safety Program and Foil Insulation Safety Program'.

Yours sincerely

Blair Comley
22 February 2011




thinkchange

GPO Box 854 Canberra ACT 2601. Tel: 02 6159 7000 www.climatechange.gov.au



Ref: LL/11/0095

14 February 2011

→ Con Voutas
 21/2

Barbara Jones
 Assistant Secretary
 Environment Assessment Branch
 Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
 GPO BOX 787
 CANBERRA ACT 2601

Coorong, Lower Lakes and
 Murray Mouth Program

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www.environment.sa.gov.au

Attention: Mr Con Voutas / Ms Katrina Daniels

Dear Ms Jones *Barbara,*

Update regarding Lake Albert Management – Bund removal - Non-referral letter

In September 2010, the South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forwarded correspondence regarding proposals for Lake Albert management in 2010/2011 to the former Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. It discussed breaching of the Narrung Bund, establishment of the Meningie Lakefront Habitat Restoration Project and limestone dosing. Receipt of the correspondence was acknowledged on 10 September 2010. Establishment of the Meningie Lakefront Habitat Restoration Project is proceeding. Limestone dosing has not been required in Lake Albert for acidification treatment during the 2010/11 year to date. Water quality monitoring is continuing and limestone treatment plans remain in place to respond to any risks of acidification as may be required.

The Narrung Bund was engineered as a temporary structure to avert acidification in Lake Albert by maintaining water levels above critical levels during a time of low River Murray inflows. It originally comprised around 43,000m³ of homogenous sand fill sourced from local sites and was around 280m in length and 180m in width. In mid-September 2010, with rapidly improved water availability and higher water levels being experienced in Lake Alexandrina, the Bund was breached by excavating a section of approximately 100m in length of variable depth from the structure to allow improved water levels and salinity reductions in Lake Albert.

With the Murray-Darling Basin having now experienced its wettest year on record and the latest MDBA predictions indicating that water levels in the Lake Alexandrina will remain above 0.0m until at least the next water year, the SA Government is now planning to fully remove the Narrung Bund (in addition to the other 2010/2011 management actions outlined in previous correspondence).

After consideration of a range of methods for removal, it is intended that the Bund will be fully removed through the removal of the sand materials used to construct the Bund and placement of the mudwaves arising from the Bund back into the dredged void.

The process for removal of the Bund will involve the following stages:

1. *Removal of the sheet piles in the Bund*
This stage should take around 2 weeks to complete.
2. *Excavate imported materials*
This stage should take around 6-8 weeks to complete. Excavated sand will be tested and treated in accordance with South Australian Environment Protection Authority fill requirements and deposited at a local land holder's station (by agreement). The disposal site is a salt scalded area on a pastoral station that does not give rise to native vegetation concerns.
3. *Dredging in channel*
Dredging would take place once excavation has been completed and sediments remaining underwater have settled. Follow up bathymetric surveys of the Narrung Narrows will determine the extent of any future dredging work required to return the site to pre-construction conditions in a timely manner.

Subject to funding and approvals, removal of the sheet piles could commence as soon as late February 2011.

A self-assessment by the SA Government, outlined in Attachment A, has found that the removal of the Narrung Bund is unlikely to result in any significant negative impacts upon matters of NES.

Yours sincerely

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**Self-assessment of impacts upon Matters of National Environmental Significance
(using primary determinants of ecological character in the Ramsar site)**

PRIMARY DETERMINANT OF ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER	IMPACT OF REMOVAL OF THE NARRUNG BUND
SALINITY	<p>Prior to drought conditions, salinity was, on average, less than 700 EC in Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) and less than 1 600 EC in Lake Albert (at Meningie). Salinity in Lake Alexandrina has now decreased to pre-drought conditions, with the measurements on 3 February 2011 ranging between 300-600 EC. By late summer 2009, salinity in Lake Albert approached 20 000 EC. Since the breach, salinity has reduced but remains variable around 6 000-7000 EC, with Meningie recording nearly 7 600 EC on 3 February. [NB seawater has a salinity in the order of 60 000 EC.]</p> <p>Figure 1 below provides a map of the locations mentioned here.</p> <p>Removal of the bund will more fully reconnect Lake Albert to Lake Alexandrina via the Narrung Narrows and thus provide for improved salinity exchange relative to the breached bund remaining in place. The removal of the remaining bund will maximise water quality improvement within the pre-existing constraints on water exchange naturally imposed by constrictions in the Narrung Narrows. It is expected that it will still take some time for salinity levels to fully reduce to historical levels. Given the scale of Lake Alexandrina relative to Lake Albert, salinity entering from Lake Albert can be expected to have very little impact on Lake Alexandrina. High flows currently passing through the lakes will dilute salinity, aid in the discharge of the salt from Lake Albert using managed variable lake levels, and support the release of salinity from both lakes through barrage releases.</p> <p>A positive impact is expected.</p>

TURBIDITY AND SEDIMENTATION	<p>Lake Albert historically experiences higher sedimentation rates and turbidity than other areas of the Lower Lakes. Temporary and localised increases in turbidity and sedimentation may be experienced during the removal process; however these are not expected to be significant and will also be managed in accordance with South Australian EPA requirements.</p> <p>No significant negative impact is expected.</p>
KEYSTONE AQUATIC PLANT SPECIES	<p>Keystone aquatic plant species in the Narrung Narrows and fringing areas of the lake, particularly reedbeds of <i>Typha domingensis</i> and <i>Phragmites australis</i>, may be temporarily impacted by potential temporary increased turbidity and sedimentation, although Lake Albert sedimentation rates in the lake are historically higher than in other areas of the Ramsar site. However, overall, these species will benefit from decreased salinity levels below 5 000 EC.</p> <p>A positive impact is expected.</p>
WATER LEVELS	<p>Water levels between Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert equalised in October 2010 following the breach of the Narrung Bund. Full removal of the bund will retain equal levels.</p> <p>No impact is expected.</p>
HABITAT CONNECTIVITY	<p>Full removal will further improve hydrological connectivity between Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, supporting fish movements and seed dispersal.</p> <p>A positive impact is expected.</p>
WATER REGIME, PARTICULARLY FLOW PATTERNS	<p>Removal of the bund will fully reconnect Lakes Alexandrina and Albert and as such will reinstate the historical flow regime. Full reconnection of both waterbodies will improve flows between the lakes, including the effects of wind seiche - an important driver of ecological character.</p> <p>A positive impact is expected.</p>

Figure 1: Location Map with ambient water quality monitoring sites

Ambient Water Quality Monitoring

