

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA **Question No:** 93

Topic: Basin Plan testing committee

Proof Hansard Page and Date 60-61 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

(page 60)

Senator BIRMINGHAM: ... Is there a duration of appointment for this committee, or is it expected that it only lasts up until finalisation of the draft Basin Plan or finalisation of the Basin Plan?

Mr Freeman: I would have to refer back to the instrument of appointment. I cannot recall. I could take that on notice.

...

Senator BIRMINGHAM: You do not know whether this committee will continue after the draft Basin Plan is released?

Mr Freeman: I am not sure of the term of engagement of the testing committee. I would have to have a look at the instrument of appointment.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: If somebody is able to provide us with that answer while we are going along, because we are here for a few hours, that would be helpful. ...

Answer:

The current instrument of appointment for the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority does not specify a set term of engagement. The Committee and its membership can be terminated by written instrument.

No decision on the continuation of the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee beyond the end of the 2010-11 financial year has been made.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA **Question No:** 094

Topic: Resignation of Mr Cosier

Proof Hansard Page and Date 62, 64 and 65 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

(page 62)

Senator BIRMINGHAM: How many of the meetings had Mr Cosier attended before he resigned?

Mr Freeman: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Did Mr Cosier provide a written statement of departure? To whom did he resign?

Mr Freeman: Again, I would have to take that on notice. I believe there may have been an email exchange but I need to check.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Do you know who that email exchange may have been with?

Mr Freeman: I believe it was with the chair; however, I would rather take it on notice and make sure I gave an accurate answer.

...

(page 64)

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Did Mr Cosier give reasons for his resignation when he departed the testing committee?

Mr Freeman: I would have to take that on notice so that I could actually look at the form of his resignation. As I indicated in a previous answer, I do need to check the form of his resignation and what he said in that.

...

(page 65)

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Is there a technical reason why you could not get the email to us today, Mr Freeman?

...

Senator Conroy: As I said, I will take that on notice and see if the minister has anything he would like to add.

...

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Had the changes to the policies that the authority is applying been presented to the testing committee at any of its meetings prior to 29 April?

Dr MacLeod: Not to my recollection, Senator.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: No? So those changes came subsequent to Mr Cosier's resignation?

Dr MacLeod: In terms of the policy proposals, the authority has been considering these over a period of time. I am not able to provide details of when they may have resolved these matters and its relationship to the date of 29 April. I would have to refer back and again take it on notice to provide you with a specific answer on the interaction of those dates.

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

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Answer:

Mr Cosier attended four meetings of the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee prior to his resignation.

Mr Cosier wrote to the Hon Craig Knowles, Chair of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on 29 April 2011 to resign (letter attached).

The reason for Mr Cosier's resignation is set out in his letter of 29 April 2011.

No draft Authority policy decisions were presented to the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee prior to 29th April.

WENTWORTH GROUP

OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

29 April 2011

Dear Craig

I am greatly disappointed that the Board has rejected our recommendation for an independent science accreditation panel to peer review any changes to the science from that described in the Guide released late last year.

The purpose of the Basin Plan is to implement the 2007 Water Act. That act requires the Basin Plan to identify a means of returning over-allocated rivers to sustainable levels of extraction. That outcome, by definition, must be based on the best available science.

We have been told in recent weeks that there are major changes proposed to the scientific methodology in the draft Basin Plan, and that those changes in methodology will result in a significant reduction in the environmental flow requirements to those described in the Guide released late last year.

The great innovation of the National Water Initiative in 2004 was to restore the health of the river systems across the Murray Darling Basin, whilst at the same time using water reform as an opportunity to modernise irrigated agriculture in Australia.

The Wentworth Group remains committed to this dual outcome, but we cannot continue to support a process that is not based on independent, peer reviewed science.

Through the Commonwealth Parliament in 2007, over \$10 billion of tax payers money has been appropriated to drive this reform. The Murray Darling Basin Plan presents a once in a generation opportunity to modernise irrigated agriculture and restore the health of the river systems across this vast river basin.

Such an opportunity will not present itself again.

It would be a public scandal if \$10 billion of public funding did not deliver a healthy and productive river system.

A draft Basin Plan that has not been subjected to an open, transparent and independent peer review process to accredit the quality of this new science will not have any credibility.

It is with regret therefore, that given the Authority's rejection of our request, I am unable to continue to participate on the Basin Testing Committee.

Yours sincerely



Peter Cosier

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 95

Topic: Work undertaken by KPMG

Proof Hansard Page and Date 87 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE: When they provide you with an invoice, do they provide you with billing hours and what they have actually done.

Dr McLeod: I do not have that information to hand.

Senator JOYCE: How about, Mr Nicholas?

Mr Nicholas: Typically you would get an invoice with billing hours, yes. It would identify the number of hours that were undertaken by each of the parties to the contract.

Senator JOYCE: What are they billing out at?

Mr Nicholas: I do not have that information with me, I am sorry. They would have hourly rates based on their expertise.

Senator JOYCE: I bet they have hourly rates.

Mr Nicholas: Yes, they do. That is standard for consultancies.

Senator JOYCE: Can you give an example of what sort of hourly rate that would be?

Mr Nicholas: I do not have those details with me in relation to that contract, so I think it would not be appropriate to speculate about what they might be. We would need to look at the contract.

Senator JOYCE: Can you take that on notice?

Mr Nicholas: We can take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

The KPMG consulting fee for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) ranges between \$237.00 and \$528.00 per hour (inclusive of GST) depending on the seniority of the staff providing the services.

These fees are in accordance with the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (formerly the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) "Environmental Water Management Services" panel, under which the MDBA engaged KPMG.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 96

Topic: Environmental works and
measures

Proof Hansard Page and Date 88 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE: Can the MDBA provide the committee with a list of environmental works and measures projects that they are considering?

Mr Freeman: Yes, we can.

Senator JOYCE: Just take that on notice.

Answer:

Based on information provided by states and other stakeholders, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has collated a list of possible engineering works and measures proposals, in order to consider the role they may play in the proposed Basin Plan in terms of overcoming delivery constraints, delivering environmental outcomes and offsetting any reductions in diversion limits.

The list is attached. It should be noted that the list is a collation of suggestions identified to date and is not definitive. The projects are at various stages from concept only to detailed design, and the list does not attempt to make any indication of the merits or feasibility of any particular proposal.

Possible water efficiency and environmental enhancement projects

State	Region	Project Title
NSW	Barwon-Darling	Construction of fishways along the Darling River between Wilcannia and Bourke
	Condamine-Balonne	Narran River Fish Passage - Installation of works to allow low flow / fish passage through NSW portion of Narran River
	Northern NSW Rivers	Computer aided river management – efficiency gains from installation of telemetered meters
	Gwydir	Install fishway at Tyreel Weir and regulator to improve fish passage
	Gwydir	Install fishway at Boolooroo Weir to improve fish passage
	Gwydir	Install fishway at Tareelaro Weir to improve fish passage
	Gwydir	Install fishway at Combadello Weir to improve fish passage
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Lake Ita
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Baconian Swamp
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Moon Moon Swamp
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Murrumbidgee Swamp
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Lake Merrimajeel
	Lachlan	Investigation / construction of works to deliver environmental water to Lower Gum Swamp
	Lachlan	Installation of fishway at Brewster Weir to improve native fish passage
	Lower Darling	Menindee Lakes Project - environmental fill of Cawndilla and reduced operational use of Lake Cawndilla through engineering works, or use of use of Menindee Lakes for provision of downstream environmental flows
	Lower Darling	Installation of fishway on Frenchman's Creek to improve native fish passage
	Macquarie-Castlereagh	Piping of Albert Priest Channel
	Macquarie-Castlereagh	Decommissioning of North Marsh Bypass Channel (originally constructed to deliver stock and domestic supply to lower Macquarie River) - removal of channel and provision of alternative supply, to enable restoration of natural flow paths and create water savings for environmental use through the Macquarie River
	Macquarie-Castlereagh	Improve Macquarie catchment native fish passage by installing fishways at key town weirs.
	Murray	On-route storage at the "Drop" – Mulwalla Canal
	Murray	Bypass around the Barmah Choke
	Murray	Works to return Euston Lakes to a more natural system - construction of regulators and pipelines to introduce more natural wetting/drying regime to permanently-wetted Euston Lakes system; will also achieve water savings for environmental use.
	Murray	Euston Weir Pool Manipulation Study
	Murray	Rehabilitation of the Moira Lake wetland system – stage 3
Murray	Installation of works to assist in the management of environmental water at Lake Tooim	
Murray	Installation of regulator at Tareena Billabong	
Murray	Installation of regulator at Back Creek	
Murray	Tuppall Creek environmental watering - Construction of works to allow for environmental watering	

	Murray	Jimaringele and Cochran Creeks - feasibility study for environmental watering options
	Murray	Construction of fishway at Lake Victoria inlet regulator
	Murrumbidgee	Yanga National Park - Installation of up to 8 new regulators, 3 rock armoured causeways and investigation studies to allow for the delivery of environmental water to 2 additional sites
	Murrumbidgee	Installation of Regulators at Maude Lagoon and Lake Merinly
	Murrumbidgee	Installation of Regulators at North Redbank supply channel
	Murrumbidgee	Native fish passage - Fishway at Redbank weir
	Murrumbidgee	Lowbidgee - Installation of structures to allow for return of environmental water to the lower Murrumbidgee River
	All	Further stock and domestic schemes. In addition to proposal included in the Basin Pipe NSW State Priority Project, additional proposals could be undertaken in unregulated replenishment schemes in the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murray regions, and other stock and domestic schemes in Border Rivers, Gwydir, Macquarie, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Murray and Lower Darling
	All	Improvements to distribution systems – water could be saved in parts of NSW where natural creeks and wetlands or irrigation canals are used to distribute and or store irrigation water which results in high transmission losses by funding alternative distribution arrangements, such as piping.
	All	Fishways - Construction of ten fishways on local council weirs
	All	Screens on major irrigation offtakes to prevent losses of fish eggs and larvae
QLD	Border Rivers	Install fishways on key structures such as the tributary to Calliguel Lagoon (a high conservation value ecosystem) and re-regulating weirs such as Mungindi Weir, Boomi Weir, Gelnarbon Weir.
	Border Rivers	Modification of existing fishways at Boggabilla Weir and Goondiwindi Weir on the Macintyre River, to enable more effective operation
	Boarder Rivers	Decommission overland flow storage works.
	Condamine-Balonne	Build regulating weir to prolong inundation and maintain the depth of water in the Northern Lakes of the Narran Lakes Ramsar site.
	Condamine-Balonne	A Culgoa-Narran diversion channel - would enable water held in private storage along the Culgoa River system to be diverted to provide supplementary flows to the Narran River and Ramsar site.
	Condamine-Balonne	Modify bifurcation weirs on the distributaries system in the Lower Balonne - could include outlet works to manipulate flows in the braided floodplain stream in the Lower Balonne, so as to maximise travel lengths and redirect flows to the Narran Lakes Ramsar site
	Condamine-Balonne	Use private diversion and storage works on Narran River - Existing private storage and diversion works on the Narran River would be used opportunistically for environmental watering, as occurred in 2008 when the Commonwealth purchased stored water for use in the Narran Lakes system.
	Condamine-Balonne	Installation of fishways on major storages along the Condamine and Balonne River systems, including Chinchilla Weir, Beardmore Dam and Jack Taylor Weir (St George)
	Condamine-Balonne	Decommission overland flow storage works.
	Moonie	Bullamon Plains artificial wetland - Maintain Bullamon Plains artificial wetland on Lower Moonie river through purchase of entitlement and new diversion arrangements.
	Warrego	Fishways on key structures - Install fishway on Allan Tannock Weir at Cunnamulla
SA	Murray	Chowilla minor works - Wetland management regulators and fish passage works to provide additional benefits to the Chowilla Icon Site.

Murray	Pike Implementation Project – Environmental regulators to generate broad floodplain inundation with less environmental water than required under a natural flood event. This is a different, but complementary, project to that submitted for funding under the Murray Futures Program funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future Program.
Murray	Katfish Reach – Environmental regulators to generate broad scale floodplain inundation across the Katfish Reach using less environmental water than under natural flood conditions. This is a different, but complementary, project to that submitted for funding under the Murray Futures Program funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future Program.
Murray	South East Flows Restoration to re-establish freshwater flows to the Coorong South Lagoon
Murray	Critical habitat watering involves the use of permanent pumping infrastructure/floodplain irrigation to maintain critical habitats during extended dry periods by pumping or floodplain irrigation.
Murray	Lower Lakes fringing wetland hydrological management to restore high diversity wetlands of the Lower Lakes for vegetation, fish and wading bird habitat.
Murray	The MDB Native Fish Strategy Action Plan 2011-2016 SA Projects - Actions proposed under this plan will contribute to the maintenance and restoration of aquatic ecosystems through infrastructure in the SA River Murray and throughout the MDB .
Murray	Environmental regulators for Overland Corner and the Ramsar listed Banrock Station where an opportunity exists upstream of Lock 1 (in addition to Chowilla, Pike, and Katarapko) to install new infrastructure to create broadscale inundation (~500ha). This intervention would generate significant improvement in ecological condition at the third Ramsar site within SA.
Murray	The Upper Reedy Creek Catchment Connection which augments the Coorong South Lagoon Flows project.
Murray	Additional Balancing Storage Area in the Tilley Swamp Watercourse which potentially provides additional balancing storage for flows to the southern lagoon of the Coorong by providing additional storage in the northern portion of the Tilley Swamp watercourse.
Murray	Fish friendly infrastructure: Threatened fish species hatchery/breeding facility which provides reestablishment of wild populations of native fish species that have become regionally extinct.
Murray	Fish friendly infrastructure: improving connectivity between the sea and freshwater to maintain and restore estuarine habitats. This will potentially improved biodiversity for the Murray Estuary and Coorong which is unique for the MDB.
Murray	Fish friendly infrastructure: new or modified water infrastructure solutions to maximise native fish passage and minimise alien species movements to improved lateral connectivity for fish passage increasing recruitment success of breeding events. Control of alien species could also be addressed through the structure/water management.
Murray	Fish friendly infrastructure: facilitating downstream fish passage and mitigating downstream movement injuries and mortalities at weirs by improving fish passage for improved recruitment success of breeding events, lessens the impacts of predation and diseases and promotes the distribution of native fish throughout the basin.
Murray	Fish friendly infrastructure: Restoration of flowing habitats in SA River Murray for recruitment success of iconic fish species including Murray cod.

VIC

Northern Vic	Priority Wetlands in Northern Victoria: Opportunities from irrigation modernisation to targeted infrastructure projects will enable environmental water delivery and management to 43 priority wetlands in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District, covering 8,500 ha. Involves a program of works and measures to upgrade existing infrastructure or construct new infrastructure to deliver water to the priority sites and complements committed NVIRP works.
Goulburn-Broken	Fish passage at Gowangardie Weir on the Broken River providing fish passage at the last remaining fish barrier in the Broken system (Gowangardie Weir), providing passage from Lake Nillahcootie to the River Murray, opening up 285 km. This project is the last remaining large infrastructure project required in the Broken River which further improves ecological outcomes of the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan.
Loddon	Fish passage and environmental water delivery works in the Loddon system, providing 340 km of connectivity for fish below Lake Laanecoorie to the River Murray. Goulburn-Murray Water weirs would be modified to enable delivery of environmental water to priority sites in the Loddon system, complementing existing environmental entitlement and water recovery proposed under the northern Sustainable Water Strategy.
Murray	Watering the Lindsay Island Floodplain (Lindsay River Stage 2 - weir structure construction) will water over 5,000 ha of floodplain, including River Red Gum communities, and permanent and semi-permanent wetlands. The proposed works include construction of a large weir across the Lindsay River that will generate broadscale floodplain inundation when the weir is closed; construction of 8 smaller regulators to retain water on the floodplain (i.e. prevent water draining back to the River Murray). Builds on small package of TLM works currently being completed for Lindsay Island.
Murray	Watering Wallpolla Island Floodplain - will water around 1,000 ha of floodplain, including River Red Gum communities and wetlands, as well as increasing flowing habitat by 50 km. The proposed works include construction of up to 7 regulators on creeks and wetlands that can be operated to improve the extent and duration of natural floods. Construction of a 3 km long channel is required to generate additional inflows into the new national park. The channel will connect the Lock 10 weir pool to the east end of upper Wallpolla Island. Builds on small package of TLM works currently being completed for Wallpolla Island.
Murray	Watering Hattah Lakes floodplain. Construction of works and use of pumps to enable the delivery of water to two key sites: 1). The Chalka Creek North project involves construction of an environmental regulator, upgrade roads and install box culverts. Water would be delivered to the site via a pump station being constructed under The Living Murray program, and directed to this site with the proposed regulator. 2). At Lake Kramen, water would be delivered to the site via a pump station being constructed under The Living Murray program, and directed to this site with the proposed regulator.
Murray	New Gunbower National Park: Watering the floodplain (Gunbower - Upper Forest Watering Project incl Black Cherry lagoon) will water the new Gunbower National Park protecting threatened Black Box and Grey Box woodland. These works include construction of an offtake regulator and small channel (50 m long) to deliver water from the Torrumbarry weir pool to the upstream areas of Gunbower Forest which will also water the watercourses and permanent, semi-permanent and temporary wetlands in the upper forest. Builds on major package of TLM works currently being completed for Gunbower Forest.

Murray	Watering River Red Gums Forests along the Murray Floodplain through water management works along the River Murray floodplain including:• Campaspe junction to Lock 26 (Torrumbarry): Works proposed for 19 sites within new River Murray Park - \$34 million. • Swan Hill to Wakool junction: Works proposed for new Nyah-Vinifera Park - \$5.1 million. • Wakool junction to Murrumbidgee junction: Works proposed for 2 sites within new River Murray Park - \$2.5 million. • Murrumbidgee junction to Lock 15 (Euston): Works proposed for 4 sites within new River Murray Park - \$29 million. • Lock 15 (Euston) to Lock 10 (Wentworth): Works proposed for 15 sites within new River Murray Park - \$84.3 million.
Murray	Gunbower Creek Fishways will provide fish passage over the entire length of Gunbower Creek (120 km) including the construction of two fishways on Gunbower Creek at the National Channel offtake regulator and Koondrook Weir. These structures are at the upstream and downstream ends of the creek, respectively. Fishways currently exist or are planned for all other weirs within the creek (Thomsons, Gunbower and Cohuna Weirs).
Murray	Enhancing the Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site and generating water savings This project involves the construction of bypass channels around the Ramsar listed Kerang Lakes that are part of the Torrumbarry irrigation area. This will deliver water savings, improve system operation and provide significant environmental improvements through a more natural wetting and drying cycle in the Kerang Lakes. Construction of bypass channels around First Reedy Lake, Third Reedy Lake, Little Lake Charm and Racecourse Lake will allow independent operation of each lake, providing GMW with the ability to efficiently manage these lakes and reinstate a more natural hydrologic cycle.
Murray	Project to improve fish passage between Barmah Forest and the River Murray and enable better management of inflows. Construction of a fishway on the Gulf Creek regulator and removal of an artificial levee and construction of a regulator at Kynmer Creek to reduce inflow threshold and enable management of inflows as well as the removal of the levee to enable fish to access the creek more frequently. These works will improve fish passage between Barmah Forest and the River Murray and enable better management of inflows.
Ovens	Fish passage, capitalising environmental outcomes from modernisation of irrigation infrastructure on Ovens River, provides fish passage at the last remaining man-made fish barrier (Tea Garden Creek weir) in the lower Ovens River, providing 795 km of connectivity for fish below Lake William Hovell and Lake Buffalo. This project will modernise the Tea Garden Creek weir to provide water infrastructure to best practice standards for irrigation supply and enable fish passage for significant threatened and iconic native fish species.

Possible works and measures to overcome delivery constraints

State	Region	Project Title
Possible works and measures to overcome river channel capacity constraints		
NSW	Lachlan	Flood easements - Lachlan River below Wyangala Dam
	Macquarie	Macquarie Marsh: Northern Bypass Channel Removal. The channel restricts passage of environmental water
	Murrumbidgee	Capacity Upgrade – Upper Murrumbidgee to raise the operational flow limit at Gundagai
	Murrumbidgee	Flood easements - in the Tumut River valley
	Murrumbidgee	Flood easements - Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai
	Murrumbidgee	Flood easements - Murrumbidgee River at Balranald
	Murrumbidgee	Increase capacity of upper Yanco Creek
	Murray, Murrumbidgee	River Management Strategic Plan to identify specific projects to improve water delivery to environmental assets
	Murray	Modify Murray weirs to better improve their suitability to deliver environmental outcomes
	Barwon-Darling	Increased "cutting" capacity at Darling River/Darling anabranch confluence
VIC	Goulburn-Broken	Flood easements in the mid-Goulburn and construction of leveed floodway, to allow watering of lower Goulburn floodplain and protecting private land from flooding. This includes purchase of land and construction of leveed floodway to allow environmental watering of Lower Goulburn RRG NP and below.
	Campaspe	Flood easements - lower Campaspe River
	Loddon	Flood easements - upper Loddon catchment
	Loddon	Flood easements - mid-Loddon River
	Murray	Flood easements - River Murray from Lakes Hume to Mulwala
Possible works and measures to improve infrastructure capacity/configuration constraints		
NSW	Macquarie	Burrundong dam outlet enlargement to improve wetland watering capacity
	Murrumbidgee	Tombullen Swamp - increase inlet and outlet capacity
	Murrumbidgee	Burrinjuck Dam outlet enlargement to enable greater discharge of water when the dam is at low levels
	Murray	Lake Victoria - increase outlet capacity (and possibly also inlet capacity)
	All	Improved environmental water delivery through increased weir capacity - increased height of weir pools can broaden pool extent and achieve additional benefits of floodplain inundation
	All	Works to overcome cold water pollution from dam releases
VIC	Campaspe	Lake Eppalock - increase outlet capacity to enable increased environmental releases
	Loddon	Cairn Curran Reservoir - increase outlet capacity to enable increased environmental releases
QLD	Condamine-Balonne, Border Rivers, Warrego	Increase outlet works on key structures within six Qld MDB schemes operated by SunWater - to improve efficiency of water delivery and ability to release environmental flows
SA	Murray	Works to allow environmental watering of the ephemeral lakes of the Coorong (including Maria Swamp and Teilaka and Paranki Lagoon Complex); works would include upgrading the floodway capacity of the Central Bakers Range
Possible works and measures to increase operational flexibility		
NSW	Lachlan	Improved en route storage flexibility at Lakes Cargelligo and Brewster (or undertake works for a Barren Box Swamp type

State	Region	Project Title
		solution)
	Murrumbidgee	Turn Yanga Lake into an active re-regulating storage for environmental flows
	Murray	Construction of new storage at "Murray Gates" in the upper Murray
	Murray	Use of Poon Boon Lakes as an en route storage
	Murray	Edward-Wakool System Water Management Study
	All	Enhanced river system operations within irrigation districts through opportunities to operate infrastructure in irrigation districts in a manner that complements river operations for the conveyance of water for consumptive users and the environment.
QLD	Condamine-Balonne, Border Rivers, Warrego	Gate automation on regulating weirs to enable environmental flow manipulation in six Qld MDB schemes operated by SunWater in the Dumaresq, Barwon and Border Rivers
	Qld MDB	Construction of existing of off-stream storage works to take Commonwealth water during announced periods for later environmental release
	Qld MDB	Purchase/lease of existing of off-stream storage works to take Commonwealth water during announced periods for later environmental release
SA	Murray	Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges Low Flow Bypasses Strategic Placement – to divert flows around dams and back into the flow path and into the stream, benefiting the environment by increasing the length of time of watercourse flow, which in turn benefits water dependent species
	Murray	Assessment of existing River Murray structures to undertake modifications and decommissioning or removals that may be required to achieve improvements in water use effectiveness and efficiency to achieve environmental outcomes
Possible works and measures to mitigate water quality issues		
SA	Murray	Pike Salt Interception Scheme to improve River Murray water quality by reducing the salt load by approximately 160t/day over a 30 year average and enhance environmental outcomes on the Pike floodplain and for downstream river environments and users.
Possible works and measures to repair/maintain levee banks to mitigate the risk of water loss		
SA	Murray	Lower Murray Levee Banks Remediation – if levees are not functioning then there will losses of River Murray water resources (up to 100 GL per annum).
	Murray	Riverland Levee Banks Remediation

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 097

Topic: MDBA staff surveys

Proof Hansard Page and Date 88 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE: Have you done staff surveys?

Mr Nicholas: Yes, we have.

Senator JOYCE: What do they say? Are they all happy?

Mr Nicholas: There are various comments about how we are operating and issues that staff may see as points for improvement.

Senator JOYCE: Can you provide the committee with a copy of the surveys? Obviously we do not want to know about the names.

Mr Nicholas: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The inaugural MDBA Employee Survey was conducted in August 2010. The key issues identified in the survey were:

- 57% of employees who responded indicate they were either satisfied or very satisfied working for the MDBA and 24% dissatisfied.
- 53% indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied in their current job and 25% dissatisfied.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 98

Topic: Communications since release
of Guide to Proposed Basin
Plan

**Proof Hansard Page and Date
or Written Question:** Written

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What communications has the MDBA had since the release of the Guide with state and federal governments regarding the timetable for implementation of the Plan? Please provide lists of and copies of all relevant correspondence and meetings.
2. Please detail all individuals or groups who have been consulted on the policy decisions made by the Authority in preparation for the Draft Basin Plan.

Answer:

1. Since the release of the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has undertaken extensive consultation and communication with state and Federal governments. The timetable for implementation of the Plan was one of many issues raised at these meetings.

In addition, regular meetings have been and continue to be held at senior officer level between the Commonwealth and State agencies to discuss implementation of the Basin Plan.

2. More than 80 meetings have occurred since March 2011 which have discussed policy proposals with various groups and individuals. These meetings have involved various Authority staff members and/or the Chair. In addition, a number of individual meetings have been held by the Chair over this period. This has included individuals from peak stakeholder groups as well as individuals from community groups and organisations. A list is attached ([Attachment 1](#)).

The Authority also consulted with the Development Working Group and the Testing Committee. For more details about this, please refer to the response to Question on Notice regarding "Basin Plan Testing Committee".



List of meetings from 1 March 2011

Session Date	Session Name	Venue
02/03/2011	Pyramid hill and Toorumbay modernisation committee	Kerang
07/03/2011	Groundwater meeting with NSW Office of water	Dubbo
07/03/2011	Chair meeting with Swan Hill stakeholders	Swan Hill
07/03/2011	meeting with DSE	
07/03/2011	QLD Farmers Federation meet with MDBA	Canberra
08/03/2011	Basin Community Committee (BCC) Meeting	Swan Hill,
09/03/2011	Chair meeting with Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW	Sydney
09/03/2011	Meeting NSW Commissioner for Water	Sydney
09/03/2011	BP water trading rules - meeting 2 with NSW Office of Water	Sydney
10/03/2011	Condamine groundwater model discussions	Brisbane
10/03/2011	Basin Tour Sydney - Chair meeting with NSW Irrigators' Council	Sydney
16/03/2011	Chair meeting with Basin Chairs' Group	Basin Chairs' Group
16/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Adelaide
16/03/2011	BOC Workshop (Strategic Programs Review)	Adelaide
16/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Adelaide
17/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Goolwa and Coorong
17/03/2011	Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) Full Gathering	Mildura
18/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Mildura
18/03/2011	General Meeting of the Country Mayors Association of NSW	MLC Tower, Sydney
21/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Dubbo
21/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Narrromine Aero Club
22/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Moree

22/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Booberra Lagoon Goodiwindi
23/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Cotton Australia/Macintyre Valley Cotton Field Day
23/03/2011	Authority meeting with Smart rivers - Condomine Bolonne irrigators	Brisbane
23/03/2011	Chair meeting with QLD Water Minister	Brisbane
23/03/2011	Chair meeting with Strategic Consultative Committee	Brisbane
28/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Jerilderie
28/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholders in Barren Box Storage & Wetland, - YAC TAC	Murrumbidgee
28/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Griffith
28/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholders- Coleambally Irrigation Cooperative	Coleambally
28/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholders RAMROC	Jerilderie
29/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Albury
29/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Deniliquin
29/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Shepparton
30/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Bourke
30/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Menindee Lakes
30/03/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Broken Hill
31/03/2011	Chair meeting with Peak Body representatives	Sydney
04/04/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	St. George
04/04/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Dalby
04/04/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Dalby
06/04/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	Narrabri
07/04/2011	Chair Meeting with Basin Plan Testing Committee	Canberra
14/04/2011	JRGWI - Jurisdictional Reference Group on Water Information	
03/05/2011	MDBA SCIENCE LEADERS FORUM	Canberra
04/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Aust Cotton Research Institute	Sydney
04/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Fifth Estate	Sydney
04/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Peel Valley Water Users Association	Sydney
05/05/2011	Basin Plan Testing Committee Meeting	Canberra
5/05/2011	NCC and IRN Basin Plan Forum -	
9/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Dairy Australia	Melbourne
09/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Victorian Farmers Federation	Melbourne
09/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Environment Victoria	Melbourne
09/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Australian Dairy Industry Council	Melbourne

09/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Richard Bull	Melbourne
10/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Cotton Australia	Canberra
10/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Moetic Solution	Canberra
10/05/2011	Chair Meeting with eWater	Canberra
10/05/2011	Modelling policy implications all basin states	
11/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Testing Committee members	Sydney
12/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Northparkes Mine	Sydney
12/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Australian Wetlands & Rivers Centre	Sydney
13/05/2011	Chair meeting with Peak Bodies, NFF & National Irrigators Council	Canberra
17/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Peak Bodies Brisbane - National Farmers Federation	Brisbane
	Chair Meeting with NFF Water Taskforce meeting	
18/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Peak Bodies Brisbane Qld Murray Darling Basin Strategic Consultative Committee	Brisbane
18/05/2011	Basin Plan Water Trading Rules Information Requirements	
19/05/2011	Chair Meeting with Peak Bodies	Tamworth
20/05/2011	Chair meeting with Peel Valley Water users and Tony Windsor	Tamworth
23/05/2011	MDBA Basin Plan meeting with NSW Office of Environment & Heritage	
24/05/2011	Chair meeting with CEO Act Water	Canberra
24/05/2011	Chair updating BCC on Regional Tours	Canberra
26/05/2011	Cultural Flows Workshop	
27/05/2011	MDB Ministerial Council Meeting	Adelaide
27/05/2011	Authority Engagement with Dept Water SA	Adelaide
30/05/2011	Shire Association of NSW Annual Conference 2011	
02/06/2011	Chair's Regional Meeting	Griffith
02/06/2011	Chair's regional meeting	Deniliquin
03/06/2011	Chair's regional meeting with Stakeholder groups	Shepparton
03/06/2011	Chair's meeting with Adrian Piccoli State Minister for Murrumbidgee	
06/06/2011	Chair's Tour to meet with Stakeholder groups	Adelaide
06/06/2011	Chair meeting with Primary Industries	Adelaide
06/06/2011	Chair meeting with Environmental Groups	Adelaide
06/06/2011	Chair meeting with Dept of Water, NRM, RDA	Adelaide
06/06/2011	Chair meeting with Minister for Water SA	Adelaide
9/06/2011	Chair meeting with Stakeholder groups	St. George and Cunnamulla

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Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 99

Topic: Legal advice since 28 January
2011

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the Authority received or requested any legal advice in relation to balancing the needs of the environment, communities and rural economies under the Water Act 2007, since Mr Knowles was appointed as Chair?

Answer:

No.

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Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA **Question No:** 100

Topic: MDBA Consultancies

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

Please detail all consultancies (including cost) undertaken since the release of the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan (the Guide).

Answer:

The following consultancies have commenced since the release of the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan:

<u>Supplier Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Contract Value (AUD)</u>
Futureye Pty Ltd	Basin Plan regional meeting strategy for response to public comment	70,000
Department of Services & Technology	Development of Operational Models and Associated Works for Koondrook-Perricoota Forest	27,346
Mr. Gerald Grealish	Consolidation, Analysis, Interpretation and Assessment of Phase 1 detailed assessment data at 62 wetlands below Lock 1, South Australia	55,000
Ballard Consulting	Technical advice on water trade and water accounting matters	38,500
Blake Dawson	Specialist legal advice in relation to the processing of five FOI requests	50,000
Tobias and Associates	Use and occupancy mapping program, Gwamu (Kooma) Living Proof Interviews	57,400
Ecological Australia Pty Ltd	Calibration of LiDAR outputs against ground data	26,125

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Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Synthesizing three major hydrology assessment components for the hydrology theme	85,608
Australian Government Solicitor	Legal advice regarding social and economic factors in relation to the preparation of the Basin Plan	35,023
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Strategic programs review of joint programs in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority	409,048
Feltar Pty Ltd	Assessment of local impacts of proposals for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan	2,212,425
Australian Government Solicitor	Legal advice regarding Sustainable Diversion Limits	16,500
Hyder Consulting Pty Ltd	Proposed Salt-load to the Sea Target	20,295
Mackellar Consulting Group Pty Ltd	Planning advice on appropriate resources to implement the Environmental Watering Plan with consideration of other MDBA environmental watering arrangements	29,999
Alluvium Consulting Pty Ltd	Advice and assistance for consultation on, and finalisation of, the proposed Basin Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Program	320,424
Australian Government Solicitor	Legal advice regarding Human Resource General and Workplace relations	16,500
Department of Services Technology and Administration	Development of Operational Models and associated Works for Koondrook-Perricoota Forest	27,346
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Hume Dam Extreme Flood Operations Manual - Hydrological Modelling	46,750
The University of Melbourne	Assessing thresholds of Ecological Change	64,585
KPMG	Role of social and economic considerations and the way in which they can be integrated with the development of Sustainable Diversion Limits	272,000
GHD Pty Ltd	Assistance with the development of the Proposed Basin Plan and the role of works and measures in the delivery of environmental water	200,508

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Neilson Associates Pty Ltd	Member of proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group	60,000
CESAR Consultants Pty Ltd	Reviewing the development of Daughterless Carp technology	35,500
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Water quality modelling framework for the Murray-Darling Basin - scoping study	54,945
Blake Dawson	Provision of specialist legal advice	13,263
Charles Darwin University	Advisor to the National Cultural Flows Planning and Research Committee	19,300
Frontier Economics Pty Ltd	Peer review of the cost benefit analysis of the Basin Plan	34,430
Mark Lintermans	Developing the Native Fish Strategy Action Plan 2011 to 2021 - specialist technical advice	10,000
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Independent Peer Review of the Berri-Renmark and Pyap to Kingston groundwater models	29,750
KPMG	Internal Audit, Risk Management and Financial Advice	880,000
Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd	Independent Peer Review of refinements to the Chowilla groundwater model	29,960
Australian Government Solicitor	Legal advice regarding NSW Office of Water Notices	26,000

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Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 101

Topic: MDBA Staffing

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How many staff have left the MDBA since the release of the Guide?
2. How many staff at SES level have left the MDBA since the release of the Guide? What positions did any SES level staff that have left hold?
3. Have any hydrologists left the MDBA since the release of the guide? How many hydrologists does the MDBA employ? Was the MDBA, at any stage, without any hydrologists in its employ?

Answer:

1. As at 31 May 2011, 58 staff have left the MDBA since the release of the guide on 8 October 2010, of which 27 were temporary staff engaged for specific periods.
2. As at 31 May 2011, two SES staff have left since 8 October 2010 - the General Manager Development & Implementation Basin Plan (SES Band 1) and the Executive Director Engagement, Secretariat & Communications (SES Band 2).
3. The MDBA employs river operators and hydrological modellers who work in the hydrology field. Not all of these staff are hydrologists by training. As at 31 May there were 29 staff employed as river operators and hydrological modellers. As at 31 May no staff employed as hydrological modellers have left since 8 October 2010.

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Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 102

Topic: MDBA Sub-committees

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Please detail all members of the Basin Plan testing committee and Proposed Basin Plan working group and any other consultancy or advisory groups operating in relation to the Basin Plan process. Please also detail former members of these groups who have left their roles on these groups.
2. Please provide details of all meetings held and who was in attendance.
3. How much is each member of each committee or group paid?
4. What travel or advisory costs are associated with each committee or group?

Answer:

1. The Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee members appointed:

Karlene Maywald
Jeff Angel
Kel Baxter
Joan Burns
Mal Peters
Christine Forster
Ian Todd
Peter Cosier - resigned
Thomas Parry – no longer involved

The Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group members appointed:

Jennifer Westacott – KPMG (at the time of appointment)
Don Frater - KPMG
Brendan Rynne - Simon Corden (proxy) - KPMG
Peter Sutherland – GHD
Lyndsay Neilson – Neilson Associates Pty Ltd
Rob Freeman – MDBA (Chief Executive)
Fraser MacLeod – MDBA (Executive Director)

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2. Meeting schedule and attendance

Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee meetings and attendance

Meeting 1 was held on 9 March 2011. The attending members were Karlene Maywald, Kel Baxter, Jeff Angel and Peter Cosier.

Meeting 2 was held on 25 March. The attending members were Karlene Maywald, Peter Cosier, Jeff Angel, Kel Baxter, Thomas Parry, Joan Burns, Mal Peters, Ian Todd and Christine Forster.

Meeting 3 was held on 7 April. The attending members were Karlene Maywald, Peter Cosier, Kel Baxter, Joan Burns and Ian Todd.

Meeting 4 was held on 18 April. The attending members were Karlene Maywald, Jeff Angel, Kel Baxter, Mal Peters, Ian Todd, and Christine Forster with Peter Cosier and Joan Burns via phone.

Meeting 5 was held on 5 May. The attending members were Karlene Maywald, Joan Burns and Christine Forster.

Meeting 6 was held on 19 May. The attending members were Kel Baxter, Thomas Parry, Joan Burns, Mal Peters, Ian Todd and Christine Forster.

MDBA staff members also attended the meetings. Most regularly these were Craig Knowles (Authority Chair), Liz Dann (Executive Director) and Brent Williams (General Manager). Fraser MacLeod (Executive Director) also attended some meetings.

Meetings were attended by representatives from Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC). Most regularly this was Russell James (Assistant Secretary) with Tony Slatyer (First Assistant Secretary) attending one meeting.

The Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee meetings were also generally attended by either Don Frater or Jennifer Westacott who sat in on meetings as representatives of the Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group.

Presentations were on occasion provided by MDBA and SEWPaC staff on specific issues.

Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group meetings and attendance

Meeting 1 was held on 11 March. The attending members were Jennifer Westacott, Don Frater, Brendan Rynne, Peter Sutherland, Rob Freeman, and Fraser MacLeod.

Meeting 2 was held on 18 March. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Fraser MacLeod.

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Meeting 3 was held on 25 March. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Fraser MacLeod.

Meeting 4 was held on 1 April. The attending members were Jennifer Westacott, Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson, Rob Freeman and Fraser MacLeod.

Meeting 5 was held on 7 April. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Rob Freeman.

Meeting 6 was held on 15 April. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson, Rob Freeman and Fraser MacLeod.

Meeting 7 was held on 27 April. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Rob Freeman.

Meeting 8 was held on 29 April. The attending members were Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Rob Freeman.

Meeting 9 was held on 13 May. The attending members were Don Frater, Simon Corden, Peter Sutherland, Lyndsay Neilson and Fraser MacLeod.

Additional MDBA staff members attended the meetings. Most regularly these were Liz Dann (Executive Director), Brent Williams (General Manager), and Sarah Clark (A/g Director). Craig Knowles (Authority Chair), Phil Cole (Director) and Brad Jackson (Assistant Director) also attended some meetings.

Meetings were attended by representatives from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC), most regularly by Russell James (Assistant Secretary) and David Parker (Deputy Secretary) with Tony Slatyer (First Assistant Secretary) attending some meetings.

Additional attendees: Hugh Wilson, KPMG attended meeting 1 and Jennifer Westacott was present at meetings 8 and 9 as an attendee.

Presentations were on occasion provided by MDBA and SEWPaC staff on specific issues.

3. Payment

Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee
Members receive \$2200 per meeting GST incl

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Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group

Jennifer Westacott	\$4224 (meetings 8 and 9 were attended on a voluntary basis)
Don Frater	\$3616
Brendan Rynne	\$4224
Peter Sutherland	\$3520
Lyndsay Neilson	\$3000
(per meeting GST incl)	

4. Travel and advisory costs

MDBA covered the cost of travel to and from meetings for members of both the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee and the Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group, in accordance with Commonwealth government guidelines. Meeting venue and catering cost were covered as required.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 103

Topic: Socio-economic analysis

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. When will the Lower Lakes Social Impact Case Study and Assessment of the Local Community Impacts of Proposals for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan be presented to the Authority? When will these studies be publicly released?
2. Has socio-economic analysis considered reductions at levels other than those recommended in the Guide?

Answer:

1. The Authority is giving consideration to this report while finalising the proposed Basin Plan, and will consider the release of the study in that context.
2. Yes.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA **Question No:** 104

Topic: Water allocations – SA storage rights

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

Have draft schedules to provide and account for South Australia's storage rights been prepared? Has any state Minister objected to these schedules? When will they be finalised? When will they be released?

Answer:

The proposed schedule accounting for South Australia's storage rights defined under clause 130 of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement (the Schedule) has been prepared.

The Schedule was submitted to Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council for its approval (out of session) on 25 February 2011. The consequential amendments to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement which are required to give effect to the Schedule were also provided to Ministerial Council for its approval.

Approval by the Ministerial Council was completed on 15 June 2011. The Schedule and consequential amendments to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement were approved by the Executive Council on 29 June 2011 and will be registered on 1 July 2011.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 105

Topic: Authority decisions and minutes

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

1. Could the Authority please provide this Committee with all the decisions it has made since February 22 in accordance with s 198 of the Water Act which requires the Authority to keep records of all of its decisions?
2. Could you please provide the minutes to any of the meetings the Authority has held since 22 February 2011?

Answer:

Meeting minutes including decisions which are appropriate to release are provided as follows:

- Meeting 29 – 1 March 2011, Attachment A
- Meeting 29a – 9 March 2011, Attachment B
- Meeting 29b – 16 March 2011, Attachment C
- Meeting 29c – 23 March 2011, Attachment D
- Meeting 30 – 5 April 2011, Attachment E
- Meeting 30a – 11 April 2011, Attachment F
- Meeting 30b – 19 April 2011, Attachment G
- Meeting 31 – 3 May 2011, Attachment H

The meeting minutes contain material disclosing matters in the nature of, or relating to, deliberation that has taken place, in the course of, or for the purposes of, the deliberative processes involved in the functions of the MDBA and, accordingly, this material has been omitted.

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Attachment A – Authority Meeting 29 – 1 March 2011 – Adelaide

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 9.45 am.
2. The Chair **welcomed** Mr James Flintoft and informed members that Mr Flintoft had been invited to perform the role of board Secretary to the Authority, on part-time secondment from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Members **agreed** to the appointment of Mr Flintoft as a dedicated Secretary to the Board. Mr Flintoft **described** his considerable private and public sector experience, which included a strong background in business enterprise banking and strategic consulting.
3. The Chair **noted** the resignation of Dr Diana Day and **recorded** his thanks for her contribution to the work of the Authority since her appointment.
4. The Chair **reported** that he had drafted a letter to Dr Diana Day in response to her letter of resignation to the Governor-General. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **endorsed** the contents of the Chair's letter to Dr Day, and **agreed** that a copy of the letter should be filed with a copy of Dr Day's letter of resignation in the Authority records.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

5. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 29. The Chair **emphasised** the importance of focusing on Item 7, and thanked Authority officers for the high quality of the papers that they had prepared for that item.

Conflict of Interest

6. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings 27, 28 and 28a

7. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **confirmed** the minutes of Meetings 27 (12 January 2011) as amended, 28 (1 February 2011) and 28a (7 February 2011).
8. While acknowledging the importance of social and economic matters, members **agreed** to discontinue the establishment of the Social and Economic Reference Committee. The Chair **requested** the Chief Executive to inform those people who had been approached that the Authority would not be pursuing that particular avenue, although their services could be drawn upon in the future, and to thank them for their willingness to contribute.

Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes, including Actions

9. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** the Matters Arising.

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Agenda Item 5: Chair's Report

10. The Chair stated that he had reviewed the role and functions of the Basin Plan Issues Committee (BPIC) and **recommended** that there was no longer any need for this group to continue. He stated that, should any governance issues emerge, they should be dealt with by the MDBA Audit and Compliance Committee. Members **noted** the review and assessment of the operations of BPIC in accordance with the Sunset clause of the MDBA Corporate Governance Policies – Authority Member BPIC document. Members **agreed** to abolish BPIC and **agreed** that if there were any outstanding issues before BPIC, they should be transferred to the Audit Committee. The Chair **requested** that the Secretary:
- (a) review the governance structures for the Authority focusing on the Committees; and
 - (b) review the list of BPIC issues to determine whether any matters should be referred to the MDBA Audit and Compliance Committee.
12. The Chair **stated** that he had met with the Basin Community Committee (BCC) in Sydney the previous day and that he had talked to its members about a greater level of involvement in developing the Basin Plan. This had been welcomed by BCC members. The BCC Chair, Mrs Joan Burns would be attending Basin Official Committee meetings and the Chair had invited her to be a member of the Basin Plan Testing Committee. The Chair also reported that he had met with the chairs of Regional Development Australia the previous week and that discussions with them had focused on construction of a regional implementation framework and ways in which water issues could be embraced within that framework.

Agenda Item 6: Chief Executive's Report

15. Members **discussed** the inquiry into the Provisions of the *Water Act 2007* being held by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee. Given that the Authority was a statutory body which had to work under the Act, members **agreed** that it was inappropriate for the Authority to comment on provisions of the Act and therefore should not provide a submission to the inquiry but would assist as required by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities in any submission they make.
17. Members **endorsed** the Chief Executive's recommendation to administratively establish the Basin Plan Development Working Group and **agreed** to establish a committee under section 203 of the *Water Act 2007* called the Basin Plan Testing Committee.
18. Members **agreed** to the appointments of Karlene Maywald, Peter Cosier, Jeff Angel, Kel Baxter, Thomas Parry, Joan Burns and Mal Peters to the Basin Plan Testing Committee. Members further **agreed** that any additional appointments to the Committee should be decided by the Chair, noting that two additional members were likely to be appointed (one each from Queensland and Victoria). Members **noted** that

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there was a need to include people with expertise in agribusiness and **agreed** to send any nominations to the Chair via the new Secretary.

19. Members **agreed** to the proposed roster for attendance at future BCC meetings. Members briefly discussed the Authority position on media communications by non-executive board members and **endorsed** continuation of the current policy that the Chair and Chief Executive were the primary spokespeople for the Authority, and that members should seek clearance from the agency's media unit before responding to media requests.

Di Davidson withdrew from the meeting at 1.30pm.

Agenda Item 8: Other MDBA Activities

Agenda Item 8.1: River Murray Update

35. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** the River Murray update and in particular the current water resources availability, key River Murray System management issues, and progress with the asset management program.

Agenda Item 8.2: Natural Resource Management

36. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** key developments and issues within the Natural Resource Management Division.

Agenda Item 9: Other Business

37. There were no items of Other Business.

Agenda Item 14: Next Meeting

38. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **agreed** to the Chair's proposal that the Authority meet on a weekly basis until the draft Basin Plan had been completed, with the next meeting to be held in Sydney on Wednesday 9 March 2011 in conjunction with the first meeting of the Basin Plan Testing Committee.

Meeting Close

39. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 2.05 pm.

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Attachment B – Authority Meeting 29a – 9 March 2011 – Sydney

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 9.15 am, and **noted** that it was a continuation of the meeting held in Adelaide on 1 March 2011.
2. There were no apologies.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

3. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 29a, and **noted** that the agenda papers for item 7 – Basin Plan had been carried over from meeting 29 – 1 March 2011.

Conflict of Interest

4. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 4: Other Business

Agenda Item 4.1: Report by Board Secretary

23. Mr James Flintoft, Board Secretary, reported that a working group had been formed within the Agency to prepare a strategic work-plan for delivery to the Authority at the next meeting (16 March 2011). A more detailed list of issues would be presented at the April board meeting. The manner in which information could be supplied to the Basin Testing Committee was also being considered.
24. Mr Flintoft also reported that a new Australian Government interdepartmental committee had been formed to assist in progressing input to the draft Basin Plan, comprising representatives of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities; the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; and Regional Australia. The Chair **emphasised** the importance of having strong, strategic-management links between the Authority and other Australian Government departments and agencies. He also **emphasised** the need to have disaggregate, state by state approaches.

Agenda Item 5: Next Meeting

26. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **agreed** that the next meeting would be held in Adelaide on Wednesday 16 March 2011 and **noted** that Prof Hart had a conflicting commitment and could not attend. In response to Prof Hart's request, Mr Flintoft advised he was preparing a schedule of Authority weekly meeting dates.

Meeting Close

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27. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 1.05 pm.

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Attachment C – Authority Meeting 29b – 16 March 2011 – Adelaide

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 3.10 pm.
2. Apologies were **received** from Professor Barry Hart.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

3. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 29b, and **noted** that the agenda papers for Item 7 – Basin Plan had been carried over from meeting 29 – 1 March 2011.

Conflict of Interest

4. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 3: Discussion of Meeting 29 Agenda Item 7 Basin Plan (Strategic Pathways) Continued

Agenda Item 3.1: Discussion of Meeting 29 Agenda Item 7.5: Engagement on the Proposed Basin Plan

5. Members **agreed** that the objectives of the stakeholder engagement process should be to:
 - (a) draw on the knowledge of stakeholders and thereby develop a better Basin Plan;
 - (b) build stakeholder support (including Commonwealth and state support) for the proposed Basin Plan; and
 - (c) build stakeholder capacity to implement and adapt to water reform in the Basin.
8. Members **noted** that there was a new cross-agency group, the Murray–Darling Reform Joint Taskforce, sponsored by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, comprising about 15 officers on secondment from the Department of The Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, and Regional Australia.
9. Members **agreed** that there was a need to approach stakeholder engagement through both formal and informal activities.
14. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **endorsed** the Chair's approach to stakeholder engagement.

Agenda Item 6: Next Meeting

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Budget Estimates, May 2011

19. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **agreed** that the next meeting would be held in Brisbane on Wednesday 23 March 2011.

Meeting Close

20. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 5.10 pm.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Attachment D – Authority Meeting 29c – 23 March 2011 – Brisbane Airport

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 4.30 pm.
2. Apologies were **received** from Mr James Flintoft.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

3. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 29c.

Conflict of Interest

4. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 4: Advancing the Consultancy—*Community impacts of the proposed Murray–Darling Basin Plan*

15. Members **agreed** that the Chair and the Chief Executive would **prepare** a statement for presentation to the House of Representatives Committee hearing on Friday 25 March 2011.

Agenda Item 6: Next Meeting

18. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **agreed** that the next Authority meeting would be held in Canberra on Tuesday 5 April 2011.

Meeting Close

19. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 6.10 pm.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Attachment E – Authority Meeting 30 – 5 April 2011 – Canberra

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 8.45 am.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

2. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 30. The Chair **emphasised** the importance of focusing on Item 7.

Conflict of Interest

3. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings 29, 29a, 29b and 29c

4. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **confirmed** minutes of Meetings 29 – 1 March, 29a – 9 March, 29b – 16 March and 29c – 23 March 2011, subject to amendment of paragraphs 22 and 23 of Meeting 29.

Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes, including Actions

5. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** actions completed and progress against current activities since meeting 29 -1 March 2011.

Agenda Item 5: Chair's Report

6. The Chair provided an oral report on his activities over the last few weeks, and described in detail his intensive program of stakeholder meetings throughout the Basin and his meeting with the Ministerial Forum on Friday 1 April 2011.

Item 6: Chief Executive's Report

10. After a brief discussion, Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **endorsed** the draft 2011–2015 Corporate Plan.
11. The Chief Executive **outlined** the status of FOI requests and **asked** that Prof Barry Hart provide him with any email correspondence, or other documents, relating to feedback on the submission presented by CSIRO, which were required to complete the discovery of documents for FOI request 22.

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12. The Chief Executive **reported** that giving evidence to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia's Inquiry into the impact of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in regional Australia had provided an opportunity to publicly clarify media misinterpretation of CSIRO feedback on the *Guide to the proposed Basin Plan*. Members **agreed** to put the section of the hearing transcript relevant to CSIRO on the Authority website, plus a link to the full transcript, when it became available from Hansard.
13. Members **noted** the Chief Executive's report on the National Cultural Flows Planning and Research Committee.
14. Members **clarified** the Authority position on media communications by non-executive board members agreed at Meeting 29 and **agreed** that they should seek clearance from the Chair or the Chief Executive, rather than the media unit as previously agreed, before responding to media requests, but that they should also check with the media unit in case there were any matters that they needed to be aware of.
15. Members **noted** the concerns of nominees of the proposed Social and Economic Reference Committee at the disbandment of the Committee, but **agreed** that it was important to focus on getting the best possible outcomes from the consulting work currently being completed and the drawing together of other social and economic impact information.
16. Members **noted** the delay in publishing of the National Water Account by the Bureau of Meteorology, due to delays in receiving data from the eight regions, and members **agreed** that this matter be raised at the next BOC meeting when states would be encouraged to be more responsive.

**Agenda Item 7.3: Ground Water SDLs — Managing Deep Groundwater Systems
(Including Coal-Seam Gas)**

28. Authority members **agreed** SEWPac be invited to brief Authority meeting 31 on 3 May.

Agenda Item 7.10: Update on Engagement

51. Members discussed the paper ...(*Feedback on the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan*), which provided a summary with statistics on who provided feedback, where they were from, what they said... and **agreed** that the document should be made available on the Authority website.

Agenda Item 8: Basin Plan Development Working Group and Testing Committee

52. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** that the Basin Plan Development Working Group meets weekly, having met on 11, 18 and 25 March 2011. Members of the Group are: Don Frater (KPMG), Simon Corden (KPMG), Peter Sutherland (GHD), Jennifer Westacott (KPMG, until 1 April 2011), and Lyndsay Neilson.

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Members **noted** the feedback provided by the Basin Plan Development Working Group.

53. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** that the Basin Plan Testing Committee meets fortnightly, having met on 11 and 25 March 2011. Members of the Committee are: Karlene Maywald, Peter Cosier, Thomas Parry, Mal Peters, Christine Forster, Jeff Angel, Kel Baxter, Joan Burns and Ian Todd. Members **noted** the feedback provided by the Testing Committee.

Agenda Item 9: Other MDBA Activities

Agenda Item 9.1: River Murray Update

54. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** the River Murray update and, in particular, current water resource availability, key River Murray System management issues and progress with the assets management program.

Agenda Item 9.2: Natural Resource Management

55. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** key developments and issues within the Natural Resource Management Division.

Agenda Item 10: Other Business

10.1 BCC Briefing

56. The Chair **requested** that the Basin Community Committee be provided with a briefing on outcomes from this Authority meeting, at its next meeting, to be held on 20 April 2011. This would be done by Di Davidson who would be the Authority representative at the meeting.

10.2 Authority Attendance at BOC Meetings

57. The Chair **requested** that members seek to attend BOC meetings whenever possible to demonstrate the Authority's high level of interest and involvement. He hoped to join the meeting by teleconference.

Agenda Item 11: Next Meeting

58. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **agreed** to meet on Monday 11 April 2011, either face-to-face in Sydney, or by teleconference, at a time to be decided in consultation with members. The meeting would focus on resolution of items 7.1 and 7.6 from Meeting 30.

Meeting Close

59. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 4.55 pm.

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Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Attachment F – Authority Meeting 30a – 11 April 2011 – Teleconference

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 3.15 pm.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

2. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 30a.

Conflict of Interest

3. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

4.2 Upcoming Basin Officials (BOC) Meeting

12. The Chair **advised** he would be participating by teleconference in BOC meeting 11 – 14 April 2011 to reinforce the messages from the Ministerial Forum on 1 April. Di Davidson confirmed her availability to attend and the Chair **reiterated** his request from Authority meeting 30 that members seek to attend BOC meetings to demonstrate the Authority’s wish to work collaboratively and with transparency.

Agenda Item 5: Next Meeting

14. Murray–Darling Basin Authority **agreed** to meet on Tuesday 19 April 2011 by teleconference.

Meeting Close

15. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 4.35 pm.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Attachment G – Authority Meeting 30b – 19 April 2011 – Teleconference

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 8.05 pm.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

2. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 30b.

Conflict of Interest

3. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.

Agenda Item 4: Draft Agenda, Meeting MDBA 31

9. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **agreed** to the draft agenda for Meeting 31 to be held on 3 May 2011.

Agenda Item 5: Other Business

5.1 Basin Officials Committee Meeting

10. Ms Di Davidson **reported** on the Basin Officials Committee meeting on 14 April 2011 which she had attended on the Chair's behalf.

5.2 Windsor report

11. The Chair **reported** that tabling of the House of Representatives Committee inquiry into the Impact of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia (the Windsor report) might be delayed and suggested that if it was delayed, the Authority could not delay the release of its proposed Basin Plan. The Chair **suggested** that if there was going to be a significant delay with the Windsor report, the Authority could seek a private briefing with the chair on the report's main findings.

Agenda Item 6: Next Meeting

12. Murray–Darling Basin Authority **agreed** to meet on Tuesday 3 May 2011 in Sydney.

Meeting Close

13. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

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Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Attachment H – Authority Meeting 31 – 3 May 2011 – Sydney Airport

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting and Apologies

1. The Chair **opened** the meeting at 9.00 am and **stated** that he would adjourn the meeting briefly at 10.00 am so that he could open, by phone, the Science Forum being held that day in Canberra (see item 5, paragraph 13).
2. Apologies were **received** from Mr David Green.
3. The Chair **reported** that there was still no news on the appointment of a new member.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Draft Agenda

4. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **adopted** the agenda for meeting 31.

Conflict of Interest

5. No member declared any conflict of interest, actual or apparent, in relation to any items on the agenda.
6. The Secretary **stated** that, in his review of governance arrangements and the management of risk through current governance structures, it had emerged that written disclosures of conflicts of interest had not been completed by most Authority members for 2011. The Authority's own protocols (adopted on 1 February 2010, and reflecting the requirement of the *Water Act 2007*) required a written disclosure to be made on an annual basis, and as individual member's circumstances changed. The Chair therefore **requested** that all members provide a current written disclosure of conflicts of interest as soon as convenient.

Agenda Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting 30

7. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **confirmed** the minutes of Meeting 30 (5 April 2011).

Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes, including Actions

8. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** actions completed and progress against current activities since meeting 30 (5 April 2011).
9. Members **discussed** action item 27/2/1 (Authority meeting 27 – 12 January 2011) relating to the attendance of Executive Directors at all Authority meetings and **agreed**

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that this was not necessary, and that Executive Directors should attend only when an item was directly relevant to their administrative area.

10. Members **discussed** action item 27/9.1/1 (Authority meeting 27) relating to having the Director of the Media Strategy Unit present at all Authority meetings and **agreed** that, given the importance of media communications in the lead-up to release of the proposed Basin Plan, the Director ... should be present at all Authority meetings.

Agenda Item 5: Chair's Report

11. The Chair **provided** an oral report on his activities over the last few weeks, and stressed that the Authority had now moved into an important pre-release phase of activity which included two main areas of work: (1) drafting the suite of documents associated with the proposed Basin Plan (hence Prof Lyndsay Neilson's attendance at the meeting); and (2) widespread, 'no surprises' communication with stakeholders and jurisdictions. In his May tour of the Basin, the Chair would convey the message that the Authority was wrapping up current engagement activities and preparing stakeholders for the imminent release of the proposed Basin Plan, which would be followed by more consultations.
12. The Chair **noted** the departure of Mr Geoff Haberfeld, Executive Director Engagement Secretariat and Communications, from the Authority and thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Authority.
13. The Chair **reported** that the science workshop, comprising a small group of environmental scientists, was being held on 3 and 4 May 2011 in Canberra to discuss whether the MDBA had availed itself of the best available science and whether the science had been appropriately used in developing the proposed Basin Plan. The outcomes of the workshop would be fed back to the Authority, the Proposed Basin Plan Development Working Group and the Proposed Basin Plan Testing Committee.
14. Following a brief report by Di Davidson on the latest Basin Community Committee (BCC) meeting, which she had attended, the Chair **emphasised** the importance of continuing to include the BCC in Authority processes and inviting BCC members to stakeholder meetings held by the Authority in their regions.

Agenda Item 6: Chief Executive's Report

15. Murray–Darling Basin Authority members **noted** the Chief Executive's tabled report and in particular matters relating to the recent Basin Officials Committee (BOC) meeting and the Senior Officials Group (SOG) teleconference.

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17. Members **requested** a list of names of people nominated for the three Technical Groups which had been established to assist the Social and Economic Working Group (convened by the Authority to assist in guiding its forward work program on social and economic matters).

Agenda Item 9: Other MDBA Activities

Agenda Item 9.1: River Murray Update

54. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** the River Murray update, in particular, current water resource availability, key River Murray System management issues, and progress with the assets management program.
55. The Chair **requested** an information briefing from the Executive Director, River Murray, David Dreverman, on the current situation with Lake Hume which was now effectively full, and was likely to stay that way through winter and spring, and the concomitant issue of 'airspace' which was needed to mitigate floods or smaller overbank-flow events.

Agenda Item 9.2: Natural Resource Management Update

56. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** key developments and issues within the Natural Resource Management Division.

Agenda Item 10: Other Business

10.1 Secretary's Review of MDBA Governance

57. Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** that the functions of and the issues managed by the now abolished Basin Plan Issues Committee could appropriately be managed through the current governance arrangements of the Authority.

Agenda Item 11: Next Meeting

58. Murray–Darling Basin Authority **noted** that:
- (a) the next monthly Authority meeting (meeting 32) would be on Tuesday 7 June 2011 in Canberra, and that Di Davidson had provided notice that she would not be able to attend the meeting; and
 - (b) Authority meeting 33 on Tuesday 5 July would also take place in Canberra.
59. Members **agreed** to meet by teleconference on Wednesday 11 May 2011, from 10.30 am to 12.00 noon.

Meeting Close

60. The Chair **declared** the meeting closed at 4.12 pm.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 106

Topic: Briefings provided by MDBA

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

Could you please provide the Committee with a list of the briefings the MDBA has given to the Minister for Water or his / her staff, and the Prime Minister, or his / her staff, in the last 3 months?

Answer:

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority has provided a total of six briefs to the office of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities in the last three months to 6 June 2011. Details are as follows:

- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Between the Mekong River Commission and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority International Engagements and Travel.
- Publication of Water Audit Monitoring Report 2009-10.
- Outcomes from Murray-Darling Basin Authority Meeting 29 – 1 March 2011 and Three Supplementary Weekly Authority Meetings.
- Feedback on the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan.
- Outcomes from Murray-Darling Basin Authority Meeting 31 – 3 May 2011 and Two Supplementary Weekly Authority Meetings.

MDBA has not provided any briefs to the Prime Minister, or her staff, in the last 3 months.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 107

Topic: Hydrologic indicator sites

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

I note that in response to a request for the meeting notes for the Authority meetings on 7 December 2011, the Authority agreed to undertake "independent advice" on whether the environmental objectives and flow regimes were appropriate at 108 hydrologic indicator sites and whether additional environmental water can be practically delivered to these sites.

1. How has the MDBA sought this advice?
2. Who is it receiving it from?
3. When will it be complete?
4. Can you provide a copy of it to this committee?

Answer:

The Authority received a significant volume of feedback in relation to the proposals set out in the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan, including the methods used to determine environmental objectives and flow regimes.

The Authority continues to work to improve the technical basis for the proposed Basin Plan. This has included closer examination of the environmental objectives and the practicalities of environmental flow delivery. On 3-4 May 2011, the Authority held a forum with a small number of scientists as a further part of this process.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA

Question No: 108

Topic: MDBA Board member

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Joyce asked:

Does the Authority know of any plans to replace Board member Dr Diana Day?

Answer:

No. The appointment of Board members is administered by the Department of Sustainability Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

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Program: Division or Agency: 4: MDBA: **Question No:** 109

Topic: Native Fish Strategy

Proof Hansard Page and Date 107 (25/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Cameron asked:

Ms Swirepik: Carp are very difficult to control. I have been involved on and off with carp control issues for probably 15 years. When you have a pest species like that, it is almost impossible to eradicate them, so there have been various efforts put into carp control. The biggest investment that has been made by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the former commission is in the CRC for invasive animals. There is a daughterless carp program that we have been putting funds into. It is approximately \$1 million, I think, a year—I would probably have to confirm that figure—over 10 years. That is to try and get a genetic structure, if you like, that will actually stop carp having anything except for male offspring. That is probably one of the biggest hopes in a big biocontrol type program. We do a lot of carp screening through the fishways on the Murray River and that removes a lot of carp. I think David Dreverman might be able to give some figures, but that sort of manual removal effort is continuing in the meantime.

CHAIR: Do you have a figure for the overall cost of this program?

Ms Swirepik: Of the Native Fish Strategy?

CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Swirepik: I could not tell you. I would have to take that on notice. I know that it has varied between approximately \$2½ million and \$5½ million over the last couple of years. So the allocation that it gets is dependent on what our partner governments sign off in our corporate plan.

Answer:

- Native Fish Strategy expenditure for 2006/07 to 2010/11 is provided below:

2006-07 (expended)	2007-08 (expended)	2008-09 (expended)	2009-10 (expended)	2010-11 (budgeted)
\$3.940m	\$4.970m	\$5.969m	\$5.445m	\$4.185m