Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Budget Estimates, May 2013

Program: Agency:	MDBA	**Question No:**	187
Topic:	MDBA - Model annual inflows of the Murray-Darling		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	16 (29/05/13)		

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE: Can you provide the committee with the model annual inflows of the Murray-Darling for every year since 1895? Please include these up to the latest year possible. Obviously, I want that on notice; I am not going to ask you to do it now. Is it possible to get that in the next—

Ms Harwood: I am sorry; what was the—

Senator JOYCE: Can we get model annual inflows into the Murray-Darling for every year since 1895?

Answer:

The Basin Plan 2012 provided the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's (the Authority) best estimate of average surface water inflows in the basin under baseline conditions of development (2009) as 32553 GL/y for the 1895-2009 period (refer Schedule 1, Paragraph 34, page 161).

The data in the table below are the annual estimated inflows in the basin for this 1895-2009 period and updated estimates for 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The data for 1895-2009 are based on both modelled and unmodelled inflows (i.e., diversions upstream of inflow locations, interceptions and inter basin transfers):

- for modelled by Authority components (average 28346 GL/y), detailed daily inflow estimates available were used; and
- for unmodelled and not modelled by Authority components (4207 GL/y), long term average inflows estimate have generally been used for all years.

The estimates for 2009-10 and 2010-11 represent the best available information at this time and may change as better data becomes available. These estimates are based on available flow data collated from Basin States (and do not include Wimmera inflows at this time).

Estimated total inflows into the Murray Darling Basin (Modelled plus unmodelled)

Water Year	Modelled Inflows (GL/y)	Unmodelled and other inflows (GL/y)	Total Inflow (GL/y	Water Year	Modelled Inflows (GL/y)	Unmodelled and other inflows (GL/y)	Total Inflow (GL/y
1895-96	18066	4200	22265	**1953-54**	29042	4521	33563
1896-97	13170	4256	17426	**1954-55**	45965	4404	50369
1897-98	21467	4207	25675	**1955-56**	108187	3935	112123
1898-99	17800	4082	21883	**1956-57**	61829	4902	66732
1899-00	21309	4150	25459	**1957-58**	13778	4514	18292
1900-01	24992	4124	29116	**1958-59**	36509	4253	40762
1901-02	14927	4133	19059	**1959-60**	19003	4329	23332
1902-03	11853	4362	16214	**1960-61**	31727	4233	35960
1903-04	32614	4184	36799	**1961-62**	26381	4512	30893
1904-05	21092	3970	25062	**1962-63**	25860	4145	30005
1905-06	25428	4135	29563	**1963-64**	23534	4157	27691
1906-07	33086	4541	37627	**1964-65**	30561	4235	34796
1907-08	18007	4209	22217	**1965-66**	12262	4511	16773
1908-09	17243	4053	21297	**1966-67**	23495	4108	27603
1909-10	37201	4084	41286	**1967-68**	16883	4365	21248
1910-11	29655	4002	33657	**1968-69**	24248	3863	28111
1911-12	15018	4232	19250	**1969-70**	27667	4004	31671
1912-13	25750	3974	29724	**1970-71**	62830	3843	66672
1913-14	15020	4126	19146	**1971-72**	25732	4043	29775
1914-15	6906	4687	11593	**1972-73**	24405	4185	28590
1915-16	24315	3987	28302	**1973-74**	65012	3964	68976
1916-17	60039	4514	64552	**1974-75**	46822	5011	51833
1917-18	56772	4448	61220	**1975-76**	62714	4665	67379
1918-19	17682	4745	22426	**1976-77**	28713	4512	33225
1919-20	11784	4473	16257	**1977-78**	17859	4168	22028
1920-21	58231	3987	62217	**1978-79**	31367	4074	35441
1921-22	40602	3993	44595	**1979-80**	13754	4337	18091
1922-23	18219	4095	22314	**1980-81**	17918	3999	21917
1923-24	30477	3951	34428	**1981-82**	33292	3878	37169
1924-25	31347	4420	35767	**1982-83**	25258	4254	29512
1925-26	26744	4359	31103	**1983-84**	45403	4009	49412
1926-27	20259	4242	24501	**1984-85**	30437	4083	34520
1927-28	23808	4127	27935	**1985-86**	17340	4175	21515
1928-29	17102	4174	21276	**1986-87**	29846	3899	33745
1929-30	11848	4227	16075	**1987-88**	28067	4245	32312
1930-31	42593	3795	46388	**1988-89**	41700	3951	45651

1931-32	34846	4009	38856	**1989-90**	45589	4123	49711
1932-33	18059	4118	22177	**1990-91**	40945	4046	44991
1933-34	26234	4141	30375	**1991-92**	25493	4014	29507
1934-35	32666	4124	36791	**1992-93**	28358	4168	32526
1935-36	18684	4855	23539	**1993-94**	31691	4625	36316
1936-37	24355	4171	28525	**1994-95**	13962	4217	18179
1937-38	10938	4372	15310	**1995-96**	42356	3968	46325
1938-39	17699	4301	22001	**1996-97**	38300	4428	42728
1939-40	27442	3935	31377	**1997-98**	11685	4450	16136
1940-41	18830	4313	23143	**1998-99**	50822	4018	54840
1941-42	15533	4195	19728	**1999-00**	20755	4121	24876
1942-43	32071	3920	35990	**2000-01**	38809	3980	42789
1943-44	16689	4102	20791	**2001-02**	13567	4076	17644
1944-45	11974	4404	16378	**2002-03**	7293	4218	11511
1945-46	17373	4192	21566	**2003-04**	20139	4045	24184
1946-47	19992	3962	23955	**2004-05**	14254	4020	18274
1947-48	33745	3831	37576	**2005-06**	17916	4134	22050
1948-49	17821	4553	22374	**2006-07**	4632	4333	8965
1949-50	52727	4340	57067	**2007-08**	15636	4067	19702
1950-51	85957	4523	90480	**2008-09**	8833	3967	12800
1951-52	42225	4217	46443	**2009-10***	24727	3967	28694
1952-53	46778	4694	51473	**2010-11***	70502	3967	74469

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Budget Estimates, May 2013

Program: Agency:	MDBA	**Question No:**	188
Topic:	Project at Chowilla – contractual details		
Proof Hansard Page and Date	20 (29/05/13)		
or Written Question:			

Senator Ruston asked:

Senator RUSTON: On that basis, I would ask you to get me what you think the final cost of the project is going to be. Could you also confirm whether, in the contract, the contractor was paid $66,000 a day for down time when they were unable to work and actually what that $66,000 equates to in a total amount for the number of days that were down and who is responsible for the paying of that $66,000 a day, if it is actually a correct figure? Could you also—if you do not have the answer now—provide me with some information about where the negotiations are currently at with the landholder. My understanding is that we do not have an agreement with the landholder in relation to any compensation that is to be paid to them. So the question is: what is the government's liability, what is the taxpayer's liability in relation to this particular person who has, so far, not got a contract with the department for the consequences of the inundation of his land in relation to the infrastructure?

Mr Dreverman: I will take all of that on notice because some of those are quite complex commercial matters between the state of South Australia and the contractor or between the state of South Australia and the landholder. So they are not matters that the authority is directly responsible for. We fund the overall project, but the project is delivered by the state of South Australia on behalf of four governments. I will have to take that on notice because I will have to go back to the state of South Australia to get that information.

Senator RUSTON: Perhaps you could just let me know where the liability rests if there is an unsatisfactory conclusion to the negotiations with the landholder, despite the fact that we have a regulator—

CHAIR: Senator Ruston, we need to move on.

Senator RUSTON: and who will pay. Thank you very much

Answer:

The current projected cost of the Chowilla project is $56.959 million (excluding GST) up from the original 2009 projected cost of $42.318 million (excluding GST). The updated figure covers the cost of variations to date, re-design due to latent conditions and the cost of delay and damage caused by successive flood events. It also includes an allowance for some further latent conditions but does not allow for any further major flooding.

The Chowilla Regulator Project is being managed under General Conditions of Contract set out in Australian Standard 2124. Under the contract, delays caused by latent conditions and flood, in this contract, are the responsibility of and paid for by the client. The project is being managed by SA Water as the South Australian State Constructing Authority under the Murray Darling Basin Agreement. Under this arrangement the source of the funding is from the Australian Government, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia Governments, provided through the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

The amount of payments to cover the cost of delay depends on the labour and plant used on the construction site when the delay occurs. Typical contractor claims on this project for delay have been in the range of $15,000 to $32,000 per day (excluding GST). When protracted delays occur (as in this case), the contractor is requested to demobilise and later remobilise labour and plant to minimise costs. The final figure paid is negotiated between SA Water and the contractor. Delays on this project currently exceed two years and the total cost to date for delays, clean-up, repairs and remediation as a result of flooding is close to $9 million.

In relation to land matters raised, the South Australian Government is unable to provide advice on issues relating to liability and status of negotiations due to legal privilege. However, the South Australian Government has advised that:

- The Chowilla floodplain is a Game Reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and under that Act is vested in the State of South Australia. Under the Act, and the Management Plan for the Reserve, the public has access to the Game Reserve. The Chowilla floodplain is also a Living Murray Icon Site and part of the Riverland Ramsar Wetland of international importance.

- Robertson-Chowilla Pty Ltd has a lease, with the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation as lessor, that allows them to graze selected areas of the Chowilla Game Reserve and the adjoining Regional Reserve.

- Negotiations are progressing between the South Australian Minister and Robertson Chowilla Pty Ltd on a number of matters relating to their lease and use of these public lands.

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Program: Agency:	MDBA	**Question No:**	189
Topic:	MDBA - Monitoring and Evaluation under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	Written		

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

How will monitoring and evaluation obligations under MD Basin plan be met and funded? Specifically interested in how much of their budget is earmarked for Monitoring and evaluation.

Answer:

The Basin Plan includes a monitoring and evaluation program, which establishes obligations on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority), the Basin States, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Population and Communities (the department). These obligations build on existing, funded and ongoing arrangements.

The Authority is negotiating an agreement with the Basin States and the CEWH, which will provide for a phased transition from existing reporting arrangements to full alignment with the Basin Plan by 2016.

Basin States' costs of implementation are supported by funding as part of an Intergovernmental Agreement, negotiated by the department. This has been signed by Victoria, SA and the ACT, with the draft Agreement remaining open to other States.

The Authority's obligations are supported by a 2013-14 budget of approximately $4 million for monitoring, evaluation and reporting and approximately $2 million for data acquisition and integration.

The obligations on CEWH and the department are funded from the department's allocations as per the Portfolio Budget Statements.

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Program: Agency:	MDBA	**Question No:**	190
Topic:	MDBA – Joint NRM projects to MDBA		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	Written		

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

Two state governments have reduced funding for joint NRM projects to Basin Authority. The Native Fish Program an important program which engaged community and worked to protect native fish species.

What future course of action is being considered to continue meeting these environmental and community goals/ how will SEWPAC/MDBA meet these goals?

Answer:

In line with the Basin Officials Committee decision of 11 July 2012, and consistent with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority) Corporate Plan 2012–2013 to 2015–2016 as approved by the Legislative and Governance Forum on the Murray-Darling Basin , the Authority's Native Fish Program has been wound back throughout 2012–13 and completed by 30 June 2013. As part of this wind-up, a number of legacy products have been produced by the Authority to capture and communicate the previous outputs and outcomes of the Native Fish Program.

The recent decision of the Legislative and Governance Forum on the Murray-Darling Basin (Out-of-session 12) in regard to the Funding Arrangements for the Joint Activities 2013-14 was to make a short-term (12 month) investment in three elements of the former Native Fish Program, namely pest fish management including the control of tilapia and carp, showcasing methods and techniques to restore river environments to benefit native fish, and monitoring of the Sea to Hume fishways.

Beyond these three elements, the jurisdictions have indicated that they will continue to work independently in their priority areas in regard to the objectives of the Native Fish Strategy.