

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: OWS

**Question No:** 076

**Topic:** Office of Water Science - staffing

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

How many staff are employed in the area of the Department that takes care of the “Science Based Framework for Coal Seam Gas and Coal Mining Impacts on Water” at the moment?  
How many staff do you expect to employ in this area over the next year?

**Answer:**

As at September 2012, 36.4 staff were employed within the Office of Water Science. The Annual Operating Plan for Office of Water Science indicates an average staff level of 43.2 for the 2012-2013 financial year.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: OWS

**Question No:** 077

**Topic:** Independent Expert Scientific Committee - budget

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What are the Departmental expenses over the forward estimates from the costs of this area of the Department? Please provide the data for each year of the forward estimates.
2. Are these Departmental costs all being funded from the \$150 million put aside for the Independent Expert Scientific Panel?
3. What are the costs of the Panel itself, the costs of meetings, wages, etc? Please provide the data for each year of the forward estimates.
4. How much of the \$150 million will be left for funding independent research after taking out the departmental costs, the costs of the panel and any other costs not related to funding research?

**Answer:**

1. The operating budget for the Office of Water Science to support and deliver the work of, and advice by, the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (the Committee) has been set at \$7.4 million in 2012/13. This includes funds for substantive analytical work requested by the Committee delivered by the Office of Water Science. The allocation of funding for the forward estimates years will depend on future decisions about the division of work to be undertaken within the Office of Water Science itself or allocated to external bodies.
2. Yes. The \$150 million was for all costs associated with the delivery of the research outcomes and supporting the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development.
3. The budgeted direct costs of the Committee is approximately \$600,000 for each year of the forward estimates and this covers sitting fees and allowance, travel and meeting costs.
4. The remaining funds will be spent on external research activities, inclusive of bioregional assessments.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 078

**Topic:** Water programs

**Proof Hansard Page and Date:** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Can the Department please provide a list of expenditure under each of the following programs for all financial years beginning 2007-08, and include the most up to date spending for the current financial year. Can the Department also provide forecast or projected for these programs over the forward estimates?
  - a. Restoring the Balance.
  - b. Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure.
  - c. National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns.
  - d. National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative.
  - e. Green Precincts Fund.

**Answer:**

- 1a. Actual expenditure under the Restoring the Balance program for the period 2007-08 through to 30 September 2012 is \$2.190 billion<sup>#</sup>. Projected expenditure\* for the remainder of 2012-13 and the forward estimates is also provided.

Restoring the Balance	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	To 30 Sep \$'000	June \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	33,059	371,706	780,188	357,657	540,896	36,560	140,671	150,013	349,190	410,400	490,166

- 1b. Actual expenditure under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure program for the period 2007-08 through to 30 September 2012 is \$1.236 billion<sup>#</sup>. Projected expenditure\* for the remainder of 2012-13 and the forward estimates is also provided.

Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	To 30 Sep \$'000	June \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	122,001	63,485	213,704	225,666	563,020	47,714	615,307	618,022	781,261	1,214,191	579,043

1c. Actual expenditure under the National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns program for the period 2007-08 through to 30 September 2012 is \$141 million#. Projected expenditure\* for the remainder of 2012-13 and the forward estimates is also provided.

National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	To 30 Sep \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	10,000	13,041	13,659	17,240	83,976	3,017	70,471	14,536	8,000	2,945	Nil

1d. Actual expenditure under the National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative program for the period 2007-08 through to 30 September 2012 is \$8 million#. Projected expenditure\* for the remainder of 2012-13 and the forward estimates is also provided.

National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	To 30 Sep \$'000	June \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Nil	620	4,661	2,315	246	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

1e. Actual expenditure under the Green Precincts Fund for the period 2007-08 through to 30 September 2012 is \$13 million#. Projected expenditure\* for the remainder of 2012-13 and the forward estimates is also provided.

Green Precincts Fund	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	To 30 Sep \$'000	June \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Nil	500	5,097	5,188	2,434	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Notes:

# All figures exclude departmental funding.

\* Projected expenditure is based on expense estimates as published in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements.

^ Excludes funds appropriated to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 079

**Topic:** Purchase plan

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. In the advice the Department gave to the Minister after the election it proposed to announce a refined “purchase plan” as soon as the Guide is released. Was that purchase plan released? Does the government plan to release a refined “purchase plan” in the future? If so when?

**Answer:**

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is currently developing a draft Water Recovery Strategy that will be released for consultation.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 080

**Topic:** Infrastructure investment

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Of the 2,750 gigalitres of water that is planned to be diverted from productive to environmental use in the Murray-Darling Basin, how much will be acquired via infrastructure investment and how much via entitlement purchase?

**Answer:**

1. The actual volume of water savings from infrastructure investment will not be known until projects have been completed. However, it is expected that investments in more efficient irrigation infrastructure under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program will deliver approximately 600 gigalitres towards the proposed 2,750 gigalitre target. Of this, as at 30 September 2012, 316 gigalitres has already been secured through infrastructure works contracts.

As at 30 September 2012, the Commonwealth had secured water entitlement purchases which will provide 1,094 gigalitres for the environment (measured in long term average annual yield). The final volume of water purchases necessary to bridge the gap to the Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will depend on the confirmed volume of water recovery from infrastructure and other sources, including water recovery from programs managed by state governments. It will also depend on the outcome of the application of the SDL adjustment mechanism, that is, the volume of offsets from projects designed to achieve equivalent environmental outcomes with less water, such as environmental works and measures and more efficient river operations. Some Murray-Darling Basin states consider there is potential for up to 650 GL of water recovery to be “offset” through such environmental works and measures.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 081

**Topic:** ANAO Report - Administration of the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in New South Wales

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

In June 2012, the Australian National Audit Office report Administration of the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in New South Wales, raised some serious concerns regarding the operation of this program, which is a key component of the Federal Government's \$5.8 billion Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program.

The ANAO's report concluded that all applications from funding rounds 1 and 2 of the NSW program "did not contain sufficient detail to facilitate a thorough assessment, particularly in relation to addressing the economic/social criteria, environmental criteria and the projects' cost-benefit analyses". That amounts to \$649 million of taxpayer dollars to projects that have not undergone a cost-benefit analysis.

1. Can the Department provide any advice or indication as to why cost-benefit analyses weren't conducted for some of these applications?
2. Will the Department acknowledge that, given the abovementioned concerns expressed by the ANAO, irrigators in the Riverland have been understandably upset by their inability to access funds (as acknowledged by the Minister)?

**Answer:**

1. A cost-benefit analysis was conducted as part of the assessment of all applications under Round 1 and 2 of the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in New South Wales.
2. Funding of \$530 million was committed for South Australian irrigators and communities under the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform on the basis of priorities identified by the South Australian Government. This has included investment in projects supporting irrigation communities in South Australia. South Australian irrigators have also received funding under the Commonwealth On Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program which is a competitive program applying across the Southern Murray-Darling Basin. In addition, the Commonwealth has recently announced further funding support of \$265 million specifically for Riverland communities, including a major irrigation industry focused project of \$180 million. The South Australian Government is developing business case proposals for these new projects.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 082

**Topic:** Condamine-Balonne catchment –  
sale of water

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Commonwealth received offers during its tender processes or otherwise for water for sale in the Condamine-Balonne that it has rejected?

**Answer:**

1. Offers are rejected when they do not represent value-for-money for the Commonwealth based on an assessment of prevailing market prices and potential environmental benefit.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 083

**Topic:** Cubbie Station

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Commonwealth at any stage enquired about purchasing entitlement from Cubbie?

**Answer:**

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has been approached by the owners of Cubbie Station, representatives of the owners, and potential purchasers of the Cubbie Group on several occasions. In each instance, the department has advised that the preferred approach to purchasing water entitlements from the Condamine-Balonne was through open market tenders. Advice was also given that only the legal owners of Cubbie Station, or their authorised representative, could lodge a sell offer.

The only approach the department has used to elicit sell offers of water entitlements from the Condamine-Balonne catchment has been through open market tenders.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 084

**Topic:** Irrigation efficiency

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

I refer to Minister Burke's media release of 18 July 2012, which announces \$1.2 million funding to explore proposals to improve irrigation efficiency in South Australia. The funding is for a feasibility study and a business case for the South Australian River Murray Improvements Program.

1. What are the rationale and objective of this feasibility study?
2. Can you please indicate how this feasibility study is progressing?

In this release, the Minister also states "the high efficiency of so many South Australian irrigators has made it difficult for many of them to access previous rounds of funding."

3. Can the Department please provide an indication of how much funding has been allocated to South Australia projects in the past 5 years?
4. What percentage of total funding is this?

**Answer:**

1. The study will analyse the feasibility of the proposed South Australian River Murray Improvements Program and develop governance, financial accountability and risk management frameworks for program delivery. Outcomes from the study will be presented to the Australian Government as a business case which will be subject to due diligence assessment by the Commonwealth.
2. The South Australian Government is currently undertaking work on the feasibility study. The funding agreement requires the South Australian Government to submit the final business case to the Commonwealth Government by 31 January 2013.
3. As at 16 October 2012, the Australian Government had committed almost \$1.2 billion under Water for the Future (which commenced in 2007-08) to South Australian projects, including major investments to improve ecological outcomes in the Coorong and Lower Lakes, as well as funding for irrigation-related projects (both on and off-farm) and the Adelaide Desalination Plant.

On 28 October 2012, the Commonwealth Government announced a further commitment of up to \$265 million to South Australia. Subject to due diligence, the funding includes up to \$180 million from the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program for the South Australian River Murray Improvements Program, as well as up to \$85 million for research, development and industry redevelopment in regional South Australia.

4. South Australia is responsible for 6 per cent of diversions in the Murray-Darling Basin and the funding described above represents 19 per cent of total funding allocations.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 085

**Topic:** Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

1. What is the total amount of Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance funding available under the Planning Assistance Program?
2. How much of the Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance funding was allocated in 2011/12?
3. How much of the Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance funding is earmarked for allocation in 2012/13?
4. How much Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance funding in total currently remains to be allocated?
5. How many individual funding grants have been made under the Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance Program?
6. How many of these funding grants have been made to agriculture interests in Queensland?
7. How many of these funding grants have been made to agriculture interests in the Northern Territory?
8. How many of these funding grants have been made to agriculture interests in Western Australia (excepting the South West region)?

**Answer:**

1. The total amount of funding allocated in 2008 to the program was up to \$7.2 million.
2. The total funding allocated in 2011/12 was \$210,074, comprising grant payments to three separate irrigation schemes.
3. The 2012/13 budget allocation is \$300,000.
4. The program closed for applications after three grant rounds on 29 October 2012. Some applications received prior to the closing date are currently under assessment.
5. There have been 23 grants made under the program.

6. There have been three irrigation modernisation planning grants made in Queensland; to Sunwater for preparing modernisation plans for eight separate irrigation schemes, North Burdekin Water Board and South Burdekin Water Board.
7. There have been no applications for grants from the Northern Territory.
8. There have been no applications for grants from Western Australia outside of the South-west region.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 086

**Topic:** Menindee Lakes Joint Evaluation  
Team

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Evaluation team come to a final position on works to upgrade Menindee Lakes?
2. Has the Team produced any interim reports? If so, please provide a copy.
3. When is the Team expected to report?
4. What progress has been made? What roadblocks currently exist?
5. How many times has the Team met? Have any meetings been refused or cancelled? How many meetings are scheduled?
6. Have any options for works been ruled out? If so, which? Why?
7. Has the MDBA completed hydrological modelling in the area? What were its findings?
8. How has this modelling informed the work of and issues faced by the team?

**Answer:**

1. Officials have proposed a scope of works and related operational rules at Menindee Lakes to improve operation of the Lakes, for Ministerial consideration.
2. No.
3. See answer to question 1.
4. See answer to question 1.
5. There have been four meetings. No meetings were refused or cancelled. No further meetings are scheduled at this time.
6. The scope of works is subject to government agreement.
7. Yes. The modelling has tested various scenarios and combinations of infrastructure and operational rules to determine the viability, practicality and likely water savings of potential arrangements. The modelling found that evaporation at the lakes could be reduced under a range of scenarios.
8. The modelling enabled the team to determine the viability and cost effectiveness of potential changed infrastructure and operational arrangements.

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Budget Estimates, May 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 087

**Topic:** Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal  
Project – Stage 2

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Please provide the business case for this project.
2. What social and economic studies were done prior to approval of this project?
3. Was any analysis of potential job losses from reduced water entitlements conducted – if so, please provide copies.
4. What programs are in place to address any economic or community impacts arising from the NVIRP?
5. How will the Government measure its commitments as outlined under point 5 of the heads of agreement?
6. What is the total entitlement returned to the Commonwealth under this program to date. What further entitlements are expected?
7. How much has been paid to the Victorian Government under each of the 6 components of NVIRP Stage 2?
8. How will water acquired by the Commonwealth under NVIRP Stage 2 be accounted for under the Basin Plan – will it be credited towards particular catchment SDL targets?
9. What process does the Commonwealth have in place if the required amount of water is not delivered by the Victorian Government?
10. Is the Commonwealth aware of suggestions that funds were transferred from the NVIRP project funding account to Goulburn Murray Water to cover the waived termination fees for surrendered delivery shares?
11. Is the Commonwealth aware of claims by locals that native animals including koalas, kangaroos and platypi, as well as stock animals, have drowned in NVIRP funded plastic lined channels? How does the Commonwealth intend to address this issue?

**Answers:**

1. The release of the business case for the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project Stage 2 (NVIRP 2) is a matter for the Victorian Government.
2. Economic and social studies were carried out by the Victorian Government and presented as part of the business case for NVIRP 2.

3. Job losses are not anticipated from the NVIRP2 infrastructure project. The water entitlements being transferred to the Commonwealth under NVIRP 2 represent savings of water that otherwise would have been lost through inefficient infrastructure. These savings will not reduce the capacity of individual farms.
4. The Business Case submitted by Victoria identified a number of positive economic and community impacts that the NVIRP 2 project is expected to deliver.
5. The commitments outlined under item 5 of the Heads of Agreement are being measured as follows:
  - (a): there are specific outcomes for service delivery improvements set out in the Project Schedule (funding agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria), achievement of which are conditions of payment;
  - (b) and (e): the Commonwealth will monitor the economic conditions of the irrigation sector, including investment and competitiveness, throughout the life of the project;
  - (c): the transfers to environmental use will be shown by the water entitlements held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder; we will also assess the effectiveness of water savings actions to ensure that this water has come from non-productive uses; and
  - (d): we will monitor for any stranded assets, however, the fact that changes are being implemented in a single, coordinated project will reduce the risk of stranded assets.
6. As at November 2012, the Commonwealth has received the following entitlements from NVIRP 2:
  - 2,442 megalitres Long Term Cap Equivalent (LTCE) of High Reliability Water Shares.
  - 740 megalitres LTCE of Low Reliability Water Shares.
  - The following entitlements will be delivered over the remaining life of NVIRP 2;
    - 90,289 megalitres LTCE of High Reliability Water Shares; and
    - 27,351 megalitres LTCE of Low Reliability Water Shares.
7. At November 2012, total Commonwealth payments to the Victorian Government for the NVIRP 2 project were \$156,371,700. The Project Schedule sets out annual Commonwealth payments but these are not broken down into the six main components of the NVIRP 2 project.
8. Water acquired by the Commonwealth under NVIRP 2 will be credited towards the Victorian Murray and Goulburn Catchment Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) targets.
9. The Project Schedule sets out the milestone conditions that must be met prior to any Commonwealth payments being made. Each payment of Commonwealth funds (apart from the initial payment) is dependent on the delivery in full of a specified quantity of water entitlement as well as the achievement of a number of other outcomes listed in the Project Schedule.
10. The Commonwealth is not aware of any such suggestion in relation to the NVIRP 2 project which is receiving Commonwealth funding.



11. The Commonwealth is aware of claims in the media relating to koalas and stock animals and has raised this matter with the project managers, Goulburn Murray Rural Water Corporation and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment. It is a condition of Commonwealth funding that where channel lining is used, best practice in relation to the safety of animals is applied. This funding condition will be subject to Commonwealth audit during the project.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 088

**Topic:** Port Pirie Community Water Reuse Project

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Edwards asked:**

With reference to question number 091 (May Budget Estimates 2012), the Department stated that a strike caused a delay in the completion of the project.

1. Was the 30 June 2012 deadline for completion for all elements of the project met? If not, why not?
2. If the project was not completed on 30 June when was or when will the project be completed?

**Answer:**

1. No. Although the Reverse Osmosis Plant was completed by 30 June 2012, there were delays to the installation and commissioning of linking Council infrastructure.
2. Project construction was completed on 12 September 2012. The Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water officially launched the project on 15 November 2012.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 089

**Topic:** Private Irrigators Infrastructure  
Operators Program – New South  
Wales

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Government recently signed off on a \$180m project with MIL?
2. How much water will this project return to the environment?

**Answer:**

1. Yes. The value of the Funding Agreement with Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL) is up to \$165.3 million (GST exclusive).
2. MIL will transfer water entitlements to the Commonwealth that, in long-term average annual yield, will return 37,596 megalitres to the environment.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 090

**Topic:** Private Irrigators Infrastructure  
Program – South Australia

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. In regards to QoN 71 and the Private Irrigators Infrastructure Program South Australia – is it still the case that there remains some \$95m left unallocated?
2. Where are discussions at in regards to this program?
3. How many applications were received vs approved?
4. What further scope is there to ensure South Australian irrigators can access this program?

**Answer:**

1. Yes, funding of \$95.6 million (GST exclusive) is currently unallocated from the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Program for South Australia (PIIP-SA) and is available for activities within South Australia.
2. There are ongoing discussions between the Commonwealth and the South Australian Government on the proposed use of remaining South Australian State Priority Project funding including funds allocated to PIIP-SA.
3. A total of 20 applications have been received for funding under PIIP-SA, including two from Delivery Partners with multiple sub projects (one with three sub projects and one with 17 sub projects). Funding of \$14.4 million (GST exclusive) has been approved for 13 projects, including a Delivery Partner project with 16 sub projects.
4. The South Australian Government is determining its priorities for the remaining South Australian State Priority Project funding (including remaining PIIP-SA funding).

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 091

**Topic:** Restoring the Balance – water recovery

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator McKenzie asked:**

1. The MDBA website list the progress of water recovery under the Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin program. These figures are reported on a catchment by catchment basis. Please provide a further break-down of water purchase for all irrigation districts contained within those catchments.

**Answer:**

1. The provision of the requested information is complicated because the disassociation of water entitlements from land and trade in those water entitlements, both within a State and interstate trade, means that the connection between an entitlement and a particular irrigation district is less direct than previously. As a result, information captured in the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' database of water purchases includes the catchment from which the entitlement was purchased and the trading zone. The information on the irrigation district from which the water entitlement purchase was made is not available for every trade because the information was not consistently captured for each sale where there is a clear association to irrigation districts until late 2010. For the Victorian disassociated water shares, the Victorian Water Register does not record any link between a disassociated water share and an irrigation district even though it may be held and used within that district.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 092

**Topic:** Small Block Irrigators Exit Program

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. When was the last grant under this program provided?
2. How many per year, covering what area of land, were provided?
3. What is the rationale for locking in the 'swish cheese' impact of these grants?
4. Have any exemptions to the ban on irrigation on these properties been provided?

**Answer:**

1. The last grant payment was provided on 30 March 2011.
2. 293 grants were provided in 2009-10 and four grants were provided in 2010-11. The 297 grant recipients committed 2,747 hectares of land to the terms of the program.
3. A condition of accepting grants through the program was that the land owned by the applicant would not be irrigated for five years. Land can return to irrigated agriculture after the five year period has expired.
4. No.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 093

**Topic:** Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

1. How much funding has been allocated to date under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure program?
2. How much of the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure funding was allocated in 2011/12?
3. Where was it allocated and on what?
4. How much funding under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure program is earmarked for allocation in 2012/13?
5. Where will this funding be spent and on what?
6. How much of the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure funding has been provided to Northern Australian agriculture? In what locations?
7. How much Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure funding in total currently remains to be allocated?

**Answer:**

1. The Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (SRWUIP) is a \$5.8 billion program. At 30 September 2012, more than \$5.2 billion of administered funding has been allocated to known projects and programs.

2. In 2011/12, payments totalling \$563 million were provided to contracted SRWUIP projects. The breakdown of this is as follows:

<b>State</b>	<b>2011/12 Payments (\$m)</b>	<b>Activities that received payment in 2011/12</b>
Qld	\$10.47	Compliance and Enforcement (C&E); Coal-Seam Gas Feasibility Study; Environmental Works and Measures (EWM) Feasibility; National Water Market System (NWMS); Qld On-farm Water Use Efficiency
NSW	\$206.81	C&E; EWM Feasibility; Irrigation Hotspots Assessment; Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance; Lithgow Recycled water project; Menindee Lakes project studies; NSW Irrigated Farm Modernisation; NSW Metering Scheme; NSW Basin Pipes; NSW Healthy Floodplains; On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (OFIEP); NSW Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program (PIIOP)
ACT	\$0.19	C&E
Vic	\$192.7	C&E; EWM Feasibility; Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP); NWMS; OFIEP
SA	\$43.92	C&E; EWM Feasibility; IMPA; Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery Project; NWMS; OFIEP; Private Irrigators Infrastructure Program for SA (PIIPSA); SA Riverine Recovery
Tas	\$5.87	C&E; NWMS; Supporting More Efficient Irrigation in Tas;
WA	\$27.39	C&E; Gascoyne Pipeline Project; NWMS
NT	\$0.28	C&E
Murray-Darling Basin (no specific or multi-state)	\$67.08	Commonwealth Environmental Water Holdings management and infrastructure costs; Commonwealth environmental water shepherding; Irrigator-led Group Proposals; OFIEP; Strengthening Basin Communities
National (no specific state)	\$8.32	C&E; NWMS, Due Diligence; E-water CRC Hydrological Modelling; Great Artesian Basin shared water resource assessment; Irrigation Hotspots assessment; National Water Commission reform assessment; NWMS
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$563.02</b>	

3. See response to question two.
4. The SRWUIP has an appropriation of \$615 million for 2012/13.
5. The funding will be spent on existing projects under contract and new activities (subject to successful contractual negotiations following Commonwealth due diligence and value for money assessment).



6. The following SRWUIP activities support irrigation water use and management in Northern Australia (Qld, NT and Northern WA):

<b>State</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>SRWUIP funding commitment (\$m)</b>
WA	Gascoyne Pipeline Project	Carnarvon	\$6.60m
	Compliance and Enforcement	State-wide	\$6.31m
	National Water Market System	State-wide	\$0.53m
NT	National Water Market System	Territory-wide	\$0.50m
Qld	On-farm Water Use Efficiency	Queensland Murray-Darling Basin	\$115.00m
	Compliance and Enforcement	State-wide	\$10.47m
	National Water Market System	State-wide	\$0.25m
	Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance (IMPA): North Burdekin Water Board	Burdekin	\$0.17m
	Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance (IMPA): South Burdekin Water Board	Burdekin	\$0.11m
Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance (IMPA): SunWater	St George, Theodore, Mareeba, Emerald, Bundaberg, Mackay, Maryborough and Ayr (plans developed for 8 irrigation water supply schemes).	\$0.50m	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$140.44m</b>

7. At 30 September 2012, \$360 million of SRWUIP administered funding remains unallocated.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 094

**Topic:** Sustainable Rural Water Use and  
Infrastructure Program - expenditure

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Please provide a breakdown of expenditure (incurred and committed) under the SRWUIP detailing expenditure on each project and categorised by projects in the Murray-Darling Basin returning water to the Commonwealth, projects in the Murray-Darling Basin where water savings are retained in the region and projects, programs or other expenditures without a water-saving component within the Murray-Darling Basin. Please also detail the volume of water savings arising from each project.
2. How much do you expect to spend on non-water saving projects under SRWUIP?
3. How much will the federally funded study to examine how efficient SA irrigators can access infrastructure grants cost? Who is the federal Government paying to undertake the study? From what program is this study being funded? When is the study due to report? Will the report be presented to the federal or state Government or both simultaneously? Will be released publicly? Will both the federal and state Governments have to provide consent for it to be released? How will the study be used?

**Answer:**

1. The tables found at **Attachment A** provide a breakdown of Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (SRWUIP) activities in the Murray-Darling Basin, and the volume of water savings agreed to be returned to the Commonwealth at 30 September 2012.

Note that water savings agreed at 30 September 2012 include some recoveries which do not contribute to the proposed 2,750 gigalitre reduction in surface water diversions under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (for example, groundwater).

2. At 30 September 2012, commitments under SRWUIP for projects which do not have direct water savings total \$1.36 billion.

These projects achieve other benefits, including enhanced rural water planning (for example, Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance) and knowledge (for example, CSIRO sustainable yields studies), feasibility studies to inform future water saving projects (for example, Environmental Works and Measures), water market reform, water information (for example, the E-water Cooperative Research Centre hydrological modelling platform) and irrigation industry development (for example, Supporting more efficient irrigation in Tasmania).

3. The Commonwealth Government is providing up to \$1.2 million to the South Australian Government for the feasibility study of the proposed South Australian River Murray Improvements Program. Funding for the study has been drawn from remaining South Australian State Priority Project funds within SRWUIP.

A business case incorporating outcomes from the feasibility study is due to be submitted by the South Australian Government to the Commonwealth by 31 January 2013. The Commonwealth will undertake due diligence assessment of the proposal presented in the business case.

Access to the business case (once finalised) is a matter for the South Australian Government.

1. SRWUIP Commitments in the Murray-Darling Basin returning a share of water savings to the Commonwealth

SUSTAINABLE RURAL WATER USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2012				
Program/Projects		Contracted SRWUIP activities (at 30 Sept 2012) (\$m)	Program Expenditure (at 30 Sept 2012) (\$m)	Cwth Water Savings Agreed in contract (at 30 Sept 2012) (\$m) (GL LTAAY)
<b>SRWUIP commitments in the MDB returning a share of water savings to the COMMONWEALTH</b>				
<b>QLD</b>	QLD On Farm Water Use Efficiency Project <sup>A</sup>	115.0	18.6	3.4
	QLD State Priority Project	0.1	0.1	
<b>NSW</b>	NSW Irrigation Farm Modernisation (including pilot)	91.8	12.1	12.0
	NSW Basin Pipe - Stock and Domestic	137.0	19.8	25.7
	NSW Water Metering Scheme (including pilot)	221.0	31.4	44.1
	NSW Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program	492.5	184.1	81.7
	Menindee Lakes Project	23.8	23.1	
<b>SA</b>	SA Riverine Recovery Project <sup>A</sup>	89.0	18.0	4.7
	SA Private Irrigation Infrastructure Program	14.0	9.1	2.6
<b>VIC</b>	VIC Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project	1000.0	170.9	112.0
<b>Basin-wide</b>	On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program	212.5	145.3	58.5
	On Farm Irrigation Efficiency Pilot Programs	5.5	5.5	1.3
	Small Block Irrigators Exit Grants (SBIEG) <sup>B</sup>	49.0	49.0	Water recovery recorded as purchase under the <i>Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin Program</i> (RtB)
	Irrigator Led Group Proposals (ILGP) - infrastructure component <sup>B</sup>	0.0	0.0	Water recovery recorded as purchase under RtB
<b>TOTAL <sup>C</sup></b>		<b>2,451.3</b>	<b>687.1</b>	<b>346.1</b>

Notes for Table 1:

- A. Contracted amount reflects the total commitment for these activities, however for some projects water savings will be progressively brought under works contracts to the Commonwealth subject to further assessment (for example, of future funding rounds for on-farm projects). The contracted water savings reflect the volumes agreed under works contracts from these projects at 30 September 2012.
- B. Water recovery from SBIEG and ILGP was by way of purchase using *Restoring the Balance* funds, while SRWUIP funds were used for infrastructure works.
- C. Allow for rounding

**2. SRWUIP Commitments in the Murray-Darling Basin where all water savings are retained in the Region**

<b>SUSTAINABLE RURAL WATER USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2012</b>			
<b>Program/Projects</b>		<b>Contracted SRWUIP activities (at 30 Sept 2012) (\$m)</b>	<b>Program Expenditure (\$m) (at 30 Sept 2012)</b>
<b>SRWUIP Commitments in the MDB where all of the water savings are retained in the REGION</b>			
<b>NSW</b>	NSW Healthy Floodplains Project	50.0	4.5
	Orange Emergency Pipeline Project	20.0	2.0
	Lithgow-Clarence Colliery Water Transfer Project	4.0	0.6
<b>SA</b>	SA Integrated Pipelines Project	119.9	116.9
	SA Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery Project	160.9	57.0
<b>VIC</b>	Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline Project	99.0	98.0
<b>Basin-wide</b>	Strengthening Basin Communities Program	68.3	38.9
		<b>522.1</b>	<b>317.9</b>

3. SRWUIP Commitments in the Murray-Darling Basin for Rural Water Planning, Knowledge, Feasibility Studies, Market Reform and Water Skills development projects

<b>SUSTAINABLE RURAL WATER USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2012</b>			
<b>Program/Projects</b>		<b>Contracted SRWUIP activities (\$m)</b>	<b>Program Expenditure (\$m)</b>
<b>Rural Water Planning, Knowledge, Feasibility Studies, Market Reform and Water Skills development projects in the Murray-Darling Basin</b>			
<b>Qld</b>	QLD Coal Seam Gas Project	5.0	3.3
<b>ACT</b>	ACT State Priority Project	0.4	0.4
<b>SA</b>	SA River Murray Improvement Program Feasibility and BC prep	1.2	0.6
<b>Basin-wide</b>	Water For Rivers	6.3	6.3
	Irrigation Hotspots Assessment Program	2.1	2.0
	CEWO Water Holdings Management and Infrastructure Costs	46.2	46.2
	E-Water - Hydrological Modelling Platform	5.1	2.7
	National Water Commission Assessment of Reforms	1.1	0.6
	Snowy River Repayment of Mowamba Borrow	13.7	13.7
	Environmental Works and Measures Feasibility	10.0	4.7
	Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance	5.6	5.6
	National Water Market System	19.9	17.4
	Compliance and Enforcement	56.4	12.7
	Water for the Future campaign	4.1	4.1
		<b>177.0</b>	<b>120.4</b>

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 095

**Topic:** Restoring the Balance – value and class of water purchased

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 25

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Joyce and**

**Heffernan asked:**

Senator JOYCE: What was the value of all the water in that survey—the value of the water you purchased?

Ms Harwood: I would have to take that on notice in terms of adding up the entitlements of all the sellers, but it was a survey of over 500 sellers.

Senator HEFFERNAN: If you take it on notice, could you also add the class of the water? Obviously your chief modeller does not know the difference of the classes and the impact.

Ms Harwood: Yes.

**Answer:**

The estimated value of the water entitlements sold to the Commonwealth by the survey respondents, by entitlement class, is provided in the table below. As the department has not been advised of the identity of the survey respondents, so as to maintain confidentiality, these estimates were provided by the consultant who conducted the survey.

<b>Entitlement Class</b>	<b>Value of water entitlements sold to the Commonwealth by survey respondents* (\$ million)</b>
High Security	136.9
General/Medium Security	58.4
Other (Inc. Low Security and Supplementary)	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>196.8</b>

\* Estimated from survey responses.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 096

**Topic:** SRWUIP – average cost of water per megalitre

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 26

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Joyce asked:**

Senator JOYCE: What has been the average cost per megalitre of the infrastructure water you have got thus far?

Ms Harwood: I would have to take the precise figure on notice.

**Answer:**

As at 30 September 2012, the volume-weighted average cost of entitlements secured by the Commonwealth in agreed Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Projects in contract was \$4,872 per megalitre of entitlement, noting that this figure includes many different entitlement types of various levels of reliability.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 097

**Topic:** Adelaide Desalination Plant –  
implementation plan

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 30

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Senator BIRMINGHAM: If I look at the implementation plan for augmentation of the desal plant, it indicates that a milestone was expected to be reached by 1 May 2012 that involved a payment of \$53.2 million, which appears to be what one would describe as milestone 4, looking at the payment schedule. Are you aware of the implementation plan for the augmentation, which details five payments?

Ms Harwood: I do not have the implementation plan with me, but the later milestones relate to the additional environmental water, with a framework to be negotiated between the South Australian government and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. That has yet to be finalised and a substantial payment is contingent on that being completed.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Perhaps just get us some information on that, please, Ms Harwood.

**Answer:**

The status of milestone payments under the Implementation Plan for Augmentation of the Adelaide Desalination Plant (100 gigalitres per annum) are provided in the table below.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Amount (GST exclusive)</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Expected by 1 May 2011	\$76,000,000	Paid
2	Expected by 31 October 2011	nil	Not yet achieved
3	Expected by 30 November 2011	\$53,200,000	Paid
4	Expected by 1 May 2012	\$53,200,000	Paid
Final	Expected by 31 December 2012	\$45,600,000	Not yet achieved

The final payment of \$45.6 million is contingent upon completion of all previous milestones, including milestone two.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 098

**Topic:** SRWUIP investments

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 35

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Joyce asked:**

Senator JOYCE: Is it under contract for amounts that will be part of the returning 600 gicalitres?

Ms Harwood: Yes. About half of the 600 gicalitres is already under contract.

Senator JOYCE: Of the \$5.8 billion—half of 3.6 is 1.8, so let us say 1.8 away from 5.8 is 4—are you saying that \$4 billion is going to get you back 600 gicalitres?

Ms Harwood: I do not feel comfortable doing the maths on the run. I can give you the total investment in infrastructure projects and the yield from that, but I would like to take that on notice.

**Answer:**

It is anticipated that the total direct cost of recovering 600 gicalitres towards bridging the gap is around \$3.6 billion in administered funding. This does not include funding for other activities which generate water savings that are retained in the regions, or activities that deliver other benefits such as environmental outcomes, water market improvements, enhanced enforcement, etcetera.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 099

**Topic:** Irrigation infrastructure works - cost

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. How much does water recovery from irrigation infrastructure works typically cost at the moment?

**Answer:**

1. As at 30 September 2012, the volume-weighted average cost per megalitre of entitlements transferred to the Commonwealth from agreed Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Projects was \$4,872 per megalitre.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 100

**Topic:** Irrigation infrastructure

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What cost per megalitre does the MDBA or SEWPAC expect the 600 GL to come from at the moment?

**Answer:**

1. As at 30 September 2012, the volume-weighted average cost per megalitre of entitlements transferred to the Commonwealth from agreed Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Projects (SRWUIP) was \$4,872 per megalitre. The final average cost per megalitre of the 600 gicalitres expected from SRWUIP will depend on a range of factors including the result of negotiations with the states.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 101

**Topic:** Adelaide Desalination Plant - usage

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Will the South Australian Metro-Cap incorporate the ability of the SA Government to use the desal plant?

**Answer:**

1. The operation of the Adelaide Desalination Plant is a matter for the South Australian Government.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question** 102  
**No:**

**Topic:** Adelaide Desalination Plant – final project report

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Has the Final Project Report for this project been completed?
2. Will the Final Project Report “evaluate the Project, including assessing the extent to which the objective has been achieved and explaining why any aspect were not achieved” as required by the implementation agreement?

**Answer:**

1. No. The Final Report required under the Implementation Plan for Augmentation of the Adelaide Desalination Plant (100 gegalitres per annum) has not yet been completed.
2. Yes. Completion of the Final Milestone under the Implementation Plan for Augmentation of the Adelaide Desalination Plant (100 gegalitres per annum) requires the submission of a Final Report. The Final Report must “evaluate the Project, including assessing the extent to which the objective has been achieved and explaining why any aspect were not achieved”.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question 103**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Setting of SDLs

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What volume of water entitlements has been secured for the Murray-Darling, to go towards the sustainable diversion limit set by the basin plan, to date via infrastructure projects?
2. How much has been spent on infrastructure projects which have delivered or are expected to deliver water savings into the Murray-Darling to contribute towards the SDL set by the basin plan?

**Answer:**

1. As at 30 September 2012, 316 gigalitres Long Term Average Annual Yield has been secured under signed works agreements for projects under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program which will contribute to bridging the gap to the proposed Sustainable Diversion Limits.
2. As at 30 September 2012, the Commonwealth had signed works agreements worth \$2,489 million for projects returning water savings towards 'bridging the gap'. Of this, \$687 million has been spent.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 104

**Topic:** SRWUIP – funded projects and programs

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Can you please provide a breakdown of every project or program funded under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure program? Please provide amounts that have been funded by financial year since the inception of the program and forecast amounts over the forward estimates for each program or project.

**Answer:**

1. The table at **Attachment A** details expenditure to 30 September 2012 for each of the projects and programs comprising the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (SRWUIP).

Funding will be allocated to these activities in future years in alignment with contractual obligations and the budget appropriation for SRWUIP. The exact allocation each year will be determined in line with requirements of the various projects.

At 30 September 2012, the SRWUIP appropriation profile across the forward estimates is as follows:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Appropriation (\$m)	615	618	781	1214	579

## ATTACHMENT A

## SRWUIP Program Expenditure to 30 September 2012

<b>SRWUIP Program Expenditure to 30 September 2012 (\$)</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 (to 30 Sept)</b>	<b>Total Expenditure (\$)</b>
ACT Salt Reduction Strategy			\$175,000	\$203,878			<b>\$378,878</b>
Compliance and Enforcement				\$2,386,794	\$10,311,221	\$35,874	<b>\$12,733,889</b>
CEWO water holdings management and infrastructure costs				\$24,776,479	\$21,408,223		<b>\$46,184,702</b>
Qld Coal Seam Gas Water Feasibility Study		\$825,000		\$1,155,012	\$1,350,000		<b>\$3,330,012</b>
Due Diligence	\$207,019	\$175,318	\$735,225	\$2,269,891	\$1,973,371	\$887,844	<b>\$6,248,668</b>
Environmental Works and Measures Feasibility					\$4,600,000	\$100,000	<b>\$4,700,000</b>
E-water CRC Hydrological modelling strategy				-\$400,000	\$2,267,100	\$836,900	<b>\$2,704,000</b>
Great Artesian Basin shared water resource assessment					\$1,925,000		<b>\$1,925,000</b>
Gascoyne Pipeline			\$1,650,000	\$990,000	\$3,960,000		<b>\$6,600,000</b>
Harvey Water Pipeline	\$35,000,000						<b>\$35,000,000</b>
Irrigation Hotspots Assessment	\$740,000	\$624,000	\$556,969	\$89,450	\$28,554		<b>\$2,038,973</b>
Irrigator-led Group Proposals					\$34,724		<b>\$34,724</b>
Irrigation Modernisation	\$1,205,000	\$2,388,000	\$1,149,009	\$477,766	\$210,074	\$5,000	<b>\$5,434,849</b>

<b>SRWUIP Program Expenditure to 30 September 2012 (\$)</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 (to 30 Sept)</b>	<b>Total Expenditure (\$)</b>
Planning Assistance							
SA Integrated Pipelines		\$25,430,000	\$91,476,974	\$5,636			<b>\$116,912,610</b>
Lithgow Recycled water project		\$49,434	\$334,838		\$247,493		<b>\$631,765</b>
Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery		\$3,000,000	\$12,039,140	\$13,214,726	\$26,595,113	\$2,167,332	<b>\$57,016,311</b>
Menindee Lakes Project		\$2,143,000	\$13,385,794	\$5,626,503	\$1,879,539	\$52,000	<b>\$23,086,836</b>
Metering Test facilities	\$565,050	\$1,906,000	\$686,127	\$113,010			<b>\$3,270,187</b>
Information campaign				\$4,115,878	\$5,417		<b>\$4,121,295</b>
Snowy River repayment of Mowamba re-borrow				\$13,680,000			<b>\$13,680,000</b>
NSW Irrigation Farm Modernisation		\$232,000	\$3,865,375	\$4,695,445	\$350,000	\$3,000,000	<b>\$12,142,820</b>
NSW Metering			\$3,880,854	\$3,053,800	\$22,500,000	\$2,000,000	<b>\$31,434,654</b>
NSW Basin Pipes			\$797,878		\$5,000,000	\$14,000,000	<b>\$19,797,878</b>
NSW Healthy Floodplains			\$987,743		\$3,500,000		<b>\$4,487,743</b>
Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP)			\$2,471,590		\$167,947,703	\$432,985	<b>\$170,852,278</b>
National Water Commission Reform Assessment			\$171,000	\$444,000	\$13,021		<b>\$628,021</b>
National Water Market System			\$3,398,585	\$6,196,598	\$6,899,149	\$920,923	<b>\$17,415,255</b>
On-farm Irrigation Efficiency Program			\$3,017,727	\$62,723,642	\$68,303,916	\$16,743,682	<b>\$150,788,967</b>
Orange Emergency				\$2,000,000			<b>\$2,000,000</b>

<b>SRWUIP Program Expenditure to 30 September 2012 (\$)</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 (to 30 Sept)</b>	<b>Total Expenditure (\$)</b>
Pipeline project							
NSW Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program				\$41,619,119	\$139,909,250	\$2,600,000	<b>\$184,128,369</b>
Private Irrigation Infrastructure Program for South Australia			\$220,000	\$1,658,898	\$6,171,394	\$1,050,000	<b>\$9,100,292</b>
Queensland On-farm Water Use Efficiency		\$675,000		\$11,021,577	\$6,191,914	\$686,108	<b>\$18,574,599</b>
Riverine Recovery		\$675,000	\$1,350,000	\$9,381,102	\$6,615,000		<b>\$18,021,102</b>
South Australia River Murray Improvements Program						\$600,000	<b>\$600,000</b>
Strengthening Basin Communities			\$857,391	\$10,293,515	\$26,128,111	\$1,595,521	<b>\$38,874,538</b>
Small Block Irrigator Exit Grants			\$48,248,032	\$796,531			<b>\$49,044,563</b>
Water for Rivers - Snowy River Environmental Flows	\$6,283,947						<b>\$6,283,947</b>
Supporting more efficient irrigation in Tasmania		\$2,119,620	\$20,134,889	\$3,056,455	\$26,694,483		<b>\$52,005,447</b>
Toorale Decommissioning		\$128,000	\$58,170				<b>\$186,170</b>
WA CSIRO Sustainable Yields study		\$3,115,000	\$2,076,476				<b>\$5,191,476</b>
Wimmera Mallee Pipeline	\$78,000,000	\$20,000,000					<b>\$98,000,000</b>
<b>Total Expenditure (\$)</b>	<b>\$122,001,016</b>	<b>\$63,485,372</b>	<b>\$213,724,786</b>	<b>\$225,645,705</b>	<b>\$563,019,770</b>	<b>\$47,714,169</b>	<b>\$1,235,590,818</b>

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Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 105

**Topic:** Water buyback and efficiency in Queensland

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What progress has been made on water buyback and water use efficiency (healthy headwaters) projects in Queensland? What money has been spent in Queensland to date?

**Answer:**

1. Three rounds of on-farm water use efficiency funding have now been undertaken in Queensland, with the third round of applications now under assessment.

Six tenders for water purchasing in Queensland have been completed.

Water entitlements secured in Queensland through water purchasing and recovery through the Healthy HeadWaters Water Use Efficiency Project (HHWUE) are listed in the table below

As at 30 September 2012, \$72.787 million has been spent in Queensland on water purchasing and the HHWUE Project.

<b>Catchment</b>	<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>ML</b>
Condamine Balonne	Unsupplemented	31,423
Queensland Border Rivers	Medium priority	10,916
	Unsupplemented	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,412</b>	<b>42,412</b>

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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Answers to questions on notice  
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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question 106**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Targeted Water Purchase Initiative

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. How many of the 117 gigalitres from 375 applications for the Targeted Water Purchase Initiative in Southern Murray-Darling Basin were taken up? How many applicants were successful?

**Answer:**

1. Of the 375 successful offers involving 117 gigalitres of entitlements, trades involving five bids for a total of 2 gigalitres of water entitlements have since been withdrawn by the respective sellers (as at 5 November 2012).

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 107

**Topic:** Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Has the Department finished guidelines for the Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration program?

**Answer:**

1. As at 5 November 2012, the guidelines for the Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration program had not been finalised for public release.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question 108**  
**No:**

**Topic:** On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency  
Program - tenders

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Can you give an update on the tender process for the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program tenders for which closed on 26 July 2012. How much water has been recovered or is planned to be recovered under this program? What is the average cost per megalitre of the water recovered?

**Answer:**

1. Round Three of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (the Program) closed for applications on 26 July 2012. Further details will be announced by the Minister in the near future.

As at 7 November 2012, Delivery Partners are contracted under Rounds One and Two of the Program, to deliver projects that will result in the transfer to the Commonwealth of water entitlements of 58.7 gigalitres calculated on a long term average annual yield (LTAAY) basis from a total of 845 farms. The Australian Government is committed through contracts under Rounds One and Two to invest approximately \$209 million in grants under the Program. The estimated average cost per megalitre (ML) of the water that either has been acquired or is under contract to be acquired is estimated at \$3,560 per ML LTAAY.

The figure of \$209 million includes payments against future milestones and does not represent actual expenditure to date.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 109

**Topic:** Menindee Lakes

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What is the status of negotiations between the government and the NSW government on works on Menindee Lakes?
2. How much water are works at Menindee expected to contribute towards the sustainable diversion limit set by the basin plan?

**Answer:**

1. Subject to approval by the respective governments, officials have developed a proposed scope of infrastructure works and related operational rules at Menindee Lakes.
2. This will be determined when the final details of a proposed project is agreed between governments.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
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**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question No:** 110

**Topic:** Infrastructure improvements in the Murray-Darling Basin

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Ruston asked:**

1. The 2012-2013 Federal Budget included \$200 million over four years to identify water savings from infrastructure improvements in the Murray Darling Basin. Have any infrastructure projects been identified and when will they commence?
2. Will SEWPaC continue purchasing water entitlements while this investigation goes ahead?

**Answer:**

1. The Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration in the Murray-Darling Basin program aims to integrate infrastructure reconfiguration with water purchasing. As at 5 November 2012, the opening date for the first funding round of the new program is yet to be announced.
2. Yes. The Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration in the Murray-Darling Basin program relates specifically to proposals for irrigation delivery systems. It will complement water sales associated with reconfiguration of other Australian Government water purchase initiatives and investments in more efficient irrigation infrastructure.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED

**Question No:** 111

**Topic:** Water for the Future

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

1. How much funding in total has been allocated to date under the Water for the Future program?
2. How much of the Water for the Future funding was allocated in 2011/12?
3. Where and on what was this funding been spent?
4. How much of the Water for the Future funding is earmarked for allocation in 2012/13?
5. Where and on what will this funding been spent?
6. How much Water for the Future funding in total currently remains to be allocated?

**Answer:**

1. Administered funding of \$13,174.4 million (including other agency funding) has been allocated to the Water for the Future program.
2. Expenditure on Water for the Future in 2011/12 was \$1,662.9 million.

3. Water for the Future Administered Expenditure in 2011/12 was as follows<sup>1</sup>:

<b>Program</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>ACT</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure	75,400	190	206,810	280	10,470	43,920	5,870	192,700	27,390	<b>563,030</b>
Restoring the Balance in the Basin	540,896		0							<b>540,896</b>
Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative	0		7,202		6,811	0				<b>14,013</b>
National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns (includes Green Precincts)	0	119	7,669	11,659	13,158	17,451	14,153	10,295	11,906	<b>86,410</b>
National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative	246									<b>246</b>
National Urban Water and Desalination Plan	0		8,167		8,495	257,132	6,518	31,692	8,160	<b>320,165</b>
Water Smart Australia	165	495	15,363	0	9,902	2,719	0	0	1,120	<b>29,764</b>
<b>Total DSEWPaC Administered</b>	<b>616,707</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>245,211</b>	<b>11,939</b>	<b>48,836</b>	<b>321,222</b>	<b>26,541</b>	<b>234,687</b>	<b>48,576</b>	<b>1,554,524</b>

1. All figures are in \$'000s

2. Figure includes funding for Commonwealth Environmental Water Holding management and infrastructure, water shepherding, irrigator-led group proposals, On-Farm Irrigation and Efficiency Program and Strengthening Basin Communities and amounts not attributable to individual states/territories.

A further \$108.4m was spent by other agencies within the portfolio as follows:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount (\$000s)</b>
MDBA	37.5
ACCC	7.9
NWC	13.6
Bureau of Meteorology	49.4
<b>Total Other Agencies</b>	<b>108.36</b>

4. \$1,137.4m (including departmental and other agency funding) is budgeted for Water for the Future in 2012/13.
5. Administered Budget Appropriation for Water for the Future in 2012/13 includes the following programs:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure	615.3
Restoring the Balance in the Basin	140.7
Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative <sup>3</sup>	10.0
National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns (includes Green Precincts)	70.5
National Urban Water and Desalination Plan	124.8
Water Smart Australia	9.0
Commonwealth Contribution under the Murray Darling Basin Agreement	19.5
MDBA	37.9
ACCC	8.1
NWC	3.6
Bureau of Meteorology	38.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1077.6</b>

The geographic distribution of this expenditure will depend on the success of submissions received from State and Local Government proponents, and from tender respondents offering the sale of environmental water or participation in competitive infrastructure-focussed programs involving environmental works and measures. The majority of spending will continue to be in the Murray-Darling Basin region.

6. As at 30 September 2012, \$7,374.6 million (including departmental and other agency funding) in Water for the Future funding remains to be spent.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WED **Question 112**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse  
Program – Derwent Park, Hobart

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 37

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Senator BILYK: I was after an update on how the stormwater harvesting and reuse program is going. I am specifically interested in any information on how the program in Derwent Park in Hobart is going.

Ms Harwood: The Derwent Park project received a total of \$2.6 million in Australian government funding. The project will collect stormwater from the sites' stormwater detention facilities and then treat it in an existing water treatment plant designed to remove heavy metal contamination. The project will increase the water storage capacity at the zinc smelter and construct a reverse osmosis plant and water distribution infrastructure. The additional infrastructure will enable treated water to replace potable water usage at the location by up to 32 per cent. In summary it basically reduces potable water usage at the zinc smelter by up to 32 per cent and it reduces demand for potable water by over 800 megs a year. It reduces the impact of run-off from the site into the Derwent River.

Senator BILYK: Can carbon offsets address the carbon impact of any of those projects? I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms Harwood: Yes.

**Answer:**

***Progress of Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse Program; and Derwent Park Project, Hobart***

Over \$200 million has been approved for 38 stormwater harvesting and reuse projects across the nation under the Water for the Future's National Urban Water and Desalination Plan. Projects have been approved under three separate grant rounds and are at various stages of implementation.

Two projects are funded in the Glenorchy area of Hobart: Glenorchy Council's Derwent Park Stormwater Harvesting and Industrial Reuse project; and the Integrating Water Cycle Management at Nyrstar Hobart project that spans areas within Derwent Park and the adjacent suburb of Lutana.

- The Australian Government has committed up to \$9.2 million (GST exclusive) for the Glenorchy Council project that will harvest stormwater from the catchment of Derwent Park, treat it and then use it to replace an estimated 476 megalitres of potable water for irrigation of gardens and sports ovals at the Moonah Primary School; and for industrial processing at the Nyrstar Hobart Smelter. The project is currently being constructed and is on track to be completed by June 2013.
- The Australian Government has committed \$2.6 million (GST exclusive) in funding to the Nyrstar Hobart project that will increase the stormwater storage capacity at the zinc smelter and construct a reverse osmosis plant and water distribution infrastructure. The additional infrastructure will enable treated stormwater to replace potable water usage at the smelter by over 800 megalitres per year. The commitment was announced in August 2012 and a funding agreement is being negotiated.

### ***Carbon Offset***

All the stormwater harvesting and reuse projects funded under National Urban Water and Desalination Plan, including the Derwent Park stormwater project, are required to source 100 per cent of their energy needs from renewable sources or fully offset the carbon impact of the projects' operations.

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Additional Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question No:** 113

**Topic:** Funding for Lake Albert and the  
Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray  
Mouth

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. What progress is being made in discussions with the South Australian Government regarding proposals to reduce salinity in Lake Albert?
2. In regards to the dredging of the Narrung Narrows are there further payments to the South Australian Government in addition to the \$300,000 already provided?
3. Has funding for a feasibility and environmental impact study into a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong been agreed upon?
4. Has the South Australian Government submitted any proposals for funding to improve water quality in Lake Albert?
5. How much of the \$200 million designated for projects to restore the health of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth has been spent? On what projects? How much was spent in 2011/12? How much is expected to be spent in 2012/13?

**Answer:**

1. On 1 November 2012, the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP, agreed to fund up to \$668,606 toward South Australia's proposal entitled 'Scoping study of future directions in managing Lake Albert Water Quality and the Narrung Narrows'. The study aims to collect, analyse and provide crucial information to inform a coordinated long-term approach to the management of Lake Albert Water Quality and the Narrung Narrows. Options that may be considered include, but are not limited to: modification/removal of the Narrung causeway; removal or addition of vegetation to improve water exchange; construction of a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong; and dredging the Narrung Narrows.
2. Yes, \$885,429 has been provided to the South Australian Government for the decommissioning of the Narrung Bund, which includes dredging of the Narrung Narrows at the bund site. Further payments of up to \$558,102 are anticipated in 2012/13 for this project.
3. The 'Scoping study of future directions in managing Lake Albert Water Quality and the Narrung Narrows', referred to in our response to question 1 will consider the feasibility of a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong.



4. Yes. South Australia provided a proposal entitled 'Scoping study of future directions in managing Lake Albert Water Quality and the Narrung Narrows' (see response to question 1 above).

5. Of the \$200 million designated for projects to restore the health of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth, \$56,951,585 has been paid to South Australia.

The \$56,951,585 has been paid toward the following projects:

- Feasibility Study for Long-Term Management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (complete) - \$9,500,000.
- Goolwa Channel Water Level Management Project (complete) - \$6,039,140.
- Early Works for the Water for the Future Enduring Response for the Coorong and Lower Lakes – \$16,590,332.
- Lake Albert Water Level Management Project - Narrung Bund Decommissioning Component - \$885,429.
- Goolwa Channel Water Level management Project - Clayton Regulator Decommissioning and Currency Creek Decommissioning Investigations - \$1,970,000.
- Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project - \$21,966,684.

In 2011/12 the total amount paid to South Australia for the projects listed above, was \$26,595,151.

A total of total of \$12,585,151 is expected to be paid in 2012/13, subject to South Australia's achievement of relevant project milestones.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question 114**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Correspondence between the South  
Australian Premier and the Minister

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Please provide a copy of the letter received by Minister Burke from Premier Weatherill mentioned in QoN 93 regarding the independence of the MDBA and any response or further correspondence on the matter.

**Answer:**

1. The correspondence is the subject of a Freedom of Information request and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is consulting with the relevant party prior to making a decision on its release.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
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**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD

**Question No:** 115

**Topic:** Legal advice and budget

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has the Government received any advice specific to current or threatened legal challenges to the Water Act or Basin Plan?
2. How much is the Government budgeting to defend the Water Act and/or the Basin Plan in the high court?

**Answer:**

1. Yes.
2. The Australian Government intends to defend the *Water Act 2007* (the Water Act) and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (Basin Plan) against the current court action. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) does not have a specific budget to defend the Water Act and/or Basin Plan against court action. The department has engaged Counsel who is funded from the department's legal budget. As is standard practice, if costs become significant the department will put in place appropriate contingency arrangements.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question 116**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Water Act Amendment (Long-term  
Average Sustainable Diversion Limit  
Adjustment) Bill 2012

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. How does the Government expect to finance any increased SDL reduction?
2. Please indicate which stakeholders sought this adjustment?
3. Which stakeholders were consulted on the proposed legislative changes?
4. How were they consulted and when?
5. Will you do an estimate on the potential flood damage arising from increased frequency and duration of moderate to major flood events before an adjustment is made?
6. Will compulsory private land acquisition or retirement be part of any bid to remove system constraints?
7. Will there be compensation for any resulting land devaluation caused by an adjustment?
8. Will there be compensation for profit downgrades associated with a farming business' inability to access part of its property due to increased inundation which may be caused by an adjustment?
9. Will you undertake an assessment on the impact of erosion of land arising from increased velocity, duration and elevated river flow levels in specific catchment regions before an adjustment is made?
10. Have you consulted with – or will you consult with – local shire councils and relevant industry associations in a bid to understand localised impacts before an adjustment is made?

**Answer:**

1. A Bill to establish a Special Account and Special Appropriation of the necessary funds (\$1.77 billion) was introduced into the House of Representatives on 31 October 2012. The funds reflect the estimated cost of acquiring up to 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water through infrastructure upgrade programs, especially an on-farm irrigation efficiency program and the cost of projects to ease or remove constraints.

Funding for this initiative is fully reflected in the budget outcome contained in the 2012 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook statement.

2. During the 20-week public consultation period for the draft Basin Plan some submissions, including the Victorian Government, National Farmers' Federation and National Irrigators' Council, raised concerns over the amendment process needed to capture any outcomes associated with the proposed 2015 Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) review.

The concerns raised in these submissions resulted in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority) considering the need for a SDL adjustment mechanism. Consequently, the Authority, in its letter of 28 May 2012 asked the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council to consider and advise on this matter.

In the consensus notice under section 43A (4) of the *Water Act 2007* the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council requested that the Authority work with Basin states to develop a proposed 'SDL Adjustment Mechanism' for its consideration. The adjustment mechanism is intended to permit the SDL reduction to be increased or decreased by up to 5% if there are projects or initiatives that can improve the socio-economic or environmental outcomes envisaged with the 2,750GL/y SDL reduction starting point.

3. State governments were consulted on the issues covered by the Bill in the first instance. Comments from and discussions with several industry external organisations were also considered.
4. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) first began discussing with State officials possible amendments to the *Water Act 2007* to provide a simpler approach to amending the SDL in the Basin Plan following the release of the revised draft Basin Plan in May 2012. Discussions were on-going with the State governments until immediately prior to the Bill being introduced into Parliament on 20 September 2012. State governments were provided a copy of the draft Bill on 10 September 2012. Other stakeholders were consulted by email, phone conversation and in meetings in the week commencing 10 September 2012.
5. The current draft of the Basin Plan (released 6 August 2012) includes a provision for the Authority to prepare a constraints management strategy, in consultation with Basin states and the general public, within 12 months of the Plan being made. The potential for flood damage would be considered in the preparation of the strategy when the Authority "assesses the impacts of modifications of constraints on environmental water delivery and third parties, as well as downstream impacts, and assesses options to address those impacts" (section 6.07 of the current draft Basin Plan).

The amount of water available to the environment will also be managed in accordance with the environmental watering plan (Chapter 7 of the current draft Basin Plan), the implementation of which will consider such issues.

6. Compulsory land acquisition by the Commonwealth is not envisaged. Previous efforts to deal with constraints have involved negotiated acquisition of easements.
7. Potential impacts and options to address any impacts will be assessed in the Constraints Management Strategy (refer to the answer provided to question 5 above).
8. Refer to the answer provided to questions 5 and 7, above.
9. Refer to the answer provided to question 5 above.

10. It is a requirement under section 23A (2) (d) of the *Water Act Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012* that all adjustments be subject to public consultation.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD

**Question 117  
No:**

**Topic:** Water for the Future review

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Was a 'Review' actually undertaken?
2. Precisely who undertook it?
3. What were the terms for the review?
4. When will it be released?
5. Was it provided to Cabinet? If so, when?

**Answer:**

Yes. The Water for the Future review was considered by the Cabinet in the Budget process.

Consistent with long-standing practice, the content and timing of advice to the Cabinet is confidential, as is the Cabinet discussion and response to this advice.

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**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question 118**  
**Topic:** 3,200 gigalitre scenario – water  
buybacks **No:**

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 35-36

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Joyce asked:**

Senator JOYCE: Can any upwater from the 2,750 come from adjustment mechanisms and water buybacks?

(Page 36)

Ms Harwood: The resources that we have available for the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program and the Restoring the Balance funds in totality—the task of those funds and those programs is to get us to recovery of the 2,750 that is in draft Basin Plan. The construct and the funding for the 450 that you have been discussing—the criteria and the legal machinery for that is what is in play at the moment.

Senator JOYCE: I don't understand what that answer means. Does that mean you can get it from water buybacks or not?

Ms Harwood: You are asking a very specific question about the additional water and I do not feel in a position to answer that.

Senator JOYCE: So we do not know whether we can get it from water buybacks?

Senator Conroy: We are happy to take it on notice.

Senator JOYCE: It is such a simple question.

Senator Conroy: We are just not all as smart as you, Senator Joyce, but we are happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

**Answer:**

Additional environmental water from that required by the 2,750 gigalitre benchmark expected to be in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will be derived through projects funded from the proposed Water for the Environment Special Account and recovered in a manner that does not worsen social and economic impacts compared with the impacts associated with recovering the 2,750 gigalitres proposed in the Basin Plan. An example includes water savings achieved through upgrades to on-farm irrigation infrastructure, which may include infrastructure upgrade and purchase components.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question No:** 119

**Topic:** Ramsar wetlands – bird populations

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 34

**or Written Question:** (16/10/12)

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: Is that the same for bird populations? Are they steady or fluctuating along with water availability?

Mr Slatyer: There is usually a pretty direct correlation, but we do not have specific details with us on bird numbers.

Senator WATERS: Perhaps you could take that on notice.

Mr Slatyer: In doing that, since it was such a broad question, could you be a little more specific about what you are asking on notice?

Senator WATERS: Yes. I am interested in the trends of bird populations in Ramsar wetlands—not every wetland or everything on the national inventory, just Ramsar listed sites—and whether those trends are steady, increasing or declining and whether it is solely related to rainfall or whether there are any other parameters that may be influencing the shape of those trajectories.

Mr Slatyer: We will answer that with reference to the data that we can access on that particular matter.

**Answer:**

Trend data on bird populations is generally only available for waterbirds and for a limited number of Ramsar sites including Paroo River, Macquarie Marshes, Barmah Forest, Gunbower Forest, Hattah Lakes, Riverland, and Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

Information on waterbird populations at these sites is available from :

- Paroo River and Macquarie Marshes Ramsar sites: The National Water Commission's National Waterbird Assessment (2008) (<http://archive.nwc.gov.au/library/waterlines/74>), and the 2011 Eastern Australian Aerial Waterbird Survey (<http://www.wetrivers.unsw.edu.au/research-projects/shorebirds/aerial-surveys-of-waterbirds-in-eastern-australia/>)
- Barmah Forest, Gunbower Forest, Hattah Lakes, Riverland, and Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar sites: Survey of waterbird communities of the Living Murray icon sites - November 2010 ([http://www.mdba.gov.au/files/bp-kid/2253-Survey\\_Waterbird\\_Communities\\_Living\\_Murray\\_Icon\\_sites\\_Nov2010.pdf](http://www.mdba.gov.au/files/bp-kid/2253-Survey_Waterbird_Communities_Living_Murray_Icon_sites_Nov2010.pdf))

A range of factors, including but not limited to rainfall, contribute to trends in bird populations at Ramsar sites. Relevant influences include food and water availability, breeding sites and threats such as predators. Waterbirds often require specific food, habitat and flow regimes in order to support successful breeding events. Many Australian waterbirds are also mobile over large spatial scales, moving between habitats across Australia as conditions change. Populations of migratory shorebirds and seabirds, which are characteristic of many coastal Ramsar wetlands, are also effected by changes across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD

**Question No:** 120

**Topic:** Water Act Amendment Bill

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. What level of consultation did you have with State governments on the Water Act amendment Bill currently before the House? When did they first see a version of the Bill?

**Answer:**

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities discussed with states the possibility of amending the *Water Act 2007* in relation to Sustainable Diversion Limit adjustments since the release of the revised draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan in May 2012.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD **Question 121**  
**No:**

**Topic:** Water Act Amendment Bill

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Have you received legal advice on whether protections against an adjustment worsening economic or social outcomes can be in the Water Act Amendment Bill currently before the House? If so, what was the nature of this advice, who prepared the advice, when was it received and how many pages did it amount to?

**Answer:**

1. Yes. In line with long standing government policy, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities does not disclose legal advice.

The *Water Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Act 2012* (the Act) was prepared in close cooperation with the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) in order to ensure that the Act was drafted in line with Commonwealth legislative power and was consistent with the other parts of the *Water Act 2007*. Written and oral advice was received regularly from the AGS, including ensuring that social and economic neutrality was achieved through the combination of the Act and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

**Program: Division or Agency:** 4.1: WRD

**Question No:** 278

**Topic:** Water for the Future review

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Joyce asked:**

1. Please provide an update on the Water for the Future program review. When is it due for completion?

**Answer:**

1. The Water for the Future review was considered by the Cabinet in the budget process.

Consistent with long-standing practice, the content and timing of advice to the Cabinet is confidential, as is the Cabinet discussion and response to this advice.