

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1008_12

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Murray Darling Basin Authority meeting

"Refer to speech by Finley High School principal Bernie Roebuck (attached) to Murray Darling Basin Authority meeting at Griffith last December regarding proposed water cuts in the MDB. Mr Roebuck is representing the NSW Secondary Principals Council which is very concerned about the impact of proposed water cuts on schools and families in MDB communities. Concerns include: 1. Lack of job security / uncertainty for teaching staff 2. Decline in enrolments due to job losses in the towns 3. Less options in terms of curriculum choice due to less students 4. Less students could impact student outcomes 5. Less students mean threat to schools closing and flow on effects to support services and local businesses 6. Students giving up aspirations/commitment to study due to limited job opportunities in the town because of the broader impact of water cuts 7. Students less inclined to return to the MDB area resulting on further shortage of skilled workers and labour. • Will the govt/dept be looking into these concerns given that the draft MDB plan does involve the federal government which will in fact be introducing legislation? NOTE: Senator Back, on behalf of Senator Nash, raised this issue although this question was specifically asked or answered as it was dismissed as a state issue which it is not."

Answer

The Murray Darling Basin Authority has provided the following response:

The Australian Government is committed to working with and supporting Basin communities and industries as they adapt to a future with less water. The government has resources in place to work directly with affected communities.

The proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan was released in November 2011 as a discussion document and its release started a 20-week consultation period.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority (<http://www.mdba.gov.au>) and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (<http://www.environment.gov.au>) have commissioned numerous social and economic studies to provide more information on the effects of the Murray Darling Basin Plan on communities. Any information released on the social and economic impacts of the plan can be found on their websites. The Murray Darling Basin Authority released a synthesis of its social and economic analysis in November 2011 which considered potential social impacts of the Basin Plan, including for health and education. The

report is available on the website
(http://download.mdba.gov.au/proposed/social_economic_analysis_part_a.pdf) .