

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Additional Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-2007, 12-13 February 2007**

**Question: PM 15, 16, 17, 18, 19**

**Outcome 1**

**Topic: National Plan for Water Security**

**Direct on Notice:**

**Senator Wong asked: Were any minutes of any meetings kept in this period prior to the establishment of the task force in early January?**

**Answer:** There were no formal minutes of meetings kept by PM&C officials in the period prior to the establishment of the task group in early January 2007. Notes of any key points and follow-up actions required would likely have been made by those individuals attending as is routine practice.

**Senator Wong asked: You gave evidence about the Prime Minister giving some indication of parameters to the task force, and I am asking: what were the parameters that he indicated?**

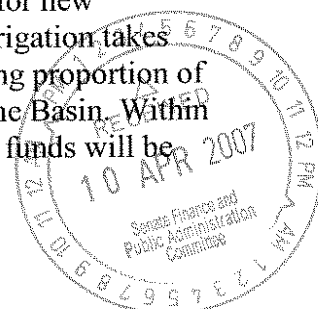
**Answer:** The parameters broadly concerned ensuring long term sustainable outcomes and effective governance arrangements.

**Senator Faulkner asked: Did the task force receive legal advice on the takeover? When was that sought?**

**Answer:** Yes. The task group members sought legal advice from the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) on several occasions during December 2006 and January 2007. Written advice was received during January.

**Senator Wong asked: Has there been an indication, in terms of your internal costing, of what proportion you are assuming will be spent outside the Murray-Darling Basin?**

**Answer:** As advised by Ms Goddard on 12 February, the Plan identifies \$3.6 billion in funding targeted in the Murray-Darling Basin for the 'Addressing Over Allocation in the Murray-Darling Basin' and the 'Reforming the Murray Darling Basin Commission' funding components. Of the remaining \$6.45 billion, all but \$85 million is national in scope and comprises \$5.885 billion for modernising irrigation and \$0.48 billion for new investments in water information. Given that 85 per cent of the nation's irrigation takes place in the Murray-Darling Basin it could be expected that a corresponding proportion of expenditure under the modernising irrigation component would occur in the Basin. Within these broad parameters, however, the specific locations for expenditure of funds will be determined in the context of ensuring the most effective use of the funds.



**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Additional Estimates Hearings 2004-2005, 14 February 2005

**Senator Faulkner asked: What does the letter say about where the money will be spent – forget about the how, just where?**

**Answer:** Costings for the Plan are set out in the National Plan for Water Security which was attached to the Prime Minister's letter to Premiers of 31 January 2007. Also see answer to QON 18.

