

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

National Water Commission

Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-07

(Question No. PM33)

Senator Stephens asked:

1. \$2 billion for Raising National Water Standards (\$200 million), Water Smart Australia Program (\$1.6 billion) and Community Water Grants Programme (\$200 million – administered by DAFF and DEH). Please list the current projects funded under each program, and the value of each?
2. The Second call for projects closes on 16 June. When will the announcement of successful projects be made?
3. There have been a number of employment advertisements recently
 - o Current staffing numbers?
 - o Locations? (i.e. Groups)
 - o How many AWA's across the board?
 - o Staffing numbers per group (i.e. Water Reform Group, Corporate Strategy and Services Group and Water Programmes Group).
4. Does the NWC have a Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO) in any Minister's office? How many and which offices?
5. May 2005 Estimates Mr Matthews indicated full-staffing capacity would be about 45 employees. Is the NWC now fully staffed and is that figure of 45 still current or has it been revised? If revised, up or down, and what is the revised figure.

Answer:

1. The Commission tabled a list of projects approved under Water Smart Australia in response to question on notice (PM 61) at the Additional Estimates Hearings in February. Since then, one further project has been approved:

State	WSA Projects Approved	Announcement date	Total Project Cost	AGWF Contribution
NSW	Goulburn – Community Consultation	26 May	\$200,000	\$50,000

To date, funding totalling \$5.3 million has been awarded to six commissioned projects under Raising National Water Standards. They were all announced on 16 June 2006:

- a baseline assessment of Australia's water resources (\$3.1 million)
- development of national water meter standards (\$502 000)
- a baseline assessment of water governance arrangements (\$100 000)
- phase one of an urban resource planning and assessment project (\$200 000)
- collection of agriculture and water use census data (\$1 million), and
- knowledge and capacity building activities (\$450 000).

The Community Water Grants Program is managed by the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. As such, the Commission is not able to provide figures for projects funded under that program.

2. Project announcements will be made at the completion of the Water Smart Australia project assessment process.
3. - The total number of staff engaged by the National Water Commission as at 19 June 2006 was 46.
 - All staff are located in the Commission's office at 95 Northbourne Avenue ACT.
 - There are currently 35 approved AWAs with Commission staff. A further seven AWA offers are under offer.

Of the remaining staff, the Chief Executive Officer's employment conditions are based Remuneration Tribunal determinations and three staff, who are engaged through secondments, are subject to the employment conditions applicable to their home agency.

- Staffing numbers per group are:

Executive and Administration	4
Corporate Strategy and Services Group	14
Water Programmes Group	16
Water Reform Group	12

4. No
5. Planned staffing capacity of the National Water Commission is 48. Currently (20 June 2006) there are 46 staff members.