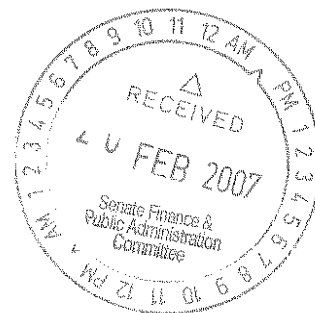


ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
National Water Commission
Additional Estimates Hearings 2006-07
(Question No. PM34)



Senator Stephens asked:

According to the NWC website, a special call for irrigation proposals has been held and many further proposals to improve irrigation are now being assessed.

- a) How many proposals were received? State by state breakdown?
- b) When will assessments be finalised?
- c) What are the assessment criteria?

Answer:

- a) 66 proposals were received in response to the special for irrigation proposals.
 - o NSW 24
 - o Vic 11
 - o QLD 8
 - o SA 4
 - o WA 6
 - o NT 3
 - o Tas 2
 - o National 8
 - o ACT 0
- b) Preliminary assessments were completed in August 2006 and letters were sent in September 2006 advising proponents of the outcome of proposals assessed as ineligible or low priority. The remaining proposals are under consideration.
- c) As set out in the Guidelines "Special call for irrigation proposals" (March 2006) there are eligibility criteria and assessment criteria:

Eligibility criteria

1. National Water Initiative – Proposals must advise the objectives and outcomes of the NWI
2. Significance – projects must have relevance beyond their local area
3. Applicant contributions – applicants are expected to make a funding contribution to reflect the benefit they will receive
4. Proposal status – proposal must be sufficiently advanced to enable early commencement if approved for funding
5. Consistency with other Australian Government policies and programmes

Assessment criteria

1. The extent to which the project advances the NWI
2. The technical viability and economic, environmental and social benefits of the proposed project
3. The significance of the proposed project
4. The degree of innovation in the proposed project
5. Value for money from the proposed project
6. The extent of beneficiary contributions to the cost of the proposed project
7. Private equity contributions to commercial proposals