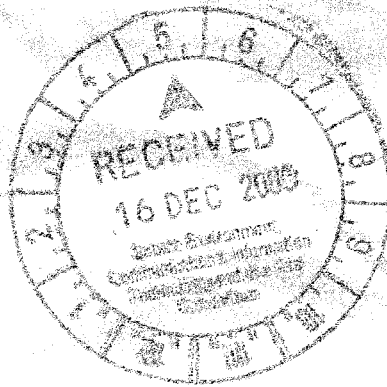


Ref: 05WLB12084

12 December 2005



The Department of  
Water, Land and  
Biodiversity  
Conservation

Dr Jacqueline Dewar  
Secretary (References Committee)  
Australian Senate  
Environment, Communications, Information Technology and The Arts  
References Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dewar

During the taking of evidence for the Inquiry into the Extent and Economic Impact of Salinity in Adelaide on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2005, Senator Stephens requested additional material in regard to River Murray salinity accounting and South Australia's Salinity Zoning Policy (refer to Page 11 of the transcript), which has been included below and in the attached documents.

Under Schedule C of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales are accountable for all salinity impacts of all actions from 1 January 1988 (Queensland is accountable from 1 January 2000). In 2001 the Murray-Darling Basin Commission launched the Basin Salinity Management Strategy 2001-2015 (building on the success of the 1988 *Salinity and Drainage Strategy*) that provides targets to which the Basin's Partner Governments are held accountable.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission maintains the Basin Salinity Management Strategy Salinity Registers, which record all accountable actions within the Basin in the form of salinity credits and debits. Any salinity debit that is created (for example by establishing a new irrigation development in close proximity to the River Murray) must be offset by a salinity credit. Under Schedule C of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, all Partner Governments are required to remain in a credit position at all times.

**Attachment 1** is a copy of the *Basin Salinity Management Strategy Annual Report: South Australia 2003/04*. The report is the forum in which South Australia formally submits all accountable actions to the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. The chapter entitled '*Ensuring Basin Wide Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting*' (pages 14 – 41) discusses in detail South Australia's accountable actions for 2003/04 and describes the methodology for calculating the corresponding salinity credits and debits. Table 21 (page 35) is the register submission for South Australia in 2003/04 and indicates a total credit of 5.1 EC. The report also reviews the major salinity mitigation works and measures completed by South Australia in 2003/04.



**Attachment 2** is a copy of the *Basin Salinity Management Strategy 2003-2004 Annual Implementation Report*. The 'Executive Summary' of this report provides insight into the objectives of the Basin Salinity Management Strategy and a brief explanation of the Salinity Registers (a further explanation of the Salinity Registers can be found on pages 16 and 17). The report also incorporates the register submissions of all basin states. Table 5 (pages 18 & 19) is the Basin Salinity Management Strategy's Salinity Registers, as at June 2004.

**Attachment 3** is an extract of the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation's *Salinity Operations Manual*, which contains the policy documents behind South Australia's recently enacted Salinity Zoning Policy and provides information regarding the legislative and regulatory framework relating to the Salinity Zoning Policy.

The Salinity Zoning Policy prioritises the use of salinity credits (to offset the debits caused by establishing or expanding irrigation developments) in areas that have been deemed to have a low salinity impact to the River Murray, and restricts the use of salinity credits in areas deemed to have a high salinity impact.

For additional information in regard to South Australia's Salinity Zoning Policy, refer to: <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/salinity/zoning.html>

**Attachment 4** is a copy of the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation's *Fact Sheet 72: River Murray Salinity Zoning*. The fact sheet was recently sent out to all irrigators within the River Murray Irrigation Management Zone in South Australia and provides a brief overview of the Salinity Zoning Policy.

**Attachment 5** is the *GIS Methodology Report: How SIMPACT2 was used to generate the River Murray Salinity Impact Zone line* and explains the SIMRAT (formally known as SIMPACT2) groundwater model that was used to determine the boundary between high and low salinity impact areas for the purposes of the Salinity Zoning Policy. The model is accredited by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and is also used to determine most of South Australia's annual accountable actions.

If you require any further information regarding South Australia's Murray-Darling Basin salinity commitments or the use of salinity credit and debit procedures, please do not hesitate to contact me on 08 8463 6892 or [cole.phil@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:cole.phil@saugov.sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Phil Cole  
**GROUP MANAGER**  
**MURRAY-DARLING INITIATIVE**

Enclosures: Annual Report 03/04 BSMD - SA Aust  
Basin Salinity Strategy, Annual Implementation Rpt. 2003/04  
Salinity Operations Manual  
Fact Sheet 72  
GIS Methodology Report