



Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2017-18
Friday, 26 May 2017
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee's Budget Estimates.

The committee met from 9.00 am until 4.26 pm.

The committee called:

- the departments and agencies covering the cross-portfolio Murray Darling Basin Plan matters, commencing with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Water Policy. The other bodies called were the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) from the Environment and Energy portfolio.

Some areas of interest that the committee covered included:

- approximately \$500 million committed to the national infrastructure development fund;
- a feasibility study on the South Australian Government's \$100 million commitment towards a recycling water scheme;
- MDBA's consultations with Indigenous communities in the Northern Basin area;
- impact of the MDBA Plan on salinity in various states such as Victoria and South Australia;
- feasibility study for a weir in Queensland;
- separation of water rights and property;
- Australia's water management regime as an international exemplar;
- foreign ownership of water rights;
- 450 gigalitres of water taken from Basin areato improve the health of the Murray-Darling River system;
- role and functions of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder;
- Australia as signatory to the Ramsar Convention covering wetlands of significance;
- rejuvenation and management of redgums;
- complaints received by the CEWH, including the timing of the release of water;
- the need for CEWH to combine best practice science with local knowledge and the use of adaptive management;
- effect of black water events on fish and other aquatic species; and
- MDBA's offices in Adelaide, Toowoomba and Albury-Wodonga.

This concludes the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee's Budget Estimates for 2017.