Shane Rattenbury MLA
Attorney-General
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction
Minister for Gaming

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
Environment and Communications References Committee
Inquiry into the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023 [Provisions]
31 October 2023

SENATOR PERIN DAVEY - Asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction:

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript, page 66

In relation to: Water capacity in the ACT.

Senator DAVEY: This is my last question, because I know Senator Pocock will have lots of questions too and I don't want to cut into his time. Is it also the case that the ACT is looking at securing water for its future growth? You mentioned potentially recycling water, but is that recycled water currently returned to the Murrumbidgee system—as in, the returned baseline flow? So, if you are recycling the water and you're using that to contribute, are you not taking that water out of a downstream system?

Mr Breen: It would reduce the volume of water downstream. I suppose, in many other situations, that water is not returned. In the case of the ACT, we have a net water-counting arrangement, so that is counted as a return and offsets the take within the ACT. As to the amount of water that could be taken from there, I suppose those investigations are yet to be undertaken. But, yes, it does reduce the volume of water that would be leaving the ACT. I think, in the context of the total volume of water that leaves the ACT, it is a relatively small component.

Senator DAVEY: On notice: if I'm interpreting it right, you have the flows into the ACT and the flows out, and the net use is sort of in the middle. Do you capture those reports anywhere? Could you send us a link, on notice?

MR RATTENBURY MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The following water balance summary for the ACT, under the Baseline Diversion Limit (BDL) conditions, is extracted from the current ACT Source hydrological model:

Table 1: Water balance of the ACT under BDL scenario

Water source	Volume (GL/yr)
NSW inflow	435.4
ACT-controlled surface water (Paramount Right)	435.7
ACT Gross Diversions	-92.9
ACT Returns	50.4
ACT Outflows	828.6

The ACT Source model development report (2017) was provided to the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) as part of the documentation for accreditation of the ACT Water Resource Plan (2021). The report is published on the MDBA website at https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/act-alluvium-development-of-source-models-for-the-act-and-region_1.pdf.

The ACT Source model is undergoing further development to include new functionality and to incorporate updated data to improve model performance. These improvements are being documented as part of the Integrated River Model Uplift project however are not yet finalised and published.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

Shane Rattenbury MLA
Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction **Date:** 5/11/23