

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 89  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 4  
**Programme:** Water (WTR)  
**Topic:** Menindee Lakes  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 23 February 2015  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

1. Can you provide an update on the Commonwealth and NSW Government Project to improve the efficiency of the operation of the Menindee Lakes for water storage?
2. How will the project deliver benefits to South Australia?
3. Will it allow increased flows to SA?
4. Has work on the planning project been completed?
5. When do you expect on-ground works to commence?

**Answer:**

1-5: The New South Wales Government is continuing to undertake investigations for a Menindee Lakes water savings project, including stakeholder engagement, modelling of potential operational options and detailed designs and costings of proposed infrastructure. There have been delays to this work, as priority has been given to investigations into emergency water supply options for Broken Hill as conditions have become drier in the northern Basin.

The Menindee Project will ensure better management of Darling River resources, by improving the efficiency of the Menindee Lakes, which will contribute water towards the environmental targets in the Basin Plan benefiting the Murray-Darling Basin as a whole.

As the infrastructure changes and operational rules for a Menindee Lakes water savings project are still to be finalised, it is not possible at this time to identify specific changes that will result from improved management arrangements. However, the project is being developed on the basis of increasing the efficiency of the lake system to better meet the needs of local and downstream water users.

On-ground works will only commence on the completion of current studies, and agreement between New South Wales and other Basin jurisdictions on a suitable project and obtaining the necessary funding, environmental, planning and other approvals.