

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Legislation Committee

Answers to questions on notice

Environment portfolio

Question No: 92
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO)
Topic: Water not used
Hansard Page: 39-40
Question Date: 23 February 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Canavan asked:

Senator CANAVAN: You have said you used 4,056 gigs since 2008. Could you take on notice how much water you have not been able to use—that you have been allocated, but that you have not been able to use either for an environmental purpose—

Mr Papps: Yes, we can give you those figures. They are figures of a gigalitre in the 0.1-type range. We can provide you with those.

Answer:

The total volume of Commonwealth environmental water allocation that has been forfeited (that is, unable to be carried over, traded or used for environmental purposes by the statutory deadline) is 0.4 gigalitres (GL). This represents less than 0.009 per cent of the 4,992 GL total volume of allocations accrued during the life of the entitlement holdings to 31 January 2015.

Water forfeited at the end of an accounting period is typically returned to the consumptive pool in each system and made available for reallocation to entitlement holders at the beginning of the following water accounting period, according to the water allocation rules that apply within that system.

Under these arrangements, water entitlements held by the Commonwealth would also receive a share of forfeited water that has been made available for reallocation, proportional to the volume of entitlement held within each system. Over the life of the holdings, available data indicates that the proportion of water allocation forfeited by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is significantly less than the total proportion of water forfeited by consumptive users each year across the Murray Darling Basin.