

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

**Question No:** 299  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 4  
**Programme:** Commonwealth Environmental Water Office  
**Topic:** Red Gum forest thinning scientific trial  
**Hansard Page:** 42  
**Question Date:** 04 March 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Rice asked:**

**Senator RICE:** Perhaps you could take on notice then any input that you had into the trial and what the criteria were to assess the impact of the trial on the ecosystems.

**Mr Papps:** Sure.

**Answer:**

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of the NSW Central Murray Forests Ramsar site, and for the development and implementation of the river red gum ecological thinning trial.

The proposed trial was referred to the Commonwealth Environment Department under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in October 2015, for its potential impacts on the NSW Central Murray Forests Ramsar Site, and threatened and migratory species protected under the EPBC Act.

The referral was assessed in accordance with the EPBC Act and guidelines available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/significant-impact-guidelines-11-matters-national-environmental-significance>.

Following assessment the ecological thinning trial was approved under the EPBC Act in January 2016, with conditions. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is required to conduct the trial in accordance with a management plan to ensure minimal impacts to threatened species and wetlands. The results of the trial are likely to provide data to inform the appropriate management of other forest remnants within the Murray-Darling Basin.