

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

Question No: 137
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Program: Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO)
Topic: Gippsland Lakes
Hansard Page:
Question Date: 14 March 2017
Question Type: Written

Senator Rice asked:

In regards to the review of the Gippsland Lakes taking place being led by David Papps.

- a) What will that review involve?
- b) What is the budget of that review?
- c) Will there be any on-ground monitoring?
- d) As part of the new review, has or will the proposal to limit the dredging at the Lakes' entrance to 3.5m rather than 5.5m be examined?

Answer:

a-b) The Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) will work with Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to assess whether there is any new evidence of a change in the ecological character of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site. The ecological character is defined as the critical ecosystem components, processes and benefits/ services that characterise the site. This assessment will draw on information from the 2015 Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Management Plan, the updated Ecological Character Description of the site and any recent research and monitoring.

The assessment must be evidence-based and undertaken in accordance with the [National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands](#). It will include the following information:

- A description of the site
- Evidence documenting the current condition of the critical ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services
- Identification of the information on which the assessment has been based
- Advice on whether there has been a change in ecological character, if so, the nature of that change and whether it is notifiable under the Ramsar Convention
- Evidence of appropriate consultation with the relevant government management agency and the site manager/landowner.

The detailed scope of the assessment, including any financial implications, will be jointly determined between the CEWO and DELWP.

- c) It is not anticipated the review will include new on-ground monitoring work.
- d) No.