

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

Question No: 112
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Water (WTR)
Topic: Menindee Lakes project
Hansard Page:
Question Date:
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

What is the current status of the Menindee Lakes project? Of the 600 GL you forecast to be achieved through infrastructure, how much did the Menindee Lakes project contribute? When is any water expected to be recovered under this project?

Answer:

1. The New South Wales (NSW) Government is continuing to undertake a range of work for the Menindee Lakes project, including designs and costings of infrastructure, modelling of operating options, stakeholder consultations and social, economic and environmental analysis.

This work was scheduled to be completed by 30 November 2014, but has been delayed. The delay has been due to NSW undertaking priority investigations into an emergency water supply for Broken Hill, required due to worsening drought conditions.

2. On-ground works will only commence on the completion of current studies and agreement between NSW and other Basin jurisdictions on a suitable project and obtaining the necessary funding, environmental, planning and other approvals.
3. The estimate that 600GL would be recovered through infrastructure projects is based on estimated water recovery from a range of on and off farm irrigation efficiency activities and does not include an estimate for Menindee Lakes.

If the Menindee Lakes project proceeds it will be eligible to contribute to Basin Plan outcomes as a supply measure under the Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) Adjustment Mechanism. No specific volume of estimated water recovery has been attributed to the Menindee Lakes project at this time. The amount of water savings will depend on the final project proposal from NSW.