

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

Question No: 180
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO)
Topic: Water received by the Commonwealth Environment Water Holder
Hansard Page: 102
Question Date: 25 May 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Singh asked:

Senator SINGH: The 790? How much water has been received by CEWH in each calendar year since the announcement of the National Plan for Water Security in early 2007?

Mr Papps: I do not know that I have the detail, but let me tell you what I do know. Since the CEWH was established—that is, since 2008-09—it has received in allocations, 5,054 gigalitres. That of course is not its holding; the holding changes each year. It has grown each year. That is the allocations against the holding cumulative over those seven years. In terms of what it has received, I would have to take that on notice and give you those figures year by year. At the moment, our holdings are 2,275 gigalitres, but keep in mind that the holding is the entitlement total and the numbers that my colleagues are talking about in terms of 2,750, for example, are long-term average annual yields. So the currency of the plan is long-term average annual yields.

Senator SINGH: Could you take that on notice as far as the breakdown of the years?

Mr Papps: So you want the entitlements accrued each year?

Senator SINGH: Yes.

Mr Papps: Okay. We will take that on notice.

Senator SINGH: I also wanted to know how much water has been delivered by the CEWH since the coalition government came into office.

Mr Papps: Again, you would have to give me a little time to do the calculation. I can tell you, for example, without doing any calculations, that since the CEWH was established in 2008-09 we have used—that is, delivered—4,332 gigalitres. That is the 'use' figure that relates to the total allocation figure I gave you earlier. When you look at it, roughly 86 per cent has been used so far over that seven-year journey. I would have to get a calculator and do the numbers for you.

Senator SINGH: Maybe we could take that on notice and you could have a look at that.

Mr Papps: Yes.

Senator SINGH: That will provide how much has been delivered. It is how much has been received and delivered, I suppose, that is what I am trying to get a snapshot—not a snapshot, trying to get the whole picture of. If that could be provided on notice, both—

Mr Papps: That will not be a problem; we keep those statistics. I just do not have the detailed breakdown, in terms of the years, you are asking for. I would just make the comment—and we will provide extra context for you when we provide you with the figures—that the amount of water used each year is essentially dependent on two things. It is slightly more complicated than this, but at its heart it is essentially dependent on two things. Firstly, it is dependent on how much water we get—that is, the level of our locations across all of those entitlements. Secondly, it is dependent on the ecological demand—that is, where we are in the ecological cycle of all the wetland assets that we are involved in, in watering, and there are many of them. What is the demand? What level of watering do we need to undertake to meet the

ecological objectives associated with that particular asset? Across the basin, that total gives us the equation that we have to deal with, each and every year, around how much water we use.

Answer:

Question one: How much water has the CEWO has been received and delivered each year since 2007?

The table below outlines the volume of entitlement held, the allocation received and the allocation delivered each year since the initial acquisition of Commonwealth environmental water in 2008.

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 (As at 30/4/15)
Registered Entitlement (GL)	65	738	993	1,368	1,629	2,126	2,275
New Allocations (GL)¹	14	187	690	979	1,112	1,056	1,016
Allocations Delivered (GL)	13	154	387	680	1,272	982	844
End of Year Carryover (GL)²	0.3	34	331	564	393	450	TBD

Notes:

1. New Allocations do not include water carried over from the previous water year.
2. End of year carryover figures include undelivered water carried over by delivery partners and is inclusive of: evaporative deductions (a total of 37 GL since 2008-09); spills from storages (33 GL); allocation sales (10 GL); and the reallocation of unused water in accordance with state water accounting rules (<1 GL).

Additional information on Commonwealth environmental water holdings and use since 2008-09 can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/about-commonwealth-environmental-water>

Question two: how much water has been delivered by the CEWH since the coalition government came into office.

Since the Coalition Government came to office in September 2013, the CEWH has delivered 1773 GL of environmental water to rivers and wetlands across the Murray Darling Basin.