

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

Question No: 227
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
Topic: MDBA - Staffing changes to duties
Hansard Page: 88
Question Date: 25 May 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Singh asked:

Senator SINGH: Have there been any changes of note to staff duties since the last estimates? Has there been any change to the work that the staff are doing?

Dr Dickson: The role of the staff varies, for a start, as the Basin Plan is rolled out, so some tasks are completed and new tasks come on. For example, in environmental watering, one of the key tasks of our environmental watering staff on the Basin Plan side was to develop the basin watering strategy over the last couple of years, which is a very detailed piece of work. In these next coming years they will be focusing very much on the water resource planning supporting the development of environmental watering planning under those water resource plans with the states, so things change as the Basin Plan is being rolled out. In the joint programs the decisions on the activities that the governments want are the decisions of those governments, so as those tasks change our staff need to adapt and do different roles. There has not been a huge amount of change in that, but there has been some change.

Senator SINGH: Are you able to take on notice more specifics in relation to those kinds of changes? I know you are going to provide me, on notice, with the profiles and some of the roles, so perhaps it could be formulated in response to that since last estimates.

Ms Schumann: Yes.

Senator SINGH: I have some questions about funding.

Dr Dickson: Just before you continue, I do not think that there has been a lot of change since last estimates, which was back in February, so there would not have been anything to report on there. We could certainly do the—

Senator SINGH: No, since the last budget estimates. Obviously this is about the budget in the last 12 months.

Dr Dickson: Since the last budget estimates?

Answer:

Branch	May 2014 duties	May 2015 duties
Social & Economic	Monitor and evaluate the social and economic outcomes of the Basin water reforms and ensure appropriate economic and social input is included in Basin Plan implementation. Support implementation of the Basin Plan in the	Monitor and evaluate the social and economic outcomes of the Basin water reforms and ensure appropriate economic and social input is included in Basin Plan implementation. Support implementation of the Basin Plan in the

	<p>Northern Basin.</p> <p>Developing policy, engaging with aboriginal communities and undertaking research into methodologies to help aboriginal people articulate their needs in water planning and management.</p> <p>Co-ordinate the development, implementation and adaptive management of interstate water trade policy within the Murray-Darling Basin.</p>	<p>Northern Basin.</p> <p>Developing policy, engaging with aboriginal communities and undertaking research into methodologies to help aboriginal people articulate their needs in water planning and management.</p> <p>Continue to co-ordinate the development, implementation and adaptive management of interstate water trade policy within the Murray-Darling Basin.</p>
Water Management and Information	Progress towards implementation of Groundwater and surface water provisions and groundwater SDLs	Continued progress towards implementation of Groundwater and surface water provisions and groundwater SDLs
Water Resource Planning	<p>Working with States on the development, assessment and accreditation process for Water Resource Plans consistent with Basin Plan requirements.</p> <p>First Basin Plan annual report publication.</p> <p>Supported the intergovernmental processes to develop a package of SDL Adjustment measures.</p> <p>Completed general review of salinity management.</p>	<p>Continuing to work with States on the development, assessment and accreditation process for Water Resource Plans consistent with Basin Plan requirements.</p> <p>Working on the second Basin Plan annual report.</p> <p>Continuing to support the intergovernmental processes to develop a package of SDL Adjustment measures.</p> <p>Working on BSM salinity strategy.</p>
Environmental Water	Completed the environmental watering strategy.	Development of environmental watering plans.
Eco-hydrology Analysis	Focus on Northern Basin review, SDL adjustment mechanism and servicing environmental monitoring and evaluation.	Continuing focus on Northern Basin review, SDL adjustment mechanism and servicing environmental monitoring and evaluation.
Assets	To efficiently and effectively manage the River Murray Operations assets in order to deliver water allocations and	To efficiently and effectively manage the River Murray Operations assets in order to deliver water allocations in

	environmental outcomes in the River Murray system; all in accordance with the responsibilities as set out in the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement.	the River Murray system; all in accordance with the responsibilities as set out in the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement.
Constraints Management Taskforce	Completed phase 1: Investigation and feasibility assessment. As outlined in the IGA, working with relevant stage governments.	Commence phase 2: Business case development.
Operations	Operating the River Murray and providing advice to the organisation regarding water delivery.	Operating the River Murray and providing advice to the organisation regarding water delivery, with increasing environmental water delivery based on water delivery requests from relevant e-water holders.
Water Resources	High quality modelling results, and advice and provision on technical analysis and modelling support for the agency.	High quality modelling results, and advice and provision on technical analysis and modelling support for the agency.
Communications, Engagement & Research	Communicate and engage with external stakeholders.	Communicate and engage with external stakeholders.
Corporate Services	Delivery of corporate services and functions to the organisation.	Delivery of corporate services and functions to the organisation.