

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

Question No: 409
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: National Water Commission
Topic: INVESTMENT IN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE
Hansard Page: 74
Question Date: 20 October 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Rhiannon asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Are there any examples in Australia where you feel that that has been followed as thoroughly as you set out?

Ms Olsson: Yes. I am sure there would be. I would have trouble coming up with one off the top of my head, but I think some of the recent developments perhaps in Tasmania or elsewhere would meet those criteria. But we would need to—

Senator RHIANNON: Could you take it on notice?

Ms Olsson: Yes.

Senator RHIANNON: Just an example of what you would see as good practice, consistent with what you are outlining there—

Ms Olsson: Yes.

Answer:

Based on a comprehensive catchment-by-catchment assessment of current and future water availability undertaken by the CSIRO, recent investment in irrigation infrastructure in Tasmania has been undertaken consistent with good investment practice. Government funding, approved in 2009 under the National Partnership Agreement on Water for the Future, was contingent on acceptance of a Tasmanian government business case and implementation plan for each new irrigation scheme. The Commonwealth sought assurance of NWI consistency with particular focus on the establishment of water plans and the long term economic, social and environmental viability of the systems including investment by industry on water entitlements prior to construction.

Commonwealth due diligence guidelines for the assessment of the Tasmanian projects addressed many of the key elements considered necessary by the Commission in ensuring a best practice approach to water infrastructure investment.