

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

Question No: 415
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: National Water Commission
Topic: WATER BLUEPRINT
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

The National Water Commission recently released its final assessment of Australia's water reform progress and called on the Government not to drop the ball on future water issues. I understand the report found water reforms have created more secure supplies and resulted in more efficient use of resources since the signing of the National Water Initiative by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2004 and its predecessor, the 1994 COAG Water Reform Framework.

What are the key water reforms that led to improved supplies and water efficiency?

Answer:

The implementation of consumption-based, cost-reflective pricing; the establishment of secure water entitlements, by state and territory jurisdictions, and water markets which enable water to move to higher value uses and encourage more efficient use of irrigation water.

Additionally, a substantial improvement in the quality and coverage of water planning; improvements in water science; and an improved understanding of groundwater, surface water/groundwater interactions and whole of water cycle management are all elements which have contributed to improved water security and the more efficient use of resources.