

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

Question No: 254
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Program: Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO)
Topic: Cold Water Pollution
Hansard Page: n/a
Question Date: 01 November 2016
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

How does CEWH manage for cold water pollution and what should be done about it?

Answer:

There are a range of engineering solutions to remediate cold water pollution, such as the installation of a suspended geo-textile 'curtain' around the outlet that directs warmer surface water through the dam outlets. This type of structure has been installed in Burrendong Dam in NSW.

Responsibility for managing these dams, including amelioration of cold water pollution, rests with the Basin States.

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is mindful of the impacts of cold water pollution in planning environmental watering and seeks to limit its impacts by (a) preferentially targeting downstream river reaches which are less affected, (b) timing flows to avoid very cold flows, and (c) mixing dam releases with natural tributary flows ('shandyng') to increase water temperature. Evidence to date demonstrates some positive environmental outcomes from these approaches.