

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

**Question No:** 19  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 4  
**Programme:** Water Reform Division  
**Topic:** Parrakie Wetlands  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 4 March 2014  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

1. I understand there is currently an application before the department to have the pipeline project at the Parrakie Wetlands, the South-East Flows Restoration Project in South Australia, recognised with major project status. Can the department advise of the progress of this application?
2. What are the implications for the project if it is granted major project status?
3. Is the department aware of the significant environmental concerns regarding this project, including the fact that a similar project in Bald Hills has resulted in increased salinity and high PH levels in that area?
  - a) Are these concerns being taken into account as the project is being assessed?
4. What auditing or assessment processes does the department follow when determining major project status?
  - a) Does the department rely on independent information, or information provided by the state government?
  - b) Have these processes been followed for this project?
  - c) Are any of the assessments or audits publicly available?

**Answer:**

The term Major Project Status is not used in Departmental approval processes. There is no current Commonwealth Departmental project at the Parrakie Wetlands.

The South East Flows Restoration (SEFR) Project is a conditional management action under the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project. The SEFR management action project area extends 93.4 kilometres southwards from the outfall into the Coorong South Lagoon at Salt Creek to the existing Blackford Drain, following the existing Tilley Swamp and Taratap Drains. Twelve kilometres of new floodway is required to connect into the Blackford Drain.

The Department is currently considering final financial matters surrounding the SEFR business case.

The Department's due diligence assessment of the SEFR business case considered the environmental impact of the project. The management action is also subject to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and as such any impact on matters of national environmental significance will need to be considered in the context of the EPBC Act before works proceed.