

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

**Question No:** 216  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Agency  
**Programme:** Murray Darling Basin Authority  
**Topic:** MOUs Expiry Date  
**Hansard Page:** 28  
**Question Date:** 24 February 2014  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Rhiannon asked:**

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you, Chair. Dr Dickson, I would like to move on to some of the international work of the authority. I understand there are memorandums of understanding with Mekong River Commission and the Yellow River Conservancy Commission in China. When do those MOUs expire? What is the annual budget allocated to them?

Dr Dickson: I will have to get back to you on when they expire. We do not have any budget allocated to them in the annual budget. The work we do with the Yellow River Conservancy Commission is where we have been involved in either a conference there or a meeting over here, but I cannot remember the last occasion we might have done that. I can certainly provide you with the latest advice on that. On the Mekong River, we did host a delegation about this time last year that came to Australia to explore a lot of the way that we undertake water planning, particularly in an integrated basin. The budget for that was supplied by AusAID, so they were supported by the aid budget. We supplied our staff and organised the program for them. This is part of our general communications and engagement budget. We do not have an allocation on the activities. Beyond this couple of events, there is not any particular work program at the moment that has a budget tied to it.

**Answer:**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mekong River Commission will expire on 13 May 2016.

The MoU with the Yellow River Conservancy Commission (YRCC) does not specify an expiry date.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority) participated in the International Yellow River Forum (IYRF) in 2009 when former Authority Chair, Mr Michael Taylor, was asked by AusAID to lead an Australian delegation to China to participate in the Forum. Consistent with the Australia China Environment Development Program, AusAID developed the MoU between the Authority and the YRCC which was signed on 21 October 2009 at the 4<sup>th</sup> IYRF.

No activities have arisen out of the MoU subsequent to signing in 2009.