

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Senate Estimates

31 May 2011

Question: BR32
Topic: National Water Commission
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Joyce asked:

The National Water Commission has raised concerns about the reinjection of water including that:

“There is an associated risk that, if the water is overly treated, ‘clean water’ pollution of naturally turbid systems may occur.”

How significant is this risk?

Would you recommend that water of "better quality" can be re-injected without significantly increasing the risk to environmental health?

Answer:

The National Water Commission’s concerns related to the disposal of “overly treated, ‘clean water’” into turbid surface water systems. Geoscience Australia’s advice focussed solely on groundwater and did not consider surface water.

Groundwater does not have any turbidity (suspended solids) and hence the injection of ‘clean water’ into aquifers cannot impact on turbidity levels in groundwater. Injection of ‘clean water’ into aquifers is likely to improve the quality of groundwater, and not likely to increase any risk to environmental health.