

Interpretation of scope: 213A – 2025 – 012 – ACT Water Resources

| Element of the 213A order | Understanding of intent | Interpretation of scope | Responsible area |
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| <p>1. Any briefings, documents or other information provided to the Minister regarding the quality of the ACT's water resources (including lakes, rivers and other waterways) from 1 July 2015 to 28 October 2025;</p> | <p>This element seeks to: gather advice provided by Directorate/s to the Minister on matters of water quality in the ACT from 1 July 2015 to 28 October 2025. The substance of the question and intent is interpreted to be directly related to the physical state and condition of water and waterways, and advice the Directorate/s have provided in relation to historical, current and future condition. This includes Lake Burley Griffin.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTBs, weekly briefs, DLO requests are in scope. • Documents provided to 'a' Minister, not just the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, are considered in scope. • “...the quality of the ACT's water resources (including lakes, rivers and other waterways)” is interpreted to mean the physical/chemical and biological state and condition of waterways. • Out of scope: matters of water quantity, e.g. briefs related to water release, wastewater testing, drinking water quality (including issues around drinking water treatment, fluoride and PFAS), and ministerial correspondence. • The scope does not include the ACT Healthy Waterways program general administration – only elements related specifically to water quality. <p>Eg. An update on the <i>construction</i> of a wetland or other water quality improvement device is interpreted to be out of scope. However, an update on water quality monitoring or findings/data/observations/incidents on water quality is taken to be within scope.</p> | <p>CED EPA HACSD</p> |

Matters of water quality policy, planning and management have been treated as in scope, if water quality is a matter of substance.

- The scope does not include documents related to the Water Strategy development or implementation, ACT and Region Catchment Co-ordination Group or inter-jurisdictional fora (e.g. MINCO, SAP, BOC, BOCA, MAG, SHWG) that may have domain over water quality but are not directly addressing water quality.

2. Any advice, decisions, modelling, policies, or other documents provided to a Minister or the Executive from 1 July 2015 to 28 October 2025, which relate to the Water Abstraction Charge or how the Government manages its obligations under the National Water Initiative’s pricing principles, including estimates of the environmental costs of water extraction;

This element seeks to: gather information and advice provided by Directorate/s to the Minister related to the Water Abstraction Charge, pricing principles, and matters related to the environmental costs of water abstraction.

Relevant excerpts:

“Looking at the budget papers, it certainly seems like there might be a water issue. The National Water Initiative, which the ACT has signed up to, requires governments to price water in an efficient and cost-effective manner, but it is not clear that is actually happening. The Water Abstraction Charge, the WAC, is bringing in around \$42 million this year, but the budget papers show the functional expenditure on water infrastructure and water quality projects is only around \$20 million this year.”

- QTBs, weekly briefs, DLO requests are in scope.
- Includes “*Any advice, decisions, modelling, policies, or other documents* provided to the Minister or the Executive (Cabinet).
- “*estimates of the environmental costs of water extraction*” is interpreted to mean studies, investigations, reports or other attempts to quantify the environmental costs of water extraction.
- Not in scope: Matters related to the National Water Initiative that do not specifically cover pricing principles.
- Not in scope: Costs associated with individual (private) water users.

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| 3. Information regarding how the Government's policy of increasing the Water Abstraction Charge by 3 percent each year is consistent with the principles of cost-reflective, transparent and efficient water pricing; | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes documents that contain information regarding how the Government's policy of increasing the Water Abstraction Charge by 3 percent each year is consistent with the principles of cost-reflective, transparent and efficient water pricing. | CED Treasury |
| 4. Any correspondence between the ACT and Commonwealth governments and agencies relating to the Water Abstraction Charge from 1 July 2015 to 28 October 2025; | This element seeks to: gather correspondence between ACT Government Directorates and Commonwealth departments related to the Water Abstraction Charge | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In scope: emails, letters, briefs, reporting between ACT Government Directorates and Commonwealth agencies.• Not in scope: Correspondence not directly related to decisions/substantial in nature. | CED Treasury |
| 5. A table showing, for each financial year since 1 July 2015, revenue generated by the Water Abstraction Charge and the cost of capital and other spending this revenue is intended | | | Treasury |

to recover or fund;
and

6. Pursuant to standing
order 213A(f), all
documents subject
to this order by 27
February 2026.

N/A