



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources**

ACTING SECRETARY

Ref: EC18-000272

Senator Barry O'Sullivan
Chair
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair

Having reviewed the transcripts of Budget Estimates hearings conducted by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on Wednesday 23 – Thursday 24 May 2018, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources would like to make the following corrections to the Hansard for Thursday 24 May 2018.

The first correction relates to a response by Ms Emma Cully to a question by Senator CAROL BROWN. The relevant dialogue is on page 10:

Senator KETTER: I count 13.

Ms Cully: I may have a discrepancy in my figures. I stand corrected. Yes, there are 13.

Senator CAROL BROWN: So it is AgForce Queensland, Australian Bankers' Association, National Farmers' Federation, NSW Farmers, NSW Rural Assistance Authority, NSW Regional Assistance Advisory Committee, Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, Rural Business Development Corporation (WA), Rural Business Tasmania (including RFCS Program Committee), Rural Financial Counselling Service—Gippsland (Victoria), Rural Financial Counselling Service—NSW Central Region, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and the Victorian Farmers' Federation?

Ms Cully: That is correct.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 10, Ms Cully mistakenly stated the number of stakeholder submissions received for the review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform. The Hansard should read:

Ms Cully: 14 submissions were received. These were from AgForce Queensland Farmers, Australian Banking Association Incorporated (previously Australian Bankers' Association Incorporated), National Farmers' Federation, NSW Farmers' Association, NSW Rural Assistance Authority, NSW Regional Assistance Advisory Committee, Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Resources—Rangeland Program, Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, Rural Business Development Corporation, Rural Business Tasmania, Rural Financial Counselling

Service—Gippsland, Rural Financial Counselling Service—NSW Central Region, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and the Victorian Farmers Federation.

The second correction relates to a response from the Secretary to a comment by Senator O'Sullivan. The relevant dialogue is on page 12 of the Hansard:

Mr Quinlivan: The concept here is that, if you meet the eligibility criteria, you effectively get access to a Newstart equivalent and the assets test is suspended for three years. That is the concept: that the assets test is suspended for three years and then, at the end of the three years, the assets test that applies for everyone else then applies to the recipients of the Farm Household Allowance.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 12, the Secretary mistakenly commented that FHA suspends the normal assets tests of Newstart Allowance, which resumes after the conclusion of FHA's three year entitlement. The Hansard should read:

Mr Quinlivan: The concept here is that, if you meet the eligibility criteria, you effectively get access to a Newstart equivalent payment, but the Newstart assets test is replaced with a tailored test while you are in receipt of FHA. The tailored test for FHA is designed to be better suited to a farmer's circumstances, ensuring that up to \$2.55 million worth of certain farm assets do not prevent access to FHA. If a person exiting the FHA program chooses to apply for other social security payments, different assets tests will apply.

The third correction relates to a response from Mr Nick Blong to a question by Senator O'Sullivan. The relevant dialogue is on page 47 of the Hansard:

CHAIR: What were those funding tranches?

Mr Blong: They were \$16.88 million in 2016-17 and \$6.18 million in 2017-18.

I wish to highlight to the committee that the funding profile for the programme was mistakenly stated. The Hansard should read:

CHAIR: What were those funding tranches?

Mr Blong: They were \$6.88 million in 2016-17 and \$6.18 million in 2017-18.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the transcript of the Budget Estimates hearings held on Wednesday 23 – Thursday 24 May 2018 and to provide clarification on the above points.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Thompson

21 June 2018