



STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES

INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF VEGETATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

PUBLIC HEARING

14 FEBRUARY 2019

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES - QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

QUESTION 1, PAGE 4:

CHAIR: The vast majority of forests in my state of Western Australia are managed by the Western Australian government. In my electorate, in the Northcliffe region, we had a very major fire where 100,000 hectares of state forest was burnt. Does the Commonwealth have any role in directing or encouraging the state to protect its forest assets? Or is that purely a state responsibility and we don't get involved at all?

Ms Standen: I don't believe so. Unless my colleagues can help, that's a question I would have to take notice.

Ms SWANSON: As a follow-up to that, I note that we've had a suggestion of a line of questioning in relation to that. Given that you do work with the peak bodies for some agricultural and forestry communities, does someone like the Forest and Wood Products Council have a role in advising the minister on fire risk? Obviously they would know a lot about what is going on with that sort of specific information. Do they have a role?

Ms Standen: Again, I'd have to take that on notice.

Answer:

It is a state government responsibility to manage the state forests, including their protection from fire.

The Forest and Wood Products Council, currently appointed as the Forest Industry Advisory Council, provides advice to the minister on forestry issues. This can include advice on fire risk.

QUESTION 2, PAGES 6&7:

Mr KEOGH: When was that Productivity Commission report?

Ms Standen: I think 2015.

Ms Cully: The final report was released on 28 March 2017.

Mr KEOGH: Has there been a formal government response to the report?

Ms Standen: There has, just recently.

Mr KEOGH: Are any of the recommendations recommendations that actually need to be adopted by state governments as opposed to by the federal government?

Ms Cully: The majority of the recommendations in the report are within the responsibilities of state and territory governments, but we would say that there's a range of work already in train, including within the Australian government's sphere, that works towards the directions that the Productivity Commission—

Mr KEOGH: Is there any COAG engagement with the state governments to try and get them to start working on those recommendations, or is getting state governments to actually do these things proving to be problematic?

Ms Standen: It's not under the auspices of COAG, but we do have an ag ministerial council. Appropriately, that would be where those conversations take place.

Mr KEOGH: Is that on the agenda for the ag ministerial council?

Ms Standen: I'm sorry, I'll have to take that on notice.

Mr KEOGH: If you can, that would be useful. Thank you

Answer:

The Australian Government response to the Productivity Commission report on Regulation in Australian Agriculture is available at www.agriculture.gov.au/about/reporting/obligations/government-responses/regulation-australian-agriculture

The Productivity Commission report on Regulation in Australian Agriculture was discussed at the Agriculture Ministers' Forum on 26 July 2017. The agenda for the next meeting is yet to be set in consultation with state and territory governments.

The Australian Government will continue to work closely with state and territory governments to improve regulation, particularly where national action is preferable or required.