

**Responses to Questions on Notice from the JCPAA Public Hearing held on
13 February 2006
Review of Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Report Number 50
(2004-05): Drought Assistance.**

Page 10 of the Official Committee Hansard:

Senator Watson—On notice – that you will keep the committee informed [of drought policy reform developments].

DAFF Response: A drought policy reform stakeholder reference group comprised of government officials and industry representatives is in the process of finalising a possible drought policy package to be considered at the Primary Industries Ministerial Council meeting in November 2006. The package being developed by the reference group includes options for more consistent drought declaration processes and for improving the drought preparedness levels of farmers.

Page 11 of the Official Committee Hansard:

Senator Moore—The report states that you conducted an internal review of the advertising process. Is it possible to get a copy of that?

DAFF Response: The Department of Human Services conducted the campaign review and evaluation. A copy of the report, 'Drought Assistance Campaign – How Effective and What did it Cost', should be sought from the Department of Human Services.

Page 18 of the Official Committee Hansard:

Senator Watson—Could you give the committee the briefs that have been submitted to overcome the problem [of low uptake of taxation related assistance measures]?

DAFF Response: Responsibility for taxation policy resides with The Treasury. As such, the Department is not in a position to comment on the uptake of taxation related measures and does not have briefings relating to the development of taxation policy.

Page 19 of the Official Committee Hansard:

Senator Moore—Can the committee get back from each of the departments the internal assessment and review processes that you are following?

DAFF Response: The Departmental Audit Committee has responsibilities in relation to financial reporting, internal control structure, risk management systems and internal and external audit functions.

The Departmental Audit Committee requires the Internal Audit Section to monitor and report on the status of implementation of management actions against recommendations made in ANAO reports, whether implemented or in progress, against the stated implementation target date. The Internal Audit Section provides the Departmental Audit Committee with a status report every second meeting (approximately four monthly intervals). A senior ANAO representative attends every Departmental Audit Committee meeting and is availed of the internal and external audit recommendations monitoring reports.

The Drought and Exceptional Circumstances Branch regularly provide management action status reports to the Internal Audit Section concerning the implementation of recommendations made in the ANAO Report Number 50 (2004-05): Drought Assistance.