

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 113

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Drought Concessional Loans Scheme and Drought Recovery Concessional Loans Scheme

**Proof Hansard page:** 103

**Senator STERLE asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** Come on! I am joking—it all right! Take your time.

**Mr Hutchinson:** I am the last of the fast movers! Just to clarify: it was the Drought Concessional Loans and Drought Recovery Concessional Loans schemes?

**Senator STERLE:** Yes.

**Mr Hutchinson:** Since the Drought Concessional Loans Scheme began across the country, 461 businesses have been approved for loans for a total of \$267.455 million as at 31 August this year. In states where the Drought Recovery Concessional Loans Scheme is open a total of 81 farm businesses have been approved as at 31 August 2016.

**Senator STERLE:** How many, sorry?

**Mr Hutchinson:** There were 81 farm businesses approved for loans totalling \$35.927 million.

**Senator Sterle asked:** How many are accessing both these loans?

**Mr Hutchinson:** I would have to take that on notice. We do not have that information readily available. That would be something that we would need to test with our state delivery agencies. It would be a guess.

**Answer:**

As at 26 October 2016, nationally there are 39 farm businesses with loans under both the Drought Concessional Loans Scheme and the Drought Recovery Concessional Loans Scheme.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 114

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** FHA

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Provide an update on how many farmers are currently accessing FHA.

**Answer:**

As at 28 October there were 4658 recipients accessing FHA.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 115

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** FHA

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Is the department aware of problems that farmers are experiencing in accessing the FHA?

**Answer:**

As at 4 November 2016, some 6 737 farmers have had their Farm Household Allowance (FHA) claims granted. This compares with the 367 farming families receiving a support payment under the former government.

The department is aware that a small number of applicants have reported problems in accessing Farm Household Allowance.

The delivery of services for Farm Household Allowance is managed by the Department of Human Services. Any specific questions on service delivery should be directed to the Department of Human Services.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water**

**Question:** 116

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** FHA

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Is the department aware of problems with the Centrelink IT system for the FHA?

**Answer:**

The department is aware of a small number of applicants who have reported issues associated with using the Centrelink IT system. The delivery of services for Farm Household Allowance, including the Centrelink IT system, is managed by the Department of Human Services. Any specific questions on service delivery should be directed to the Department of Human Services.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 117

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Concessional loans

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Provide an update of how many farmers are accessing both the drought concessional loans and drought recovery loans

**Answer:**

Please refer to response provided for question 113 from Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2016.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 118

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Concessional Loans

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Why has the government extended the application period of the 2015–16 drought-related concessional loans to 31 October 2016?

**Answer:**

The 2015–16 application period for the Drought Concessional, Drought Recovery and Dairy Recovery Concessional Loans Schemes was extended to 31 October 2016 because the election caretaker period would prevent the negotiation and finalisation of concessional loan scheme delivery arrangements in the state and territories by 1 July 2016.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 119

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Concessional loans

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Provide an update on uptake of concessional loans by dairy farmers.

**Answer:**

The data below provides figures for the uptake of concessional loans by dairy farm businesses across all jurisdictions:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Approved dairy farm businesses</b>	<b>Approved amount (A\$million)</b>
<b>Dairy Recovery Concessional Loans as at 4/11/2016</b>	70	\$ 37.164
<b>Drought Concessional Loans Scheme (as at 30/09/2016)</b>	13	\$7.114
<b>Drought Recovery Concessional Loans Scheme (as at 30/09/2016)</b>	0	0
<b>Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme (as at 30/09/2016)</b>	38	\$16.433

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 120

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Carbon Farming Initiative

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

When will the draft Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) methodology for plantation be released for public consultation prior to its finalisation?

**Answer:**

The Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) has policy responsibility for the Emissions Reduction Fund.



**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 121

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Carbon Farming Initiative

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

The Government undertook to release for public consultation, a draft CFI methodology for plantations prior to the 4th Emissions Reduction Fund auction – is has not, why?

**Answer:**

Please refer to the answer from question 120 from Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2016.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 122

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Carbon Farming Initiative

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Why does this Government not want the forest industry to participate in the ERF and store carbon – given the UNs Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change statement that sustainability managed forests are a significant part of the climate change solution?

**Answer:**

The Department of the Environment and Energy has policy responsibility for the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). A method that applies to farm forestry activities (*Measurement Based Methods for New Farm Forestry Plantations*) is currently available under the ERF.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 123

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Carbon Farming Initiative

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Why does the Government continue to delay the release for public consultation of a draft Carbon Farming Initiative methodology for plantations?

**Answer:**

Please refer to the answer from question 120 from Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2016.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 124

**Division/Agency:** Farm Support Division

**Topic:** Election Commitments

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator STERLE asked:**

Provide an update on the implementation of the Government's policy and how the department will establish a Regional Investment Corporation? How will this measure be implemented, over what timeframe and what safeguards will be implemented to ensure that the department will be able to administer the new financing and concessional loans scheme.

**Answer:**

The government has committed to establish a Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) to deliver up to \$4.5 billion in Commonwealth farm business concessional and water infrastructure loans.

The department will establish the RIC as a key priority and is working with the Deputy Prime Minister on the details associated with this commitment, including how it will be implemented and timing for its establishment.

Information about the progress of all election commitments is contained in question 82 from Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2016.