

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Program 1.6

Question No. 76

Senator Back asked the following question at the hearing on 22 February 2011:

Senator BACK—I asked the question in relation to two instances in Queensland. You might be able to assist me. The first instance is in relation to a community about 40 kilometres south-east of Cairns. To remind people, the floods in and around Brisbane and Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley occurred on about 11 January. The community of Yarrabah, some 1,700 kilometres north of Brisbane, received payments under the AGDRP of \$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child on or about 20 January—about 10 or 12 days after the Brisbane floods. 'Floods' is the right term, because cheques were flooding into Cairns from this community. Inquiries were made as to what disaster had befallen Yarrabah to cause them to receive these payments. I cannot validate the answer, but the answer given was 'the floods'. The question was asked: 'Which floods?' The answer was, 'The Brisbane floods.' Is there any reasonable explanation why a community of people 1,700 kilometres away from these flooded areas would have received these Centrelink payments? Do you understand how that could have happened?

Mr Wilkins—Where did the information come from?

Senator BACK—It came from the local federal member of parliament.

Mr Wilkins—We will have to take that on notice. I do not have that information.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Indigenous community of Yarrabah was affected by both the heavy rainfall, storm damage and associated flooding which began in Queensland in November 2010 as well as Tropical Cyclone Yasi which impacted in early February 2011. The area was declared for the purposes of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) for both events.

Yarrabah residents have been twice impacted by these events which may make recovery for the community more difficult. Yarrabah was considerably impacted by both disaster events and the claims meet the eligibility criteria under the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment Determinations.

As at 4 March 2011, a total of 885 claimants have been paid the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment for the Queensland floods from Yarrabah.

In relation to the Tropical Cyclone Yasi event, as at 4 March 2011, a total of 1,505 adults and children have been paid Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment.