

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

Group 3

Program 1.7

Question No. 146

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012

Review of disaster assistance

- a) Has the Attorney-General, Nicola Roxon, initiated a review of disaster assistance of either the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) or the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) as held in ABC News article 'Roxon says flood aid will be reviewed' dated 4 May 2012? If not, why?
- b) If so, when will this review be completed?
- c) What specific funding areas are being considered in the review?
- d) What community consultation has the Attorney-General or the Department had with those individuals affected by the 2011/12 flooding events regarding the review?
- e) Has the Attorney-General corresponded either in person or via letter to the Bland Shire Mayor, Mr Neil Pokoney, regarding his concerns in relation to disaster assistance after an event? If so, please specify?

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

- a) Reform to disaster assistance is ongoing. A number of recent Commonwealth bodies of work have considered the NDRRA and/or the AGDRP, including the Department of Finance and Deregulation's *Review of the Insurance Arrangements of State and Territory Governments under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements Determination 2011*, the Senate Economics References Committee's report on *The Asset Insurance Arrangements of Australian State Governments*, and the Productivity Commission's report on *Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation*.

The Department continually reviews disaster assistance measures.

- b) The Department continually reviews disaster assistance measures.
- c) Please refer to the answer to a) above.
- d) The Department works closely with the Department of Human Services, including with frontline staff who deal directly with recipients of the payment. The Department has regular discussions with the states and territories about the operation and administration of payments.
- e) The Attorney-General wrote to Cr Neil Pokoney, Mayor of the Bland Shire Council, on 4 September 2012. That correspondence confirmed the 24 August 2012 activation of the AGDRP in the township of Ungarie—within the local government area of Bland Shire—severely affected by the March 2012 flooding event.