

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

**Group 3**

**Program 1.7**

**Question No. 149**

**Senator McKenzie asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:**

Further to the Commonwealth decision to reject applications for Category C assistance - \$25,000 clean up and recovery grants - to Joel Joel, Wangaratta and Campaspe Shire residents and businesses under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). The floods caused an estimated \$3.7 million in damage, with 400km of fencing destroyed and 1500 sheep lost.

- a) By what criteria is an application for Category C assistance assessed by the Commonwealth? Please include a definition of any terms implying a measure, e.g. significant.
- b) Under which criteria were the applications for the Joel Joel, Wangaratta Shire and Campaspe Shire areas rejected, following their third flood in less than two years?
- c) What feedback was provided to local and state governments?
- d) By what date can the remaining nine Victorian local government areas impacted by the 2012 floods expect to be advised of the Commonwealth's decision regarding their applications for Category C support?

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

- a) Agreement to Category C assistance is subject to State and Territory governments demonstrating that community sectors have been severely impacted by a natural disaster and that there will be negative long-term impacts. When assessing a request for Category C assistance, consideration is given to the number/proportion of small businesses and primary producers affected, the level of damage incurred and the longer term impacts of the disaster on the these sectors.
- b) Decisions regarding Category C clean-up and recovery grants are based on the impact information provided by State and Territory governments. Victoria's initial request for Category C clean-up and recovery grants for Wangaratta Shire and Campaspe Shire did not demonstrate that the small business and primary producer sectors had been severely impacted by the floods.
- c) All decisions regarding Category C clean-up and recovery grants have been communicated to the Victorian Government. Following feedback from the Attorney-General's Department, the Victorian Government provided more detailed impact information in support of their Category C request.
- d) The Commonwealth has now offered Category C clean-up and recovery grants of up to \$10,000 for primary producers in the areas requested by the Victorian Government that were affected by the December 2011 storms and floods, February-March 2012 floods and June 2012 floods. The Prime Minister has written to the Victorian Government regarding this matter. To date the Victorian Government has not accepted this offer of support.