

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: F&F 01

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Fisheries research expenditure in the 1990s

Hansard page: 3-4 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—My recollection is that in the mid-nineties, probably better described as the late nineties, the government withdrew funds from fishery research. Is my recollection correct?

Mr McLoughlin—I would have to check that. I was not a member of the Commonwealth fisheries, the Public Service, at that time, but I can take that one on notice.

Mr Hurry—I would be reasonably sure that that is not the case, Senator, but I am happy to check it for you.

Senator O'BRIEN—I recall a Senate inquiry about just that fact, but perhaps I have imagined it. It will not take much to look up the inquiry.

Mr Hurry—I am happy to do that, and I will also go back and check the main sources of supply of fisheries research from Commonwealth funding, but I think it is still reasonably robust, because it is a mix of Commonwealth, institutional and state agency funding that goes into fisheries research and trying to develop a better understanding of stock structures in Australia.

Answer:

Fisheries research funding was not withdrawn during the mid-late 1990s and a search of the register of Senate Committee Reports revealed no evidence of a Senate inquiry that matches that described by Senator O'Brien.

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Question no: F&F 02

Division/Agency: Fisheries & Forestry

Topic: Structural adjustment packages

Hansard page: 7 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—How many of these adjustment or restructure packages have been put into effect in the last 10 years?

Mr Hurry—I think this is the third package. There was one for the Southern Shark Fishery, there was one for the South-East Trawl Fishery, and then there is the major package that is under way at the moment, the Securing Our Fishing Future one. One of those may have been before that 10-year period, but I have a sense that one of them was around the time of the creation of AFMA.

Senator O'BRIEN—What about the Northern Prawn Fishery?

Mr Hurry—I would need to check that. There may well have been one for the Northern Prawn Fishery, but it may well have been before then.

Mr Talbot—There was one for the South-East Non-Trawl Fishery at the same time as the Southern Shark Fishery.

Answer:

The Structural Adjustment Packages put into effect for Commonwealth managed fisheries over the last 10 years are as follows:

- South East Trawl Fishery - an adjustment package was introduced in 1997 to stabilise the fishery associated with allocation of quotas. The package took out 27 trawl licences for \$1.714 million and 16 operators received \$2.297 million in financial assistance in a program the total cost of which was \$4.2 million.
- In 1999 a \$2.6 million Southern Shark Industry Development Program was announced. This programme was undertaken in 2000/01 with the purpose of smoothing the transition to individual transferable quotas. The total cost of the program was \$1.9 million and 40 permits were bought out. Also over 200/01 the South –east non-trawl fishery was also subject of an industry development program which expended \$0.346m buying blue-eye trevalla quota units to address allocation issues.
- *Securing our Fishing Future* - the most recent adjustment package applying to Commonwealth managed fisheries that are subject to overfishing, was put into effect between 2005 and 2007. To date there have been more than 550 fishing concessions surrendered across all Commonwealth managed fisheries at a cost of \$148 million. Further details may be found at <http://www.daffa.gov.au/fisheries/domestic/fishingfuture>
- The Australian Government, in conjunction with the Queensland Government and the Torres Strait Regional Authority, is implementing a programme to adjust allocation in Torres Strait fisheries to account for obligations to Papua New Guinea

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under the Torres Strait Treaty and to increase access for indigenous commercial fishers.

Other packages have primarily involved adjustment of state managed fisheries. This includes packages administered by the Commonwealth environment portfolio such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Protected Area Structural Adjustment Package in 2004 - 05 and an earlier East Coast Trawl Fishery voluntary buyback scheme in 2001 to facilitate a reduction in fishing effort in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

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Question no: F&F 03

Division/Agency: Fisheries & Forestry

Topic: Structural adjustment packages

Hansard page: 7 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—On notice, can you refer us to where we will find the details of those packages, or provide them?

Mr Hurry—What if we provide you with the details of them and then if you have any further questions, we can follow them up for you.

Answer:

Refer to F&F02.

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Question no: F&F04

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Securing our Fishing Future - buybacks

Hansard page: 25 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

With regard to the \$220 million Securing Our Fishing Future programme, I understand that \$148.58 million has been spent on licence buybacks.

Can the government advise how many vessels and entitlements have been purchased and what price was paid in each case?

Answer:

In excess of 1,500 concessions were purchased through the buyback process. The details of these are included at **Attachment A**.

The price paid in the case of each successful tender in both Round 1 and Round 2 of the buyback process is included at **Attachment B**.

Two boats were scrapped as a result of these respective tenderers being successful and wishing to take up the \$25,000 boat scrapping incentive.

[F&F 04 attachment A: Commonwealth fishing concessions to be surrendered]

[F&F 04 attachment B: Round 1 and Round 2 successful tenders]

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Question no: F&F 05

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Australian Seafood Hotline – complaints

Hansard page: 28 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Can we receive a report, at least, on the number of complaints, investigations and prosecutions arising from these 1800 hotline calls?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has a contract with Seafood Services Australia (SSA) for the provision of the 1800 number service, including monitoring and reporting. The current contract is for 31 July 2006 – 30 June 2007.

For the period 1 August 2006 to 31 January 2007 there were 57 calls received. During the previous contract with SSA for the provision of the hotline, which ran for the 2005 calendar year, there were 107 calls received.

The SSA refers reports to the hotline to the relevant state or territory agency, as the states/territories are responsible for compliance and enforcement of food labelling requirements. It is not mandatory for the states and territories to report to the SSA or the Australian Government on action, investigations or prosecutions arising from calls to the hotline. No formal information on investigation or prosecution action has been received from the states or territories under the current arrangements. The Australian Government will be discussing with the states and territories a mechanism for reporting on the outcomes of actions taken in relation to both previous and future calls to the 1800 number service.

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Question no: F&F06

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Recreational Fishing Community Grants – Panel

Hansard page: 30 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Is he (John Cleary) the only one with a political background?

Answer:

No. Mr Mark Haynes is the Deputy Mayor of the Burdekin Shire Council and Mr Tom Megaw is a Local Council member of the Grant District Council.

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Question no: F&F07

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Recreational Fishing Community Grants

Hansard page: 30 and 31 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

In the round 1 and 2 total, I understand Queensland got 39; New South Wales, 26; Victoria, 23; South Australia, 13; Western Australia, 11; Tasmania, 6.

Answer:

Rounds 1 to 3 are completed and projects approved. Applications for Round 4 have closed and are currently under consideration.

The number of applications received in each of the 4 rounds are:

| | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 | Round 4 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| New South Wales | 43 | 17 | 24 | 38 |
| Queensland | 50 | 32 | 15 | 34 |
| Victoria | 26 | 13 | 12 | 21 |
| Tasmania | 11 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| South Australia | 19 | 15 | 8 | 9 |
| Western Australia | 13 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| Northern Territory | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| National projects | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Proactive projects | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Secretariat projects | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 166 | 102 | 82 | 127 |

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The number of applications approved in each of the 3 rounds are:

| | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| New South Wales | 17 | 8 | 19 |
| Queensland | 24 | 15 | 10 |
| Victoria | 13 | 9 | 9 |
| Tasmania | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| South Australia | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| Western Australia | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Northern Territory | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| National projects | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Proactive projects | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Secretariat projects | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Withdrawn | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 71 | 59 | 61 |

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Question no: F&F08

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Recreational Fishing Community Grants

Hansard page: 31 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Perhaps the department can tell us how many applications were received by state in each of the rounds.

Answer:

Refer to F&F07.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: F&F 09

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Conditions of Scottsdale industry and community development fund

Hansard page: 37-38 (16/02/2007)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator Abetz—The Prime Minister wrote to the Premier on 13 February: ‘Therefore, as a condition of offering the \$10 million Scottsdale industry and community development fund, I ask that your government fully fund its west coast transport subsidy and give consideration to extending it to underwrite the shipment of softwood from the Bass Strait islands.’

Senator O'BRIEN—Is it possible to get a copy of the Prime Minister's letter?

Senator Abetz—Yes.

Senator O'BRIEN—Thank you.

Senator Abetz—Wait a minute. I had better be careful on that. I will take that on notice. I dare say that Premier Lennon would be happy to give it to you.

Senator O'BRIEN—He might.

Senator Abetz—But, given that it is from the Prime Minister to the Premier, I had better not make the call. That is the Prime Minister's call.

Answer:

No.

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Question no: F&F10

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Forestry managed investment schemes (MIS)

Hansard page: 38 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

To your knowledge, who else was involved apart from Treasury?

Answer:

DAFF understands that apart from Treasury, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), state forestry agencies, National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI), Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (A3P) and Australian Forest Growers (AFG) were involved in consultation on forestry Managed Investment Schemes (MIS).

DAFF understands that Treasury received 90 submissions relating to the Government's proposal on forestry MIS.

Treasury continues to consult with the Australian Taxation Office, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, DAFF, NAFI, A3P and AFG in preparation for implementation of the new arrangements on 1 July 2007.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: F&F 11

Division/Agency: Fisheries & Forestry

Topic: National Indigenous Forestry Strategy

Hansard page: 39 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

How does this program work? It is a series of projects that are funded, is it?

You said the clearing of fallen timber in the cyclone?

No, they work for money, do they not?

Answer:

The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (the strategy) was developed by the Australian Government in collaboration with Indigenous interests and the forestry industry.

The strategy was launched on 22 July 2005, and seeks to encourage greater Indigenous participation in the forest and non-wood forest related industries.

Implementation of the strategy also seeks to identify opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the growth of Australia's forest and non-wood forest industries, and to develop a means of support for Indigenous people to participate in these activities, especially where they promote the economic independence of Indigenous communities.

Implementation focuses on identifying potential projects and working with the Indigenous stakeholders and agencies to identify various funding sources. Additional activities include working in partnership with Indigenous people, government agencies and the forest industry to encourage skills development, employment and business opportunities.

In relation to the Cyclone Larry projects involving the clearing of fallen timber, the crews are contracted on a commercial basis through Northern Skills Alliance Inc., under the Operation Farm Clear Program. Crew members work for money.

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Question no: F&F 12

Division/Agency: Fisheries & Forestry

Topic: National Indigenous Forestry Strategy

Hansard page: 39 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

This is the sort of stuff I would want on the record rather than in a briefing. Is that all right?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, under the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy, has, to date, facilitated the development of projects listed in

[F&F 12 attachment]

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Question no: F&F 13

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Funding for Planting for a Sustainable Future Plan

Hansard page: 39-40, 16/3/2007

Senator O'Brien asked:

The government committed \$69,000 to the Planting for a Sustainable Future plan launched last July by you, Minister. Has it all been spent? Was all the \$69,000 spent on this plan's development?

Answer:

Yes.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: F&F 14

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Planting for a Sustainable Future Plan

Hansard page: 40 (16/03/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Which of the other 21 private forestry development committees has the department talked to about this plan?

Answer:

'Planting for a Sustainable Future: Action Plan for Private Forestry in the Central Victorian Farm Plantations Region 2006-2011' has been developed to guide the development of private forestry in the region for the period from 2006 to 2011.

The Department has not directly talked to the other Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) about this plan, however other PFDCs would be aware of the plan through other channels and the Department has regular discussions on a range of issues with these organisations.

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Question no: F&F 15

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Staffing – Forest Branch

Hansard Page: 42 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

How many staff are in that branch? (section that deals with international forest issues, including illegal logging)

Answer:

There are 28 Full-Time Equivalent (and two Graduate Administrative Assistants) staff in the Forest Industries Branch.

There are 6 FTE (and one Graduate Administrative Assistant) in the International Forest Policy Section that deals with illegal logging.

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Question no: F&F 16

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: New Forest and Wood Products Australia

Hansard page: 43 (16/03/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

What is the intention for the amount of money to be spent on R&D compared to the current company?

Answer:

There is no intention that the funding available to the new entity for research and development will be reduced.

The exact amount is dependant on the amount of levies, charges and state growers contractual payments collected in the financial year.

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Question no: F&F 17

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Australian Forestry Standard

Hansard page: 44 (16/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

What proportion of our timber industry receives certification under the AFS?

Answer:

Around 57 per cent or 8,541,296 hectares of Australia's public multiple-use forests and commercially productive private forests, including plantations, were certified under the Australian Forestry Standard as at the end of February 2007.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: F&F18

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Forestry Managed Investment Schemes (MIS)

Hansard page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

With regard to forestry management investment schemes and the December 2006 changes to forestry managed investment schemes can the Department answer the following questions?

- a) What consultations were undertaken prior to this decision being made?
- b) What form did this consultation take?
- c) How long was the consultation process
- d) Which industry participants were involved in consultation?
- e) Which other Departments or agencies were involved in consultation?
- f) Where the changes announced in December 2006 in line with any of the options discussed with industry during consultation?
- g) Has there been criticism from any industry participants about the consultation process being disconnected from the actual policy announcement in December?
- h) Did the Department receive any feedback from those consulted?
- i) Does the Department believe that a better policy outcome was achieved due to the consultation?
- j) Does the Department believe that no consultation would have led to an inferior policy outcome?
- k) Was the Minister regularly briefed on the consultation process and did he take an interest in the outcomes of consultation?
- l) Did the Minister direct the Department to undertake consultation with industry?
- m) Would the Department see it as unusual if consultation was not undertaken prior to a major policy change?

Answer:

- a) Treasury undertook a formal consultation process which commenced on 9 May 2006. This process was due to conclude on 6 June 2006, but was extended until 14 July 2006 at the request of industry. A total of 90 written submissions were received. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Treasury and the Australian Taxation Office also consulted regularly with industry until the Government announced its decision on 21 December 2006.
- b) It was a combination of a formal consultation process undertaken by Treasury based on a call for submissions from interested stakeholders, and ongoing consultation between Treasury, the Australian Taxation Office, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and industry.
- c) The formal consultation process formally ran from 9 May 2006 to 14 July 2006, with regular consultation also undertaken with industry until the announcement on 21 December 2006.

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- d) All of the peak forest and wood product industry associations were involved in the consultation process including the National Association of Forest Industries, Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council, and Australian Forest Growers. The major MIS companies were also involved.
- e) The other Departments and agencies involved in consultation were Treasury, the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- f) Not specifically – a range of options were discussed some of which had elements consistent with the final announcement.
- g) There has been no criticism that we are aware of from the forest and wood product industry participants or major MIS companies about the consultation process.
- h) Yes – the Department received a range of feedback as part of both the formal and on-going consultation.
- i) Yes.
- j) The Department believes that consultation is an important input to all policy development.
- k) The Minister was regularly briefed and took an active interest in the outcomes of the consultation process.
- l) DAFF undertook consultation with stakeholders on this matter as it would with other major policy proposals.
- m) The degree of consultation is often determined by the nature of the issue, however consideration of most policy change would be expected to involve consultation in some form.

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Question no: F&F 19

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Planting for a Sustainable Future Plan

Hansard page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

With regard to the programme Planting for a Sustainable Future could the Department answer the following questions?

- a) The Government committed \$69,000 to this plan's development. Has all of this \$69,000 been spent on this plan's development?
- b) What has happened to any remaining unspent money?
- c) Has Central Victorian Farm Plantations started implementation of the plan? If not, when will the plan be implemented?
- d) How long will it take for the plan to be implemented?
- e) Which of the other 21 Private Forestry Development Committees has the Department talked to about this plan?

Answer:

- a) Yes. This funding was identified in the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's 2004-05 Regional Investment Plan and was spent in 2005-06 on the development and production of the Action Plan.
- b) No money was left unspent.
- c) Yes. Implementation of a number of the actions has commenced. For example, both Central Victorian Farm Plantations and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority are involved in the Corangamite Environmental Forestry Project.
- d) The Action Plan will guide the development of private forestry in the region for the next five years. The Action Plan allocates timeframes and responsible parties for the actions, and implementation will be coordinated through the Central Victorian Farm Plantations.
- e) The Department has not directly talked to the other Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) about this plan, however other PFDCs are aware of the plan through other channels.

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Question no: F&F 20

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Forest and Wood Products Australia

Hansard page: Written Questions

Senator O'Brien asked:

With regard to Forest and Wood Products Australia can the Department indicate how much funding is intended to go into R&D and how this compares to the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation, and how much funding the new entity will use in its marketing and promotion activities?

Answer:

Forest and Wood Products Australia is likely to receive funding in the order of \$7 million for research and development activities. The exact amount is dependant on the amount of levies, charges and state growers contractual payments collected in the financial year.

In 2006/07, the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporations received approximately \$7,499,271.

Under the new arrangement for funding it is anticipated that additional funding of approximately \$2 million will be available to Forest and Wood Products Australia for marketing and promotion activities.