

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2009

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 01

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Stimulus Package – Nation Building and Jobs Plan

Hansard Page: 8 (23/02/2009)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—With respect to the stimulus package, the only involvement that the department would have would be with the EC payments—is that correct?

Mr Quinlivan—Correct.

Senator COLBECK—Was the department asked for any specific input into the stimulus package?

Mr Quinlivan—We were involved in the very final stage of decision making on that specific element, but that was the only involvement.

Senator COLBECK—When would that have brought you into the process? You said ‘the very final’.

Mr Quinlivan—I cannot recall the precise dates, but when the EC people come later in the morning, if you like, we could go through it. I will make sure I have the dates.

Senator COLBECK—So we would get the date the department was approached from those involved in that process, which would have been those involved in the EC process?

Mr Quinlivan—I will make sure we have that detail when they come to the table.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry was first approached for specific input into the Farmer’s Hardship Payment component of the government’s Nation Building and Jobs Plan on 29 January 2009.

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Question: CC 02

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Climate Change

Hansard Page: 25 (23/02/2009)

Senator Milne asked:

We will go then to Australia's Farming Future and the Climate Change and Productivity Research Program. Can you tell us what the money has been spent on in the last year and how much has been spent?

Answer:

The Climate Change and Productivity Research Program was renamed the Climate Change Research Program (CCRP) in the 2008 Portfolio Additional Estimates.

The CCRP is part of Australia's Farming Future and will provide \$46.2 million over four years (2008-2009 to 2011-2012) for research into reducing greenhouse pollution, better soil management and adapting to a changing climate.

\$10 million has been appropriated for 2008-2009. Of the 2008-09 CCRP appropriation, \$8.72 million has been committed as at 18 March 2009.

Expenditure has been approved for research into soil carbon, nitrous oxide and reducing emissions from livestock, with CCRP funding supplemented by funds from research organisations and industry bodies.

The \$20 million Soil Carbon Research Program (\$9.63 million from the CCRP over four years) will be established in all states and the Northern Territory to investigate carbon changes in soil across Australia in response to farm management practices.

The program will create a nationally standardised methodology for sampling and analysing soil carbon and will include research into:

- improving the understanding of soil carbon stocks;
- the impacts of management practices on soil carbon; and
- the role Australian soils could play in sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The \$11.8 million Nitrous Oxide Research Program (\$4.65 million from the CCRP over four years) will develop a national system for measuring nitrous oxide emissions from Australia's agricultural soils.

The program will monitor nitrous oxide emissions in five key farming systems: sugarcane, cotton, dairy, pasture rain-fed cereal cropping irrigated cereal cropping.

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The \$26.8 million Reducing Emissions from Livestock Research Program (\$11.25 million from the CCRP over four years) focuses on reducing methane emissions from livestock.

Projects under this program will lead to the development of abatement technologies and farming systems with low net emissions and will include research into:

- dietary supplements and alternative feeds to reduce methane production within animals;
- management of livestock farming systems to reduce emissions; and
- genetic approaches such as selective breeding to develop low emitting animals.

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Question: CC 03

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Regulatory impact statement into banning the importation of illegally logged timber – publicly available or to the minister and length of time of response by the minister?

Hansard Page: 46-47 (23/02/2009)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator COLBECK—On banning the importation of illegally logged timber: again, at the last estimates we were told that guidelines were being developed. Can you give us an update on where that is at?

Mr Talbot—We are currently having a regulatory impact statement done. The Centre for International Economics is conducting that work for us. We are hoping to have that work on the regulatory impact statement completed by 30 June.

Senator ABETZ—Would the regulatory impact statement—if I may interrupt, Senator Colbeck—be on the basis of a voluntary scheme? On what sort of a scheme is the impact statement being predicated?

Mr Talbot—The regulatory impact statement would look at a range of options—anything from some sort of voluntary approach to some sort of very strict legal approach.

Senator ABETZ—So it would cover the full gamut of options?

Mr Talbot—It would cover the full gamut of options. There would be an issues paper in March and an options paper in May. And there is a very large consultation process going on.

Senator ABETZ—When do you expect that to report?

Mr Talbot—We expect it to be finalised around 30 June.

Senator ABETZ—Will that be made publicly available, or is it a report to the minister and at his discretion to release?

Mr Talbot—My understanding is that it would be a report to the minister and at his discretion, but I had better take that on notice and clarify it.

Answer:

Under the Government's Best Practice Regulation requirements, the final regulation impact statement (RIS) is made available to the public depending on the final policy option decided by the Government. If the Government decides:

- a) to introduce legislation - the RIS will be tabled in the Parliament with the explanatory material and published on the COMLAW website
- b) on a quasi-regulatory alternative - the RIS will be published on the Department's website
- c) not to adopt a regulatory or quasi-regulatory option - the RIS may be made public at the Minister's discretion.

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Question: CC 04

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Importation of illegal logged timber

Hansard Page: 47 (23/02/2009)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Once that report is received, what is the process after that?

Mr Mortimer—The report would then go to the minister, the department would advise the minister on the pros and cons of the different options, the minister will make up his mind and, depending on the nature of the arrangements—and, indeed, how extensive they are—the minister may wish to go to cabinet, but we do not know that at this stage.

Senator ABETZ—Minister, I assume this is a report to Mr Burke?

Senator Sherry—Yes, it is.

Senator ABETZ—Can you take on notice for us the question of how quickly Mr Burke would anticipate that he would be able to respond to the RIS?

Senator Sherry—I will take it on notice.

Answer:

The Regulatory Impact Statement is expected to be completed by the end of June 2009. On its completion, it will be assessed by the Office of Best Practice Regulation before it is submitted to the Minister. The Minister will then consider the policy options for meeting the election commitment.

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Question: CC 05

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Preparing forest industries for climate change – program expenditure to date

Hansard Page: 47 (23/02/2009)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—So how are you going against budgeted expenditure for that \$8 million?

Mr Mortimer—Let me step back a bit there. I do not know what the funding profile for that \$8 million is over a number of years. I would have to take that on notice and come back to you.

Answer:

The budget for expenditure under the \$8 million election commitment for *Preparing the Forest Industries for Climate Change* is:

- 2008-09 – \$1.65 million
- 2009-10 – \$2.85 million
- 2010-11 – \$3.5 million

As at 23 February 2009 no expenditure had been recorded against this item.

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Question: CC 06

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Preparing forest industries for climate change

Hansard Page: 48 (23/02/2009)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Mr Talbot—I think maybe I will come in on the issue of the finances. Basically, there is \$19 million to be spent across all these issues—except the first one you mentioned, where the \$1 million went to the Industry Skills Council. In the additional estimates statements, we have to spend \$4.9 million of that money across those other programs this financial year.

Senator COLBECK—The only one you have got any chance of spending any money on is boosting the export of forest products, and, given the submission level that you have got, I do not think—what component of the \$4.9 million is in that?

Mr Talbot—It basically is \$4.9 million for this financial year across—

Senator COLBECK—That cannot be right. What you are saying is that you have got a lump of money that you will expend across all of those programs and it does not really matter which program it is allocated to.

Mr Mortimer—No, no. If I can just come in there, Senator, it is probably best if we take on notice the reporting of expenditure to date against those programs, if that helps. But I would also observe that there are still four months of the financial year to go and it is difficult—indeed, probably unhelpful—to speculate about what the end-of-year outcome will be.

Answer:

As at 23 February 2009:

- A total of \$63 536 had been spent under the illegal logging program.
- No expenditure had yet been recorded against the development of the industry database, the preparing forest industries for climate change item, or the boosting forest products export initiative. The department is working with the forest industry, through the Forest and Wood Products Council, on measures in these areas. The *Climate Change and Commercial Forestry Action Plan*, which will inform the climate change investment, is scheduled to be considered by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on 24 April.

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Question: CC 07

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Forestry webpage not updated

Hansard Page: 48 (23/02/2009)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Is there any reason why the webpage has not been upgraded since 16 June 2008?

Mr Mortimer—I will take that on notice. I was not aware of that, I have to say. This is on forestry, is it?

Senator COLBECK—According to the latest version of the forestry page that I have got, it was last reviewed on 16 June 2008 and that was a printout that was done on 21 February 2009.

Senator ABETZ—That would confirm the answer that forestry is going along as normal underresourced.

Senator COLBECK—I think it reflects that there is not much going on at all, quite frankly.

Mr Mortimer—I will take that on notice, Senator.

Answer:

The department has established processes to ensure more timely maintenance of the forestry area of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry web site. Much of the information contained on this website is historical in nature and does not require updating once it is made available.

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Question: CC 08

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Prescribed fuel reduction burns

Hansard Page: 51

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—And I am sure you would be right on top of it, Mr Quinlivan, if there was such a move, so thank you for that. Has the federal government pursued the state governments to get an indication as to how much prescribed fuel reduction burning they have undertaken in recent years? I recall that the Western Australian government had nothing to hide and provided us figures from 1985 right through to 2007 in relation to the areas that were burnt—by prescribed burn area by wildfire in their state. That information was sought from New South Wales and Victoria and surprisingly never materialised during my time. Is that being pursued by the federal department to get that out of their state counterparts?

Mr Quinlivan—We are not sure of the answer to that question, Senator. We will have to take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ—Yes, take that on notice. Minister, could I invite the minister that you represent to ask his state counterparts to provide us with that sort of information? I think it would be most instructive because we had all sorts of statements at the time coming out of Mr Thwaites. At the time he was saying, ‘We have a plan to burn so many hectares,’ but when you asked, ‘How many hectares were burnt?’ it was apparent that it was a very small subset of what they had allegedly planned. And just in case there needs to be any further background for staff, there was a Financial Review article on 24 April 2007 and other articles around about that time. Also, on 25 April in the Weekly Times Mr Thwaites said: ‘Victoria was doing as much mitigation work as possible.’ I do not think anybody would agree with that statement today. All I am asking is that something positive comes out of the very, very serious and devastating events in recent weeks as, might I add, Minister, occurred in our home state of Tasmania after the 1967 bushfires. That lesson was learnt, well and truly, and fuel reduction burns were then undertaken on a very sensible and ongoing basis for about 20 years and then it fell out of fashion because a new ideology took over. I think we have to get back to what we learnt from the ’67 fires, from the Victorian fires—I inspected the mountain ash there; it was just devastating—and from New South Wales as well. The fuel management issue in New South Wales and Victoria left a lot to be desired. The most tragic thing is that, at the ministerial council meeting I was at, the people that I crossed swords with were John Thwaites from Victoria and Phil Koperberg from New South Wales. And they were the two states that had the worst record and still do not seem to have learnt. And I say that, as I said earlier, in a non-partisan way. I would encourage the government and the department to really ramp this area up because it is going to be more and more important as the years go by and as our population spreads into the bushland areas of Australia. I will leave it at that and just encourage—

Senator Sherry—In response to the question that is contained within that statement, I will pass on the suggestion to the minister and I will take on notice what his response

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is to your suggestion. If it is in the positive—that states are requested to provide such information—I would further take on notice that the data that is provided by the states, if it is provided, is also provided on notice.

Answer:

The total area burnt by planned and unplanned fire for the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 is reported in Australia's State of the Forest Report 2008 (**Table 44, page 83 reproduced below**). The source data was provided by New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. This figure will continue to be included in Australia's State of the Forest Report.

Table 44: Total area burnt by planned and unplanned fire, 2001–02 to 2005–06, by jurisdiction (hectares)

| | 2001–02 | 2002–03 | 2003–04 | 2004–05 | 2005–06 | Totals 2001–06 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| NSW^a | | | | | | |
| Planned | 51,039 | 73,904 | 134,794 | 70,173 | 56,411 | 386,321 |
| Unplanned | 679,755 | 1,167,835 | 76,705 | 24,130 | 44,222 | 1,992,647 |
| NT | | | | | | |
| Planned | 915,165 | 282,893 | 225,680 | 647,665 | 157,571 | 2,228,974 |
| Unplanned | 2,157,920 | 1,459,565 | 1,075,819 | 2,714,257 | 886,696 | 8,294,257 |
| Qld | | | | | | |
| Planned | 168,800 | 186,346 | 97,419 | 160,002 | 94,213 | 706,780 |
| Unplanned | 2,189,488 | 1,319,413 | 948,369 | 1,240,991 | 1,144,032 | 6,842,293 |
| SA^b | | | | | | |
| Planned | 129 | 103 | 141 | 103 | 77 | 553 |
| Unplanned | 11 | 146 | 6 | 24 | 13 | 200 |
| Tas. | | | | | | |
| Planned ^c | 17,900 | 16,700 | 15,300 | 16,000 | 13,000 | 78,900 |
| Unplanned | 378 | 32,468 | 60,203 | 11,472 | 787 | 105,308 |
| Vic^d | | | | | | |
| Planned | 52,669 | 30,178 | 101,193 | 97,509 | 51,898 | 333,447 |
| Unplanned | 38,448 | 1,141,828 | 12,167 | 19,157 | 103,975 | 1,315,575 |
| WA^e | | | | | | |
| Planned | 53,403 | 68,000 | 30,520 | 73,150 | 20,300 | 245,373 |
| Unplanned | 196,031 | 364,288 | 160,405 | 348,521 | 136,372 | 1,205,617 |
| WA^f | | | | | | |
| Planned | 87,330 | 130,780 | 171,930 | 186,380 | 182,400 | 758,820 |
| Unplanned | 17,640 | 131,680 | 22,190 | 50,630 | 22,560 | 244,700 |
| Totals | | | | | | |
| Planned | 1,346,435 | 788,904 | 776,977 | 1,250,982 | 575,870 | 4,739,168 |
| Unplanned | 5,279,671 | 5,617,223 | 2,355,864 | 4,409,182 | 2,338,657 | 20,000,597 |
| All reported fires | 6,626,106 | 6,406,127 | 3,132,841 | 5,660,164 | 2,914,527 | 24,739,765 |

a Data supplied by Forests NSW and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW) for multiple-use and nature conservation reserve tenures only and may include non-forest areas.

b Data for ForestrySA plantations in multiple-use public forests and public nature conservation reserves only.

c Planned fires on Forestry Tasmania land only.

d Data supplied by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (Vic.). Data are for public land tenures only.

e All regions except the southwest.

f Southwest forest region only.

Note: Unshaded cells show estimates supplied by state agencies for southern forests and shaded cells show estimates derived from MODIS imagery for northern forests. Totals may not tally due to rounding.

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Question: CC 09

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Bushfire vulnerability of forests

Hansard Page: 52 (23/02/2009)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Using Victoria as an example, when there was logging in those forests you had a group of people who understood the forests, who would back-burn, who put through fire trails and had big machinery around, who were skilled and adept and who were paid to look after these things. Mr Talbot, has any assessment ever been done which would give us an indication of how much more the forests are vulnerable now than they used to be when there was logging in them?

Dr O'Connell—We will take that on notice, Senator. Certainly there is a fair amount of research work done under the CRC for bush fire reduction or whatever it is called. And it may be that that area has been looked at.

Answer:

Although the department is unaware of any research that specifically answers your question, the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre is conducting research projects to assist fire management and its role as a land management tool. Part of this research includes the sensitivity of bushfire risk to various management strategies and climate change on a wide range of land tenures including National Park, State Forests, and private land. A number of these projects have draft reports, papers and posters available providing information on preliminary findings.

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Question: CC 10

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Carbon emissions due to logging compared to bushfires

Hansard Page: 52 (23/02/2009)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay, that would be good. Forestry was shut down in a lot of these areas because we wanted to save the trees. Has anyone ever done a comparison with what trees we lost through logging compared to the horrendous loss of trees, amongst other things, not even thinking about human life and animal life, but just trees alone? That is, the comparison between trees we lost from logging and trees we lost due to the horrendous wildfires. What impact has that had on greenhouse emissions and carbon emissions generally? I am wondering if anyone has done work on the cost of carbon emissions from logging compared to the sorts of carbon emissions we have when these forests are devastated because they are not properly maintained and, as Senator Abetz pointed out, the fuel reduction is not dealt with. Do you know if anyone has done work on that?

Dr O'Connell—Again, I suggest we could take that on notice and see what there is in terms of both the bushfire CRC and other areas that have been doing work in this area.

Answer:

The department is unaware of any direct research on the comparison of the removal of trees from harvesting operations and those lost as a result of fires. There are some figures available that allow an indirect evaluation of the emissions from land clearing compared to prescribed and wildfire.

The National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2006 data for Australia's forests reports that 2.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide was emitted due to biomass burning (prescribed fire and wildfire), and 62.9 million tonnes emitted due to deforestation (land clearing). Net sequestration of carbon attributed to forest lands (native forests plus plantations) is reported as 46.9 million tonnes.

Research from the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre has estimated the 2003 and 2006-07 bushfires could have put 20-30 million tonnes of carbon (70-105 million tonnes of carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere.

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Question: CC 11

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. How many applications for Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Exit Grants were made in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 financial years and what is the State/Territory breakdown for applications?
2. How many EC Exit Grants were paid in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 financial years and what is the State/Territory breakdown for applications?
3. For what reasons were applications deemed unsuccessful?
4. How are those who are unsuccessful informed? Are reasons for the denial fully explained?

Answer:

1.

| State | Number of applicants | |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 (to 31 Jan 09) |
| NSW | 93 | 70 |
| Qld | 17 | 16 |
| SA | 49 | 33 |
| Vic | 115 | 98 |
| WA | 9 | 2 |
| Not stated | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 287 | 223 |

2.

| State | Number of grants paid | |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 (to 31 Jan 09) |
| NSW | 8 | 24 |
| Qld | 3 | 1 |
| SA | 7 | 16 |
| Vic | 13 | 42 |
| WA | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 32 | 84 |

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3. Reasons for unsuccessful applications were:
 - Failed to provide information
 - Not a farmer for at least 5 years
 - No derived income from farm
 - Farm assets too high
 - Customer not in control of farm
 - Qualification not met
 - Not contributed labour and capital
 - Sold farm before 25 September 2007
 - Client request
 - Proof of identity not provided

4. Unsuccessful applicants are informed by a letter from Centrelink which includes an explanation of why the application was declined.

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Question: CC 12

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought Policy Review

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Will the new Exceptional Circumstances scheme be ready to start on July 1 2009 as promoted?
2. Will Exit Grants be part of the new scheme?

Answer:

1. On 23 April 2008, Minister Burke announced that the Australian Government would conduct a comprehensive national review of drought policy, based upon three separate investigations, to help prepare farmers and local communities for climate change. These are:
 - an assessment of the impact of climate change on the nature and frequency of exceptional climate events by the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO, publicly released on 6 July 2008
 - an assessment of the social dimensions of the impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities by an Expert Social Panel, publicly released on 23 October 2008
 - an Inquiry into Government Drought Support by the Productivity Commission. The commission's final report was provided to the government on 27 February 2009.

The Minister will draw on the findings of these assessments, as well as consultations with key stakeholders, such as state and territory agriculture ministers, to develop an improved drought policy. An improved policy will be finalised by the government as a whole and announced once this has occurred.

2. The commission considered the Exceptional Circumstances Exit Package as part of its inquiry into government drought support. The government will carefully consider the commission's findings in formulating its new drought policy. It is not possible at this stage to explicitly rule in or rule out the inclusion of Exit Grants in any new drought policy.

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Question: CC 13

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: EC Exit Grant and Climate Change Adjustment Program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. There is a budget for the Climate Change Adjustment Program Advice and Training Grants of \$8.9 million for 2008-2009. Are the Advice and Retraining Grants (which fall under the heading Drought Assistance on the DAFF website) taken from this same pool of \$8.9 million?
2. What is the total amount of EC Drought Assistance Advice and Retraining Grants made to date in 2008-09.
3. Can you provide a breakdown of the types of farming operations involved and the type of advice provided?
4. What is the total number of Advice and Training Grants made under Climate Change Adjustment Program to date 2008-09? Again, is there a breakdown of the operations involved and the type of advice provided?
5. Is the uptake for these programs lower than expected? Is it likely there will be an underspend and what is the estimated value of this underspend?

Answer:

1. No, the Advice and Retraining Grant under the heading Drought Assistance refers to the advice and retraining component of the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Exit Grant Package and is funded separately. The budget for 2008-2009 for advice and retraining under the EC Exit Grant package is \$7 million.
2. As at 31 January 2009, \$0.094 million has been paid for the Advice and Retraining Grant component of the EC Exit Grant Package.
3. Data that compares farming operation with type of advice received is not available. The following table provides a breakdown of exit grant recipients by industry. Some grantees do not take up the option of obtaining professional advice (the second table indicates that 27 grantees do not intend taking up professional advice).

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| Farm Industry | Number of Exit Grants paid |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Viticulture | 24 |
| Dairy | 15 |
| Fruit | 14 |
| Crop | 8 |
| Beef/Sheep/Grain | 7 |
| Beef cattle | 7 |
| Horticulture | 7 |
| Beef/Sheep | 6 |
| Pigs | 3 |
| Sheep | 3 |
| Aquaculture | 2 |
| Fruit/Viticulture | 2 |
| Grain | 2 |
| Mixed | 1 |
| Sheep/Grain | 1 |
| Sheep; Crop | 1 |
| Vegetables | 1 |
| Wool | 1 |
| Other | 1 |
| Not Stated | 10 |
| Total | 116 |

The intentions of grant recipients were recorded by Centrelink as:

| Intentions for professional advice | Number |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Financial Planning | 38 |
| Career Advice | 20 |
| Career Advice, Financial Planning | 10 |
| Retirement Planning, Financial Planning | 4 |
| Legal Advice, Career Advice | 2 |
| Retirement Planning, Career Advice | 2 |
| Legal Advice; Financial Planning | 1 |
| Legal Advice | 1 |
| None | 27 |
| Not stated | 11 |
| Total | 116 |

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4. As at 31 January 2009, 340 Climate Change Adjustment Program (CCAP) Advice and Training Grants had been approved.

Breakdown of farming operations and types of advice for the CCAP is not available from Centrelink data.

5. At this stage uptake of the CCAP Advice and Training Grant is lower than originally expected. A number of Exceptional Circumstances declared areas have been extended and farmers have remained on EC Relief Payments with access to the Professional Advice and Planning Grant. It is expected that there will be an underspend in 2008-2009, however the amount is not yet clear.

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Question: CC 14

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. How many regions are currently receiving exceptional circumstances drought funding?
2. What percentage of Australia's agriculture is that?

Answer:

1. As at 17 March 2009, Exceptional Circumstances assistance was available for 71 Exceptional Circumstances declared areas and one *prima facie* area.
2. Exceptional Circumstances declarations covered about 49 per cent of Australia's agricultural land.

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Question: CC 15

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How many regions will be eligible to receive exceptional circumstances funding from 1 April 2009?

Answer:

As at 1 April 2009, Exceptional Circumstances assistance will be available for 60 Exceptional Circumstances declared areas and one *prima facie* area.

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Question: CC 16

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

What will be the estimated savings as a result of cancelling drought EC areas as announced in the Minister Media Release of 12 February 2009?

Answer:

Expenditure on Exceptional Circumstances programs is demand driven. Therefore there are no 'savings' when an Exceptional Circumstances area expires.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 17

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

What is the average interest rate paid on which EC Interest Rate Subsidies have been paid?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not have data on the average interest rate of farm business loans, on which Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate Subsidies have been paid.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 18

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. Will the government be increasing the Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate cap for eligible farmers?
2. How many farmers have already reached the cap?

Answer:

1. The government is undertaking a drought policy review which includes consideration of all Exceptional Circumstances assistance measures, including exit grants. No decisions about the new policy and associated measures have been made yet.
2. Fifty-seven farm businesses have already received the maximum cumulative support of \$500 000.

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Question: CC 19

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Is the government reviewing any regions, which have not been extended beyond April 2009?

Answer:

The government has recently reviewed those Exceptional Circumstances declared areas where assistance is due to cease in March or April 2009.

The National Rural Advisory Council is currently undertaking an assessment of 19 areas where assistance is due to cease in June 2009.

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Question: CC 20

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How many farmers are currently receiving EC assistance?

Answer:

As at 31 January 2009, 19,631 farm families were in receipt of Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment and since 1 July 2008, 8,309 farm business applications had been approved for Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate Subsidies.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 21

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Please provide a region by region breakdown of how many farmers and the dollar amount are receiving the EC Interest Rate Subsidy and or the EC Household Support for the following years 2006-07, 2007-08 and estimated for 2008-09.

Answer:

The Exceptional Circumstances income support payment includes Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payments, Interim Income Support and prima facie payments and is provided in **Table A**. Uptake of Exceptional Circumstances income support is provided in **Table B**.

Exceptional Circumstances interest rate subsidy payments are provided in **Table C** and number of approved applications is in **Table D**.

EC income support

The government has committed \$331.03 million for EC income support for 2008-2009 but an estimate by Exceptional Circumstances area is not available. This does not include delivery costs for the program.

Table A: EC income support payments to farmers as at 31 January 2009

| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| NSW | Armidale | 2.43 | 2.76 | 0.69 |
| | Bourke (revised) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.48 |
| | Bourke and Brewarrina | 1.74 | 1.67 | 0.00 |
| | Braidwood | 0.57 | 0.54 | 0.30 |
| | Casino | 1.48 | 2.75 | 0.75 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Central Mudgee-Merriwa | 0.03 | 0.21 | 0.11 |
| | Central North-North West | 10.19 | 17.31 | 2.83 |
| | Central North-North West Coonabarabran | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.73 |
| | Central North-North West Coonamble | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.07 |
| | Central North-North West Northern New England | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.56 |
| | Central North-North West Northern Slopes | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.50 |
| | Central Tablelands | 3.25 | 4.66 | 2.61 |
| | Condobolin | 0.55 | 0.95 | 0.62 |
| | Condobolin - Narrandera | 10.18 | 11.11 | 6.61 |
| | Cooma-Bombala-ACT | 1.48 | 1.57 | 0.80 |
| | Dubbo | 5.81 | 7.62 | 4.38 |
| | Forbes | 8.00 | 9.77 | 5.62 |
| | Goulburn-Yass | 4.04 | 4.84 | 2.53 |
| | Grafton-Kempsey | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Gundagai | 0.71 | 1.40 | 0.79 |
| | Hay | 1.85 | 2.52 | 1.48 |
| | Hume | 0.70 | 1.37 | 0.72 |
| | Hunter-Maitland | 0.86 | 1.91 | 1.10 |
| | Majority Western Division | 7.76 | 8.43 | 4.76 |
| | Molong | 3.24 | 4.01 | 2.38 |
| | Mudgee-Merriwa | 1.70 | 2.21 | 1.32 |
| | New South Wales Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 1.26 | 0.58 |
| | North East Northern New England | 0.65 | 0.73 | 0.09 |
| | North East Northern New England revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.11 |
| | Northern New England | 1.21 | 1.74 | 1.20 |
| | Northern Tablelands Small Areas | 1.14 | 1.28 | 0.85 |
| | Nyngan | 2.48 | 2.82 | 1.61 |
| | Riverina | 13.49 | 17.94 | 11.13 |
| | South Coast-Moss Vale | 1.15 | 2.25 | 0.54 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | South West Slopes and Plains | 15.15 | 23.41 | 13.54 |
| | Walgett-Coonamble | 3.65 | 4.82 | 3.09 |
| | Young | 3.60 | 4.91 | 2.82 |
| NSW Total | | 109.11 | 148.80 | 79.27 |
| NT | South East Alice Springs | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| NT Total | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| QLD | Atherton Tablelands | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Burnett | 10.74 | 15.00 | 8.97 |
| | Burnett addendum | 0.97 | 2.63 | 0.01 |
| | Burnett addendum (revised) | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.59 |
| | Central Coast | 1.65 | 1.77 | 0.00 |
| | Central Darling Downs | 4.93 | 6.05 | 3.10 |
| | Central Mid West | 1.55 | 1.48 | 0.00 |
| | Duaranga-Bauhinia | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.08 |
| | Emerald-Bauhinia | 0.66 | 0.61 | 0.00 |
| | Far West Queensland | 0.03 | 0.16 | 0.15 |
| | Hinchinbrook- Thuringowa | 0.11 | 0.16 | 0.00 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Mackay-Whitsunday | 0.32 | 0.65 | 0.00 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 0.71 | 0.41 | 0.09 |
| | North West Ashy Downs (second revision) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 5.67 | 6.64 | 3.31 |
| | Peak Downs | 0.35 | 0.50 | 0.00 |
| | Southern Darling Downs | 3.99 | 4.63 | 0.00 |
| | Southern Murweh | 0.80 | 0.72 | 0.00 |
| | Southern South East | 2.38 | 3.43 | 1.25 |
| | Southern South East (revised - Lockyer Valley) | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.00 |
| | South-West QLD | 2.28 | 2.53 | 1.46 |
| | Stanthorpe- Inglewood | 1.79 | 2.14 | 0.00 |
| | Sunshine Coast | 0.46 | 1.13 | 0.00 |
| | Waggamba | 0.00 | 0.25 | 0.25 |
| | Western Downs- Maranoa | 8.34 | 10.46 | 6.17 |
| QLD Total | | 47.74 | 61.48 | 25.43 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| SA | Central and Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges | 0.00 | 0.15 | 0.11 |
| | Central Eyre Peninsula | 2.40 | 5.70 | 3.25 |
| | Central North East | 1.43 | 1.54 | 0.88 |
| | Clare Light and Barossa | 0.05 | 1.08 | 0.67 |
| | Fleurieu Peninsula | 0.09 | 1.03 | 0.53 |
| | Kangaroo Island | 0.00 | 0.62 | 0.53 |
| | Lower Eyre Peninsula | 0.87 | 2.57 | 1.57 |
| | Lower South East | 0.00 | 0.63 | 0.45 |
| | Mid-North | 0.17 | 4.03 | 2.38 |
| | Murray River Corridor and Lower Lakes | 0.40 | 6.38 | 4.50 |
| | Murray-Mallee | 2.07 | 3.94 | 2.17 |
| | North West Rangelands | 0.00 | 0.09 | 0.07 |
| | South Australia Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.03 |
| | Upper North District including Annex | 1.51 | 1.94 | 1.04 |
| | Upper South East | 2.34 | 4.90 | 2.37 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Western Eyre Peninsula | 0.78 | 1.74 | 1.01 |
| | Yorke Peninsula | 0.07 | 1.39 | 0.76 |
| SA Total | | 12.18 | 37.78 | 22.31 |
| TAS | Central Midlands | 0.00 | 2.35 | 1.99 |
| | North East and Flinders Island | 0.00 | 0.32 | 0.23 |
| | Tasmanian Interim Support Areas | 0.00 | 1.16 | 0.53 |
| TAS Total | | 0.00 | 3.83 | 2.75 |
| VIC | Central and East Gippsland | 9.07 | 11.09 | 0.50 |
| | Central and East Gippsland Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.89 |
| | Central Victoria | 6.68 | 10.94 | 1.17 |
| | Central Victoria North Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.28 |
| | Central Victoria South Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.67 |
| | Eastern Mallee | 4.09 | 4.90 | 0.48 |
| | Goulburn-Loddon-Campaspe | 16.16 | 19.95 | 2.03 |
| | Mallee - Northern Wimmera Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.92 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Mallee-Northern Wimmera | 19.82 | 26.19 | 4.00 |
| | Murray | 4.88 | 6.74 | 0.95 |
| | North East Victoria | 9.15 | 14.58 | 8.23 |
| | Northern Victoria | 5.53 | 8.43 | 1.06 |
| | Northern Victoria | 0.32 | 0.93 | 0.56 |
| | Northern Victoria Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 15.17 |
| | South and West Gippsland | 2.17 | 11.14 | 4.17 |
| | South Western Victoria | 15.98 | 28.38 | 11.64 |
| | South-East Mallee | 1.84 | 2.41 | 0.34 |
| | VIC Total | 95.69 | 145.67 | 71.06 |
| WA | Central Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.11 | 0.07 |
| | Central North Eastern, Central Eastern, Central South Eastern Wheat belt | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | North Eastern Wheatbelt | 0.72 | 1.17 | 0.65 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009 (\$M) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Northern Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| | Northern Pastoral Region Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| | Northern Wheat Belt | 0.00 | 1.55 | 0.00 |
| | Northern Wheatbelt and Northern Areas of the Eastern Wheatbelt | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.73 |
| | South Eastern Wheatbelt | 0.16 | 0.53 | 0.00 |
| | Southern Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.12 | 0.06 |
| | Southern Pastoral Region Interim Support Area | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.04 |
| | Southern Rangelands | 0.16 | 0.51 | 0.36 |
| | Southwest Agricultural Region Interim Assistance Area | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.05 |
| WA Total | | 1.04 | 4.16 | 2.96 |
| Grand Total | | 265.76 | 401.73 | 203.78 |

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Table B: Uptake of EC income support for farmers 31 January 2009

| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Armidale | 204 | 199 | 0 |
| | Bourke (revised) | 0 | 46 | 46 |
| | Bourke and Brewarrina | 126 | 63 | 0 |
| | Braidwood | 48 | 46 | 36 |
| | Casino | 178 | 205 | 0 |
| | Central Mudgee-Merriwa | 9 | 18 | 13 |
| | Central North-North West | 1,203 | 1,193 | 0 |
| | Central North-North West Coonabarabran (revised) | 0 | 0 | 72 |
| | Central North-North West Coonamble Revised | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | Central North-North West Northern New England revised | 0 | 0 | 62 |
| | Central North-North West Northern Slopes (revised) | 0 | 0 | 154 |
| | Central Tablelands | 296 | 330 | 273 |
| | Condobolin | 66 | 80 | 72 |
| | Condobolin - Narrandera | 685 | 730 | 648 |
| | Cooma-Bombala-ACT | 128 | 129 | 97 |
| | Dubbo | 521 | 518 | 451 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Forbes | 564 | 631 | 544 |
| | Goulburn-Yass | 348 | 343 | 281 |
| | Grafton-Kempsey | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| | Gundagai | 94 | 106 | 85 |
| | Hay | 148 | 176 | 157 |
| | Hume | 91 | 98 | 77 |
| | Hunter-Maitland | 217 | 142 | 94 |
| | Majority Western Division | 532 | 605 | 504 |
| | Molong | 250 | 272 | 234 |
| | Mudgee-Merriwa | 167 | 162 | 133 |
| | New South Wales Interim Support Area | 0 | 151 | 0 |
| | North East Northern New England | 55 | 58 | 0 |
| | North East Northern New England revised | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| | Northern New England | 148 | 124 | 124 |
| | Northern Tablelands Small Areas | 88 | 87 | 85 |
| | Nyngan | 174 | 184 | 164 |
| | Riverina | 1,148 | 1,247 | 1,144 |
| | South Coast-Moss Vale | 143 | 165 | 0 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | South West Slopes and Plains | 1,379 | 1,620 | 1,353 |
| | Walgett-Coonamble | 320 | 331 | 296 |
| | Young | 303 | 331 | 279 |
| NSW Total | | 9,641 | 10,390 | 7,500 |
| | South East Alice Springs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NT Total | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Atherton Tablelands | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Burnett | 957 | 1,115 | 912 |
| | Burnett addendum | 126 | 149 | 0 |
| | Burnett addendum (revised) | 0 | 46 | 56 |
| | Central Coast | 136 | 126 | 0 |
| | Central Darling Downs | 427 | 431 | 305 |
| | Central Mid West | 115 | 103 | 0 |
| | Duaringa-Bauhinia | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| | Emerald-Bauhinia | 54 | 48 | 0 |
| | Far West Queensland | 9 | 13 | 16 |
| | Hinchinbrook-Thuringowa | 7 | 9 | 0 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Mackay-Whitsunday | 34 | 54 | 0 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 59 | 18 | 8 |
| | North West Ashy Downs (second revision) | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 475 | 488 | 337 |
| | Peak Downs | 40 | 36 | 0 |
| | Southern Darling Downs | 339 | 354 | 0 |
| | Southern Murweh | 52 | 47 | 0 |
| | Southern South East | 231 | 142 | 124 |
| | Southern South East (revised - Lockyer Valley) | 0 | 131 | |
| | South-West QLD | 155 | 167 | 146 |
| | Stanthorpe-Inglewood | 143 | 151 | 0 |
| | Sunshine Coast | 68 | 90 | 0 |
| | Waggamba | 0 | 34 | 26 |
| | Western Downs-Maranoa | 657 | 681 | 583 |
| | QLD Total | 4,086 | 4,443 | 2,520 |
| | Central and Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges | 0 | 24 | 12 |
| | Central Eyre Peninsula | 559 | 403 | 320 |
| | Central North East | 110 | 114 | 92 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Clare Light and Barossa | 15 | 118 | 69 |
| | Fleurieu Peninsula | 49 | 107 | 54 |
| | Kangaroo Island | 0 | 84 | 60 |
| | Lower Eyre Peninsula | 220 | 199 | 162 |
| | Lower South East | 0 | 93 | 46 |
| | Mid-North | 60 | 465 | 244 |
| | Murray River Corridor and Lower Lakes | 216 | 627 | 502 |
| | Murray-Mallee | 517 | 321 | 232 |
| | North West Rangelands | 0 | 8 | 5 |
| | South Australia Interim Support Area | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Upper North District including Annex | 145 | 148 | 115 |
| | Upper South East | 565 | 398 | 246 |
| | Western Eyre Peninsula | 185 | 133 | 100 |
| | Yorke Peninsula | 23 | 153 | 81 |
| | SA Total | 2,664 | 3,405 | 2,340 |
| | Central Midlands | 0 | 355 | 219 |
| | North East and Flinders Island | 0 | 49 | 21 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Tasmanian Interim Support Areas | 0 | 138 | 0 |
| | TAS Total | 0 | 542 | 240 |
| | Central and East Gippsland | 924 | 879 | 0 |
| | Central and East Gippsland Revised | 0 | 0 | 453 |
| | Central Victoria | 745 | 857 | 136 |
| | Central Victoria North Revised | 0 | 0 | 471 |
| | Central Victoria South Revised | 0 | 0 | 196 |
| | Eastern Mallee | 345 | 355 | 48 |
| | Goulburn-Loddon-Campaspe | 1,360 | 1,340 | 202 |
| | Mallee - Northern Wimmera Revised | 0 | 0 | 1,263 |
| | Mallee-Northern Wimmera | 1,938 | 2,142 | 465 |
| | Murray | 408 | 465 | 87 |
| | North East Victoria | 1,027 | 1,100 | 900 |
| | Northern Victoria | 575 | 659 | 118 |
| | Northern Victoria | 55 | 43 | 65 |
| | Northern Victoria Revised | 0 | 0 | 1,570 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | South and West Gippsland | 557 | 1,086 | 471 |
| | South Western Victoria | 4,074 | 2,523 | 1,305 |
| | South-East Mallee | 156 | 172 | 35 |
| | VIC Total | 12,164 | 11,621 | 7,785 |
| | Central Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| | Central North Eastern, Central Eastern, Central South Eastern Wheat belt | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | North Eastern Wheatbelt | 71 | 92 | 52 |
| | Northern Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| | Northern Pastoral Region Interim Support Area | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Northern Wheat Belt | 0 | 176 | |
| | Northern Wheatbelt and Northern Areas of the Eastern Wheatbelt | 0 | 0 | 161 |
| | South Eastern Wheatbelt | 30 | 44 | 0 |
| | Southern Agricultural Region Interim Support Area | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| | Southern Pastoral Region Interim Support Area | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | Southern Rangelands | 29 | 44 | 31 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Southwest Agricultural Region Interim Assistance Area | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| | WA Total | 130 | 423 | 244 |
| | Grand Total | 28,685 | 30,824 | 20,629 |

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EC Interest Rate Subsidies

The government has committed \$667.18 million for EC interest rate subsidies for 2008-2009 but an estimate by Exceptional Circumstances area is not available.

Table C: EC interest rate subsidy payments for farmers at 31 January 2009

| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009(\$M) |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| NSW | Armidale | 5.26 | 8.67 | 1.86 |
| | Bourke (revised) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.80 |
| | Bourke and Brewarrina | 3.26 | 4.75 | 0.44 |
| | Braidwood | 0.68 | 1.21 | 0.42 |
| | Casino | 2.59 | 4.24 | 0.75 |
| | Central Mudgee-Merriwa | 0.03 | 0.54 | 0.27 |
| | Central North-North West | 34.82 | 62.80 | 14.79 |
| | Central North-North West Coonabarabran (revised) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.38 |
| | Central North-North West Northern Slopes (revised) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.47 |
| | Central Tablelands | 6.14 | 10.40 | 4.79 |
| | Condobolin | 3.54 | 5.01 | 1.90 |
| | Condobolin - Narrandera | 11.38 | 22.58 | 8.69 |
| | Cooma-Bombala-ACT | 2.76 | 2.90 | 1.44 |
| | Dubbo | 14.48 | 21.70 | 8.64 |
| | Forbes | 16.11 | 22.63 | 8.60 |
| | Goulburn-Yass | 5.91 | 9.23 | 4.08 |
| | Gundagai | 2.29 | 3.76 | 1.82 |
| | Hay | 4.27 | 10.25 | 3.70 |
| | Hume | 2.48 | 3.21 | 1.49 |
| | Hunter-Maitland | 0.31 | 2.68 | 0.78 |
| | Majority Western Division | 9.78 | 20.65 | 7.60 |
| | Molong | 7.11 | 10.60 | 4.77 |
| | Mudgee-Merriwa | 2.26 | 2.41 | 1.56 |
| | North East Northern New England | 0.20 | 0.66 | 0.00 |
| | Northern New England | 4.24 | 4.71 | 3.57 |
| | Northern Tablelands Small Areas | 0.64 | 2.28 | 0.00 |
| | Nyngan | 5.13 | 8.34 | 2.93 |
| | Riverina | 36.01 | 51.70 | 24.98 |
| | South Coast-Moss Vale | 2.71 | 5.33 | 0.86 |
| | South West Slopes and Plains | 35.97 | 70.84 | 27.07 |
| | Unallocated | 0.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Walgett-Coonamble | 11.69 | 21.68 | 7.05 |
| | Young | 10.21 | 16.06 | 6.16 |
| NSW Total | | 242.52 | 411.82 | 152.66 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009(\$M) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| NT | South East Alice Springs | 0.00 | 0.54 | 0.37 |
| NT Total | | 0.00 | 0.54 | 0.37 |
| QLD | Atherton Tablelands | 0.19 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Burnett | 11.57 | 14.57 | 9.35 |
| | Burnett addendum | 2.12 | 5.77 | 2.09 |
| | Central Coast | 4.35 | 4.09 | 2.23 |
| | Central Darling Downs | 9.55 | 11.17 | 4.54 |
| | Central Mid West | 7.71 | 6.56 | 1.65 |
| | Duaranga-Bauhinia | 0.00 | 0.34 | 0.16 |
| | Emerald-Bauhinia | 3.39 | 2.52 | 0.69 |
| | Far West Queensland | 0.07 | 1.01 | 0.40 |
| | Hinchinbrook-Thuringowa | 0.28 | 0.18 | 0.03 |
| | Mackay-Whitsunday | 2.68 | 1.83 | 0.57 |
| | Mount Morgan | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 6.23 | 2.60 | 0.93 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.00 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 10.26 | 9.59 | 3.20 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 0.13 | 0.57 | 0.32 |
| | Peak Downs | 1.98 | 1.66 | 0.69 |
| | Southern Darling Downs | 3.48 | 4.37 | 0.83 |
| | Southern Murweh | 1.24 | 1.46 | 0.62 |
| | Southern South East | 3.03 | 2.84 | 0.52 |
| | Southern South East (revised - Lockyer Valley) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.72 |
| | South-West QLD | 6.42 | 7.06 | 1.97 |
| | Stanthorpe-Inglewood | 2.49 | 2.25 | 1.15 |
| | Sunshine Coast | 0.60 | 1.07 | 0.26 |
| | Waggamba | 0.00 | 0.46 | 0.44 |
| | Western Downs-Maranoa | 21.90 | 26.00 | 15.53 |
| QLD Total | | 99.69 | 108.10 | 48.88 |
| SA | Central and Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges | 0.00 | 0.06 | 0.03 |
| | Central Eyre Peninsula | 2.49 | 8.06 | 5.06 |
| | Central North East | 1.83 | 1.65 | 0.81 |
| | Clare Light and Barossa | 0.00 | 1.48 | 0.45 |
| | Fleurieu Peninsula | 0.00 | 1.16 | 0.39 |
| | Kangaroo Island | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.97 |
| | Lower Eyre Peninsula | 0.12 | 2.80 | 1.91 |
| | Lower South East | 0.00 | 1.10 | 0.82 |
| | Mid-North | 0.00 | 7.06 | 3.83 |
| | Murray River Corridor and Lower Lakes | 0.11 | 8.11 | 6.76 |

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| State | EC Area | Payments 2006-07 (\$M) | Payments 2007-08 (\$M) | Payments 2008-09 to 31 Jan 2009(\$M) |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| | Murray-Mallee | 1.43 | 4.85 | 3.21 |
| | North West Rangelands | 0.00 | 0.27 | 0.13 |
| | Upper North District including Annex | 2.25 | 2.51 | 1.75 |
| | Upper South East | 2.07 | 7.00 | 4.25 |
| | Western Eyre Peninsula | 0.28 | 1.66 | 1.14 |
| | Yorke Peninsula | 0.00 | 1.75 | 0.73 |
| SA Total | | 10.58 | 49.91 | 32.24 |
| TAS | Central Midlands | 0.00 | 3.58 | 1.66 |
| | North East and Flinders Island | 0.00 | 0.71 | 0.44 |
| TAS Total | | 0.00 | 4.29 | 2.10 |
| VIC | Central and East Gippsland | 10.60 | 7.26 | 2.39 |
| | Central and East Gippsland Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.24 |
| | Central Victoria | 6.02 | 7.06 | 2.29 |
| | Central Victoria North Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.57 |
| | Central Victoria South Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.22 |
| | Eastern Mallee | 3.61 | 4.22 | 1.12 |
| | Goulburn | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| | Goulburn-Loddon-Campaspe | 25.01 | 21.80 | 5.58 |
| | Mallee - Northern Wimmera Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.90 |
| | Mallee-Northern Wimmera | 26.92 | 28.18 | 10.89 |
| | Murray | 11.90 | 13.33 | 4.57 |
| | North East Victoria | 8.48 | 8.14 | 3.16 |
| | Northern Victoria | 0.46 | 0.90 | 0.41 |
| | Northern Victoria | 3.96 | 4.65 | 1.69 |
| | Northern Victoria Revised | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.22 |
| | South and West Gippsland | 0.00 | 5.84 | 2.53 |
| | South Western Victoria | 12.84 | 29.06 | 6.10 |
| | South-East Mallee | 1.97 | 1.37 | 0.74 |
| VIC Total | | 111.77 | 131.81 | 44.63 |
| WA | North Eastern Wheatbelt | 1.73 | 5.52 | 3.29 |
| | Northern Wheat Belt | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| | Northern Wheatbelt and Northern Areas of the Eastern Wheatbelt | 0.00 | 4.76 | 5.08 |
| | Southern Rangelands | 0.36 | 0.51 | 0.32 |
| WA Total | | 2.09 | 10.81 | 8.70 |
| Grand Total | | 466.65 | 717.27 | 289.59 |

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Table D: EC interest rate subsidy approved applications for farmers 31 January 2009

| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Armidale | | 238 | 81 |
| | Bourke (revised) | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| | Bourke and Brewarrina | 106 | 142 | 10 |
| | Braidwood | 22 | 33 | 13 |
| | Casino | 114 | 167 | 30 |
| | Central Mudgee-Merriwa | 1 | 13 | 6 |
| | Central North-North West | 949 | 1,440 | 405 |
| | Central North-North West Coonabarabran | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| | Central North-North West Northern Slopes | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| | Central Tablelands | 196 | 288 | 157 |
| | Condobolin | 105 | 148 | 63 |
| | Condobolin - Narrandera | 427 | 578 | 286 |
| | Cooma-Bombala-ACT | 128 | 95 | 59 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Dubbo | 499 | 615 | 353 |
| | Forbes | 682 | 591 | 309 |
| | Goulburn-Yass | 191 | 270 | 146 |
| | Gundagai | 68 | 87 | 51 |
| | Hay | 122 | 192 | 98 |
| | Hume | 74 | 96 | 41 |
| | Hunter-Maitland | 18 | 69 | 18 |
| | Majority Western Division | 386 | 540 | 223 |
| | Molong | 227 | 301 | 154 |
| | Mudgee-Merriwa | 83 | 81 | 56 |
| | North East Northern New England | 15 | 23 | 0 |
| | Northern New England | 188 | 168 | 161 |
| | Northern Tablelands Small Areas | 25 | 78 | 0 |
| | Nyngan | 153 | 207 | 87 |
| | Riverina | 1,037 | 1,184 | 777 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | South Coast-Moss Vale | 57 | 133 | 25 |
| | South West Slopes and Plains | 1,214 | 1,707 | 852 |
| | Unallocated | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Walgett-Coonamble | 343 | 483 | 234 |
| | Young | 342 | 407 | 185 |
| | NSW Total | 7,968 | 10,374 | 4,932 |
| | South East Alice Springs | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| | NT Total | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| | Atherton Tablelands | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| | Burnett | 505 | 609 | 347 |
| | Burnett addendum | 60 | 171 | 74 |
| | Central Coast | 105 | 81 | 44 |
| | Central Darling Downs | 283 | 278 | 122 |
| | Central Mid West | 211 | 141 | 36 |
| | Duaringa-Bauhinia | 0 | 6 | 5 |
| | Emerald-Bauhinia | 71 | 44 | 13 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Far West Queensland | 1 | 30 | 11 |
| | Hinchinbrook-Thuringowa | 16 | 12 | 4 |
| | Mackay-Whitsunday | 120 | 73 | 33 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 110 | 44 | 14 |
| | North West Ashy Downs | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 298 | 270 | 96 |
| | Northern Darling Downs | 7 | 22 | 14 |
| | Peak Downs | 56 | 37 | 18 |
| | Southern Darling Downs | 157 | 179 | 41 |
| | Southern Murweh | 39 | 40 | 13 |
| | Southern South East | 100 | 105 | 19 |
| | Southern South East (revised - Lockyer Valley) | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| | South-West QLD | 170 | 191 | 108 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Stanthorpe- Inglewood | 105 | 89 | 39 |
| | Sunshine Coast | 31 | 44 | 19 |
| | Waggamba | 0 | 14 | 11 |
| | Western Downs- Maranoa | 549 | 629 | 349 |
| | QLD Total | 3,009 | 3,112 | 1,459 |
| | Central and Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| | Central Eyre Peninsula | 108 | 239 | 108 |
| | Central North East | 50 | 44 | 18 |
| | Clare Light and Barossa | 0 | 36 | 16 |
| | Fleurieu Peninsula | 0 | 28 | 6 |
| | Kangaroo Island | 0 | 17 | 30 |
| | Lower Eyre Peninsula | 5 | 114 | 39 |
| | Lower South East | 0 | 24 | 19 |
| | Mid-North | 0 | 200 | 98 |
| | Murray River Corridor and Lower Lakes | 3 | 405 | 209 |
| | Murray-Mallee | 50 | 173 | 78 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | North West Rangelands | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| | Upper North District including Annex | 83 | 82 | 61 |
| | Upper South East | 71 | 188 | 91 |
| | Western Eyre Peninsula | 13 | 69 | 27 |
| | Yorke Peninsula | 0 | 57 | 21 |
| | SA Total | 383 | 1,686 | 824 |
| | Central Midlands | 0 | 93 | 67 |
| | North East and Flinders Island | 0 | 24 | 19 |
| | TAS Total | 0 | 117 | 86 |
| | Central and East Gippsland | 312 | 250 | 73 |
| | Central and East Gippsland Revised | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| | Central Victoria | 200 | 221 | 80 |
| | Central Victoria North Revised | 0 | 0 | 74 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Central Victoria South Revised | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | Eastern Mallee | 123 | 125 | 33 |
| | Goulburn | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Goulburn-Loddon- Campaspe | 742 | 622 | 151 |
| | Mallee - Northern Wimmera Revised | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | Mallee-Northern Wimmera | 738 | 774 | 311 |
| | Murray | 322 | 383 | 122 |
| | North East Victoria | 305 | 319 | 125 |
| | Northern Victoria | 16 | 29 | 16 |
| | Northern Victoria | 131 | 166 | 62 |
| | Northern Victoria Revised | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| | South and West Gippsland | 0 | 218 | 103 |
| | South Western Victoria | 464 | 905 | 175 |
| | South-East Mallee | 69 | 46 | 23 |
| | VIC Total | 3,422 | 4,058 | 1,431 |

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| | EC Area | 2006-07 recipients | 2007-08 recipients | 2008-09 current recipients |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | North Eastern Wheatbelt | 39 | 114 | 96 |
| | Northern Wheat Belt | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Northern Wheatbelt and Northern Areas of the Eastern Wheatbelt | 0 | 88 | 95 |
| | Southern Rangelands | 11 | 22 | 14 |
| | WA Total | 50 | 225 | 205 |
| | Grand Total | 14,832 | 19,578 | 8,941 |

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 22

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Transitional Income Support program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. What transitional support is available for farmers who have been taken out of EC areas?
2. What are the criteria used to access any transitional support?
3. How many farmers from the Brewarrina region in NSW have been able to access the transitional support?

Answer:

1. The Transitional Income Support program provides short-term income support for farmers in serious financial difficulty, while they recover from drought and adapt to changing circumstances, including climate change. Income support at a rate equivalent to the Centrelink Newstart Allowance is provided for up to 12 months. The program is due to cease on 30 June 2009.
2. To be eligible for the Transitional Income Support, a person must
 - for a continuous period of at least 2 years immediately before applying
 - have been a farmer in Australia
 - have derived a significant amount of his or her gross income from the farm enterprise
 - have contributed a significant amount of his or her capital to the farm enterprise
 - have contributed a significant amount of his or her labour to the farm enterprise;
 - meet the income test as per Newstart Allowance with allowable income of \$62 a fortnight before payment amount tapers;
 - meet the maximum net asset cap of \$1.5 million (on and off farm assets and debt included);
 - meet an off-farm asset test relevant to Newstart Allowance;
 - meet a liquid asset sub-cap of \$20,000 (inclusive of bank balances and Farm Management Deposits).
3. One farmer in the Brewarrina area is receiving Transitional Income Support.

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Question: CC 23

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How many exceptional circumstances exit grants have been paid in the past 12 months, how many are outstanding or waiting to be approved?

Answer:

As at 31 January 2009, the total number of EC Exit Grants paid since the program commenced on 25 September 2007 is 116.

All but three of the 116 grants have been paid in the last 12 months. As at 31 January 2009, 134 were pending completion of Centrelink assessment or sale of the farm and 260 applications have been rejected.

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Question: CC 24

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Please provide an electorate by electorate breakdown of successful applicants and the amount of each exit grant in that electorate.

Answer:

As at 31 January 2009 successful applicants were:

| Electorate | Number of grants | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Ballarat | 1 | 150,000 |
| Barker | 10 | 1,477,278 |
| Bass | 1 | 150,000 |
| Bendigo | 2 | 188,196 |
| Blair | 1 | 140,442 |
| Brand | 1 | 150,000 |
| Calare | 4 | 433,295 |
| Calwell | 1 | 150,000 |
| Capricornia | 1 | 57,712 |
| Dunkley | 2 | 276,287 |
| Eden-Monaro | 1 | 150,000 |
| Farrer | 9 | 1,350,000 |
| Flinders | 1 | 31,337 |
| Fowler | 1 | 71,854 |
| Gellibrand | 1 | 150,000 |
| Gippsland | 2 | 300,000 |
| Grey | 2 | 300,000 |
| Griffith | 1 | 150,000 |
| Gwydir | 1 | 150,000 |
| Hindmarsh | 1 | 125,170 |
| Hinkler | 1 | 150,000 |
| Holt | 1 | 150,000 |
| Indi | 3 | 450,000 |
| Lalor | 3 | 332,952 |
| Lindsay | 1 | 150,000 |
| Longman | 1 | 150,000 |
| Lyne | 3 | 357,714 |
| Lyons | 1 | 150,000 |
| Mallee | 24 | 3,034,711 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------------|
| Mayo | 2 | 300,000 |
| Mcewen | 2 | 237,189 |
| Mcmillan | 4 | 412,616 |
| Murray | 6 | 887,374 |
| New England | 1 | 150,000 |
| Oxley | 1 | 103,141 |
| Parkes | 3 | 419,663 |
| Paterson | 1 | 150,000 |
| Riverina | 5 | 741,043 |
| Wakefield | 6 | 754,091 |
| Wannon | 2 | 300,000 |
| Wide Bay | 1 | 144,332 |
| Total | 116 | 15,476,397 |

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Question: CC 25

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. How many applications were made for the exit grants? Please provide an electorate by electorate break down.
2. Why were these exit grants unsuccessful?

Answer:

1. As at 31 January 2009 there were 510 applications received in Centrelink from the following electorates:

| Electorate | Total |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Adelaide | 1 |
| Ballarat | 3 |
| Barker | 32 |
| Bass | 1 |
| Bendigo | 29 |
| Blair | 1 |
| Brand | 1 |
| Bruce | 1 |
| Calare | 20 |
| Calwell | 5 |
| Canberra | 2 |
| Capricornia | 1 |
| Chisholm | 1 |
| Corangamite | 1 |
| Corio | 2 |
| Dawson | 2 |
| Dickson | 1 |
| Dunkley | 2 |
| Eden-Monaro | 3 |
| Fairfax | 1 |
| Farrer | 22 |
| Fisher | 1 |

| | |
|------------|----|
| Flinders | 2 |
| Flynn | 2 |
| Fowler | 3 |
| Gellibrand | 1 |
| Gilmore | 1 |
| Gippsland | 8 |
| Gorton | 1 |
| Greenway | 1 |
| Grey | 21 |
| Griffith | 1 |
| Groom | 2 |
| Gwydir | 14 |
| Hindmarsh | 1 |
| Hinkler | 3 |
| Holt | 2 |
| Hume | 5 |
| Indi | 18 |
| Kalgoorlie | 6 |
| Kennedy | 2 |
| Kingston | 1 |
| Lalor | 6 |
| Lilley | 1 |
| Lindsay | 6 |
| Longman | 1 |
| Lyne | 4 |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Lyons | 1 |
| Macarthur | 1 |
| Macquarie | 3 |
| Mallee | 72 |
| Maranoa | 14 |
| Mayo | 9 |
| Mcewen | 14 |
| Mcmillan | 6 |
| Melbourne | 1 |
| Melbourne Ports | 1 |
| Menzies | 1 |
| Moreton | 1 |
| Murray | 33 |
| New England | 7 |
| O'connor | 7 |
| Oxley | 1 |
| Page | 7 |
| Parkes | 28 |
| Paterson | 3 |
| Perth | 2 |
| Port Adelaide | 1 |
| Richmond | 1 |
| Riverina | 25 |

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Scullin | 1 |
| Solomon | 1 |
| Sturt | 1 |
| Wakefield | 14 |
| Wannon | 3 |
| Wide Bay | 3 |
| Wills | 1 |
| Unstated | 1 |
| Total | 510 |

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2. As at 31 January 2009 a total of 260 applicants have been unsuccessful for the following reasons:
- Failed to provide information
 - Not a farmer for at least five years
 - No derived income from farm
 - Farm assets too high
 - Customer not in control of farm
 - Qualification not met
 - Not contributed labour and capital
 - Sold farm before 25 September 2007
 - Client request
 - Proof of identity not provided.

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Question: CC 26

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Does the Government consider this grant program to have been a success?

Answer:

The government is undertaking a drought policy review which includes consideration of all Exceptional Circumstance assistance measures, including exit grants. No decisions about the new policy and associated measures have been made yet.

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Question: CC 27

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Will the Government change the criteria for the exit grants to allow more people to be eligible?

Answer:

The government is undertaking a drought policy review which includes consideration of all Exceptional Circumstances assistance measures, including exit grants. No decisions about the new policy and associated measures have been made yet.

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Question: CC 28

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Are applicants who have been unsuccessful for the exit grants informed of the reasons their application has not been approved? If not, why not?

Answer:

Unsuccessful applicants are informed by a letter from Centrelink which includes an explanation of why the application was declined.

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Question: CC 29

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. How many applicants for the exit grant who have been refused have appealed the decision?
2. How many appeals avenues are available to them?

Answer:

1. Centrelink only collates appeals data from unsuccessful Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant applications that reach the National Support Office appeal stage. Approximately 30 appeals have reached that stage.
2. The program guidelines provide for three Centrelink review processes, with a final right of complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman:
 - If a person's claim is rejected and a notice is given advising them of the decision, the person has three months after the notice to request a review of the decision by the original decision maker at Centrelink.
 - If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision, a further review can be requested through an authorised officer.
 - If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision, a further review can be requested through a member of the Centrelink Rural Programs team in National Support Office. During this review, consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will occur in all cases where a policy matter is in question.
 - The decision of the Rural Programs team is final but applicants are able to take their complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they consider they have grounds for further consideration.

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Question: CC 30

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. Have any of the rejected applicants taken their appeal to the Ombudsman?
2. What were the grounds of their appeals? Were any of them successful?

Answer:

The Ombudsman investigates approaches and complaints. He does not, strictly speaking, deal with 'appeals'.

1. In 2007-2008 there were 14 category 1 & 2 complaints and 10 category 3 & 4 complaints. To date, in 2008-2009 there have been 9 category 1 & 2 complaints and 2 category 3 & 4 complaints.
2. There were no recordings of administrative deficiency in relation to these complaints. The Commonwealth Ombudsman reports that the main reasons for complaint were: ineligibility; delays in administrative processes; and multiple requests for information during the application process.

| Explanations of terms | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Category 1 | Resolved without investigation, outcomes include decisions not to investigate and referrals to appropriate agency or authority |
| Category 2 | Cannot be resolved at category 1 and require further internal enquires/research or more information from the complainant, resolved without contacting the agency |
| Category 3 | Investigation conducted and agency contacted |
| Category 4 | Further investigation conducted, as the complaint was not able to be resolved in category 3 |

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Question: CC 31

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances Drought Funding

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. Have any of the State Governments written to the Government asking for any regions which were removed or are to be removed from exceptional circumstances (EC) in the past twelve months to be either reviewed or made applications for the region to be returned to EC status?
2. Which State Governments have made requests and for what regions?
3. What were the grounds for their appeals?
4. Were any of them successful?

Answer:

1. Yes

2. **Table 1: State government requests for Exceptional Circumstances (EC) area revisions**

| State | EC area in question | Request received on |
|----------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Qld | North West Ashy Downs Revised | 10 June 2008 |
| | Burnett Addendum | 10 June 2008 |
| | Southern South East | 10 June 2008 |
| NSW | Bourke–Brewarrina | 10 June 2008 |
| | Central North North–West | 12 August 2008 |
| | North East Northern New England | 12 August 2008 |
| | Central North North–West | 30 September 2008 |
| Victoria | Central and East Gippsland | 18 September 2008 |

3. In each case, the State presented a case for continuing assistance on the grounds that a sustained recovery from the drought event had not taken place for all regions in the expiring EC-declared area. In each case the State identified an area or areas within the expiring declared area where it considered producers had not experienced the same opportunity to recover as those in the remainder of the expiring area. Some cases referred to the continuing impact of below average or patchy rainfall on the production in those areas.

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4. Yes. EC assistance was extended for part or all of the revised areas proposed by the state governments, with the exception of a sub-area of the former Central North North–West EC-declared area which was not extended.

Refer to **Table 2** (next page) for more detail.

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Question: CC 31 (continued)

Table 2: Outcome of state government requests for EC area revisions

| State | EC area in question | Request received on | Outcome | Revised area name |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Qld | North West Ashy Downs Revised | 10 June 2008 | Request agreed without change. | North West Ashy Downs Second Revision |
| | Burnett Addendum | 10 June 2008 | Request agreed to in part. | Burnett Addendum Revised |
| | Southern South East | 10 June 2008 | Request agreed to in part. | Southern South East Revised (Lockyer Valley) |
| NSW | Bourke–Brewarrina | 10 June 2008 | Request agreed without change. | Bourke (formerly Bourke–Brewarrina) |
| | Central North North–West | 12 August 2008 | Two sub regions proposed 1. Request agreed without change 2. Request agreed to in part. | 1. Central North North–West Northern New England Revision 2. Central North North–West Coonamble Revision |
| | Central North North–East Northern New England | 12 August 2008 | Request agreed without change. | Central North North–East Northern New England Revised |
| | Central North North–West | 30 September 2008 | Three sub regions proposed 1. Request agreed without change 2. Request agreed without change 3. Request not agreed for the Tamworth area. | 1. Central North North–West Coonabarabran Revision 2. Central North North–West Northern Slopes Revision |
| Vic | Central and East Gippsland | 18 September 2008 | Request agreed without change. | Central and East Gippsland Revised |

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Question: CC 32

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought Policy Review

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

When will the Government finalise its response to its \$3 million plus Drought Review?

Answer:

On 23 April 2008, Minister Burke announced that the Australian Government would conduct a comprehensive national review of drought policy, based upon three separate investigations, to help prepare farmers and local communities for climate change.

These are:

- an assessment of the impact of climate change on the nature and frequency of exceptional climate events by the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO, publicly released on 6 July 2008;
- an assessment of the social dimensions of the impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities by an Expert Social Panel, publicly released on 23 October 2008; and
- an Inquiry into Government Drought Support by the Productivity Commission. The commission's final report was provided to the government on 27 February 2009.

The Minister will draw on the findings of these assessments, as well as consultations with key stakeholders, such as state and territory agriculture ministers, to develop an improved drought policy. An improved policy will be finalised by the government as a whole and announced once this has occurred.

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Question: CC 33

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Farm Management Deposits Scheme (FMDs)

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How much money is currently held by farmers in FMDs?

Answer:

As at 31 December 2008, 38 401 primary producers held a total of \$2,511,946,000 in the Farm Management Deposit (FMD) Scheme. A breakdown of FMD holders by industry is provided below:

| Value of FMD Holdings and Number of Holders by Industry as at 31 December 2008 | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Industry Description | Number of Holders | Value of Holdings (\$'000) |
| Horticulture | 4,847 | 345,927 |
| Grain | 5,989 | 368,044 |
| Grain-sheep/beef | 8,166 | 501,906 |
| Sheep-Beef | 2,904 | 153,784 |
| Sheep | 2,619 | 123,601 |
| Beef | 5,860 | 373,871 |
| Dairy | 4,020 | 213,103 |
| Intensive Livestock | 1,749 | 103,863 |
| Pig | 153 | 8,619 |
| Sugar | 1,419 | 79,370 |
| Crops | 1,933 | 108,044 |
| Forestry & Fishing | 2,272 | 131,818 |
| Industry Total | 41,931 | 2,511,950 |
| ADJUSTED TOTAL* | 38,401 | 2,511,946 |

* The total has been adjusted to remove double-counting of holders that have more than one account attributed to different industries, and the value of holdings adjustment is due to rounding.

Current statistics on FMD holdings are available on the department's website and are updated each quarter.

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Question: CC 34

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Emissions from fires in forests

Hansard Page: Written

Note: All answers provided by the Department of Climate Change.

Senator Williams asked:

1. Is it a fact that under the Kyoto protocols that a fire started by man such as prescribed burns are counted as emissions, yet a fire started by lightning is not included as an emission?
2. How many tonnes of carbon are estimated to have been released by State Government National Parks and Reserves as a result of bushfires in 2003/04 to 2008/09?
3. Does this not make National Parks and reserves the greatest carbon polluters of all land managers both private and public in Australia?
4. What steps are being taken to reduce the carbon footprint of National Parks and reserves in Australia?
5. Who would be responsible for any carbon being release as a result of bushfires from on private land where individuals had sold carbon credits under the Government's proposed CPRS?

Answer:

1. Under the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries are required to account for emissions from fires on reforestation, afforestation and deforestation land under Article 3.3. The Kyoto accounts include emissions from both prescribed burning and fires.

The Kyoto accounting framework also includes emissions from savanna burning and the burning of agricultural residues from fires under the agriculture category of Article 3.1.

2. Australia prepares annual greenhouse gas inventories in accordance with international accounting rules. The inventories do not separately report emissions from fires in state government national parks and reserves.
3. As Australia's national greenhouse gas inventory does not separately report greenhouse gas emissions from fires in national parks and reserves, it is not possible to say whether they are the greatest source of emissions. Fires cause significant greenhouse gas emissions from national parks and reserves as well as other public and private lands. Other significant sources of emissions from

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public land and private lands include agricultural production (for example livestock and crops) and deforestation.

Over time, forests recovering from fires generally represent carbon sinks that balance emissions from fires.

4. State and territory governments are responsible for the management of almost all national parks and conservation reserves. The Commonwealth is developing climate change strategies, including emission reductions plans, for the six national parks under its management.
5. Reforestation owners participating in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will not generally have to relinquish permits if a forest is destroyed by fire, provided the forest is re-established.
 - Permits will be issued up to a limit that takes into account the risks of emissions from fire and pests. The way in which this is done will be determined in the legislative process.