

**Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2008

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 01

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Engagement of media and public affairs officers

**Hansard Page:** 13 (26/05/08)

**Senator Scullion asked:**

- a) How many employees are engaged in positions responsible for public affairs, media management, liaison with the media and media monitoring? I wonder whether you would be able to provide me with the APS classifications of those positions? You might also be able to provide the current operating budget for these media relations sections?
- b) If there is another section as well could you provide that same information along with the current operating budget?

**Answer:**

a) DAFF's corporate public relations section employs 24.2 full-time equivalent staff in the following APS positions:

DAFF Band 1 Level 4	3.0
DAFF Band 2 Level 5	1.0
DAFF Band 2 Level 6	4.8
DAFF Band 3 Level 7	8.0
DAFF Band 3 Level 8A	5.0
DAFF Band 3 Level 9	2.0
SES Band 1	0.4

The responsibilities of these staff include: develop and implement communication strategies; provide communication advice to internal clients; organise launches and special events; write and edit communications materials; coordinate responses to media requests; manage a media monitoring contract; crisis communications preparedness and response; manage departmental publishing requirements; respond to requests for information from the general public; and maintain and manage departmental websites.

The current annual operating budget for this section is \$2,676,539.

b) There are six other sections in DAFF that employ media and public affairs officers. The information as asked in part (a) for these sections is contained in the tables below:

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<b>Position level</b>	<b>AQIS</b>	<b>ABARE</b>	<b>Bureau of Rural Sciences</b>
DAFF Band 1 Level 1	0	0	0.6
DAFF Band 1 Level 4	0	1.0	1.6
DAFF Band 2 Level 5	4.1	2.4	0.8
DAFF Band 2 Level 6	3.0	1.5	1.0
DAFF Band 3 Level 7	2.0	1.5	3.3
DAFF Band 3 Level 8A	1.0	0.6	0.6
DAFF Band 3 Level 9	0.0	0	0
DAFF Science Band 3 Level 3A	0.0	0	1.0
<b>Total full-time equivalents</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.9</b>
<b>Current operational budget</b>	<b>1,786,912</b>	<b>908,000</b>	<b>988,000</b>

<b>Position level</b>	<b>Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health</b>	<b>Biosecurity Australia</b>	<b>Australian Government NRM joint team</b>
DAFF Band 1 Level 1	0	0	0
DAFF Band 1 Level 4	0	0	0
DAFF Band 2 Level 5	0	0	0
DAFF Band 2 Level 6	3.0	0	1.0
DAFF Band 3 Level 7	0	0.7	0
DAFF Band 3 Level 8A	0	1.0	0
DAFF Band 3 Level 9	1.0	0	1.0
DAFF Science Band 3 Level 3A	0	0	0
<b>Total full-time equivalents</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Current operational budget</b>	<b>537,442</b>	<b>226,419</b>	<b>260,647.00</b>

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 02

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Grant funding

**Hansard Page:** 14 (26/05/08)

**Senator Scullion asked:**

**Senator SCULLION**—Dr O’Connell, I have some general questions on notice, and these are the sorts of questions for which I am going to try to find some useful benchmarks for each estimates hearing. With regard to board appointments, what appointments have been made by the government, through Executive Council or other cabinet ministers, to statutory authorities, executive agencies and advisory boards? Would you have to take that notice?

**Dr O’Connell**—Yes.

**Senator SCULLION**—Certainly—and, again, because we have a longer estimates period, if you could get back to us with that, we would appreciate it.

**Dr O’Connell**—We should be able to get back to you.

**Senator SCULLION**—You might also include, appended to that, the respective appointees’ credentials. Perhaps, when you are seeking that information, you might also provide information on how many vacancies remain to be filled by ministerial, including Executive Council, appointments, and also how long those positions have been vacant. You may be able to provide an answer to this question without taking it on notice: what grants have been approved by ministers from within this portfolio?

**Mr Pahl**—I think we probably have to take that one on the same basis as the other—that we may be able to get back to you later this morning—but I do not think we have got that comprehensively in our pack this year.

**Dr O’Connell**—Just to be clear, from what date to what date do you want that information?

**Senator SCULLION**—From 26 November to today’s date.

**Answer:**

Details of all portfolio appointments made by Minister Burke from November 2007 to February 2008 were provided in answer to CP 06 from the Additional Estimates hearings in February and are **at attachment A**. The details of appointments made by Minister Burke from March 2008 up to 26 May 2008 were tabled during the hearings on 27 May 2008 (Hansard page 114).

Grants approved by Minister Burke to 26 May 2008 are **at attachment B**.

**[CP 02 attachments A&B]**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 03

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Total cost of Minister and accompanied staff travel and expenses to the Community Cabinets in Canning Vale, Narangba and Penrith.

**Hansard Page:** 15 (26/05/08)

**Senator Scullion asked:**

**Senator SCULLION** — I understand that community cabinets were held recently in Canning Vale, Narangba and Penrith. What was the cost of the ministers' travel and expenses for those meetings? You can take that on notice.

**Dr O'Connell**—I will take it on notice.

**Senator SCULLION** — If you can get that back to us swiftly, we would appreciate it. Again in a separate section, could we have the expenses of the ministerial staffers and the departmental officers who also travelled to those meetings? Could you give us the total cost of the travel?

**Answer:**

Travel costs for the minister are met by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DOFD) with the exception of car costs which are met by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Travel costs for ministerial staff are met by DOFD.

DAFF has paid the following car costs associated with the Community Cabinet meetings:

<b>Mr Burke</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Comcar</b>
Canning Vale, WA 20 January 2008	\$613.63
Narangba, QLD 2 March 2008	\$723.40
Penrith, NSW 15 April 2008	\$294.46

- The table above includes costs paid for by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, as at 30 June 2008.

- Only car costs that can be attributed to the costs of attending the Community Cabinet meetings have been included.

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<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Departmental Officers Travelling</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Air fares</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Comcar/Taxi</b>	
Canning Vale, WA 20 January 2008	\$3,058.80	\$649.00	\$127.70	\$4,449.13
Narangba, QLD 2 March 2008	\$1,425.04	\$0.00	\$30.70	\$2,179.14
Penrith, NSW 15 April 2008		\$257.60	\$303.81	\$855.87

- The table above includes costs paid for by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, as at 30 June 2008.

- Airfares for the departmental officer attending the NSW meeting have not been included as the officer had other business subsequent to attending the Community Cabinet meetings and costs cannot be disaggregated.

The Department of Finance and Deregulation (DOFD) has provided the following information for costs met by that department.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Mr Burke</b>		<b>MOP(S) Act employees</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Air fares</b>	<b>Travelling Allowance</b>	<b>Air fares</b>	<b>Travelling Allowance</b>	
Canning Vale, WA 20 January 2008	1,179.02	1,412.00	1,179.02	1,184.00	4,954.04
Narangba, QLD 2 March 2008	507.64	356.00	1,195.25	612.00	2,670.89
Penrith, NSW 15 April 2008		-	418.00	-	418.00

- The table above includes costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation, as at 18 June 2008 (excludes taxi fares).

- The table does not include any travel by Special Purpose Aircraft, administered by the Department of Defence.

- Cabcharge costs have not been included due to limited data provided by Cabcharge regarding destinations.

- The air fares for staff include one additional destination for one staff member, which is unable to be disaggregated from the ticket cost of the Qld meeting.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 04

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** FOI Procedures

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Scullion asked:**

Has the Minister written to the department outlining his requirements for the processing of FOI requests?

Could a copy of that letter be provided to the committee?

**Answer:**

No, the Minister has not written to the department outlining his requirements for the processing of FOI requests.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 05

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** FOI Procedures

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Scullion asked:**

Has the Minister or the Minister's office given any directions to the department detailing the Minister's requirements in relation to FOI requests?

What was the nature of that advice?

**Answer:**

The Minister has verbally advised the department that FOI requests should be answered in a transparent manner and seek to fulfil the objectives of the FOI Act.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 06

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** FOI Procedures

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Scullion asked:**

Has the departmental secretary or any other authorised departmental official provided written advice to executive managers detailing the Minister's requirements with FOIs?

Could a copy of that advice be provided to the committee?

**Answer:**

Mr Craig Penney, General Manager, Governance and Planning, provided executive managers and directors with written advice on changes to how requests under the FOI Act were to be handled by the department. The minute (copy attached) sought to clarify the Minister's expectations that FOI requests should be answered in a transparent manner and be fulsome.

**[CP 06 attachment]**



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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 07

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** FOI Procedures

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Scullion asked:**

Is the Minister or his office notified of FOI requests and the substance of the request when they are received by the department?

**Answer:**

The Minister and his office are not, as a matter of course, notified of FOI requests when they are received by the department. The Minister's office is provided with a summary of new FOI requests approximately every fortnight as part of a regular meeting with senior departmental officials on portfolio business. The Minister's office is also provided with an information brief relating to the request five working days before the applicant is notified of the department's decision on access, and again where there is a lag between the notice of decision and actual release of documents. The briefs are to help the Minister and his staff prepare for potential questions from parliamentary colleagues and the media.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 08

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** FOI Procedures

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Scullion asked:**

What is the role of the Minister's office in the FOI process?

**Answer:**

The Minister's office plays no role in the department's FOI process. The Minister's office is provided with information briefs relating to FOI requests received by the department only to help the Minister and his staff prepare for potential questions from parliamentary colleagues and the media.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 09

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Appointments

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

What appointments have been made to boards, advisory committees, or any quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations (quangos) within the responsibility of the department since 24 November 2007.

**Answer:**

The following Ministerial appointments were made to bodies within the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio over the period November 2007 to May 2008, including statutory authorities subject to the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, prescribed agencies under the *Financial Management Act 1997*, statutory committees and advisory councils, significant non-statutory bodies and ad hoc advisory panels:

- Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee; Presiding Member.
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority; Chief Executive Officer.
- Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee; Three industry nominated members.
- Sugar Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee; Four industry nominated members.
- Wheat Industry Expert Group; Chair and six members.
- Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel Selection Committee; Five members.
- Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel; Deputy Registrar.
- Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council; Chairman, Deputy Chairman and two members.
- Independent panel to review US and EU dairy quotas; Chair and two members.
- Land and Water Australia Selection Committee; Presiding Member.
- Sugar Research and Development Corporation; Six board directors.
- Land and Water Australia Selection Committee; Four nominated members.
- Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation; Seven board members.
- Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee; Presiding Member.
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee; Five industry nominated members.
- Expert panel to review social impact of drought.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 10

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Appointments

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Please list all quangos and agencies within the responsibility of the department.

**Answer:**

In accordance with the definition provided to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet by the Senate Committee on Finance and Public Administration, that a quango includes all government or quasi government bodies or organisations including advisory bodies, boards, committees and councils and statutory authorities within the portfolio. This list is current as at May 2008:

**Ministerial Councils Advisory Committees**

Industries Development Committee

Primary Industries Health Committee

Forestry and Forest Products Committee

Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee

Marine and Coastal Committee

**Joint Commonwealth-State Bodies**

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality – Joint Steering Committees

Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee

**Advisory Bodies**

National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare

National Land and Water Resources Audit Advisory Council

Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council

**Statutory Authorities and Committees**

Australian Landcare Council

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority Advisory Board

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Geographical Indications Committee

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Selection Committee

Australian Fisheries Management Authority Selection Committee

Cotton Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee

Fishing Industry Policy Council

Forest and Wood Products Council

Grains Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee

Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee

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Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (trading as Land and Water Australia) Selection Committee  
National Rural Advisory Council  
Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority  
Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority  
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee  
Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel  
Sugar Research and Development Corporation Selection Committee  
Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority  
Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority

**Prescribed Agencies under the FMA Act**

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority  
Biosecurity Australia  
Dairy Adjustment Authority  
Export Wheat Commission

**Commonwealth Authorities under the CAC Act**

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation  
Cotton Research and Development Corporation  
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation  
Grains Research and Development Corporation  
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation  
Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (trading as Land and Water Australia)  
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation  
Sugar Research and Development Corporation  
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** CP 11

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Policy

**Topic:** Election Commitments

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Please advise whether the list of items under the policy heading on the ALP website <http://www.alp.org.au/> constitutes the total sum election “promises” made by the Rudd Government within the following portfolios:  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

If not, please provide a comprehensive list which includes all promises referred to on the ALP website as well as those that were made but are not contained on the ALP website?

**Answer:**

As indicated in previous answers on this issue (answer to Questions on Notice 153 to 188 of 12 February 2008), the election commitments made by Federal Labor are on the public record. Those measures implementing commitments that are funded through Budget appropriations to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio are detailed in the Department’s Portfolio Budget Statements.