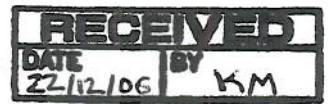




Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Secretary
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Radcliffe

In the course of reviewing comments made by officers of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and portfolio agencies during the Supplementary Budget Estimate hearings conducted by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 31 October 2006, it has been determined that several of the answers provided were not accurate in relation to the specific questions asked.

I would like to note that these errors occurred through not having precise details to hand at the hearings and attempting to answer the Committee's questions, in good faith, from memory. We have since had the opportunity to review the answers provided at the hearings and the following pages present our corrections and/or further information for the consideration of the Committee.

In all cases, where incorrect or incomplete information was supplied at the hearings we sincerely apologise for any misunderstanding that may have arisen as a result. It would be appreciated if these corrections could be brought to the attention of the members of the Committee.

If you have any queries on this matter please contact Ms Nicola Hinder, General Manager, Parliamentary and Media on 6272 5590.

Yours sincerely

Don Banfield
Acting Secretary

21 December 2006

In answering Senator O'Brien's question (Hansard page 40; 31 October 2006):

Senator O'Brien- So it is only meals and drinks provided to board members at board meetings that fall into the category of sustenance.

Mr Enright answered:

Mr Enright – That is correct.

Mr Enright wishes to advise the committee that to correct a factual error, the statement should read: That is partly correct. It includes light meals e.g. sandwiches, and drinks (non-alcoholic beverages) e.g. fruit juices and sodas that are provided on the premises at board meetings, GRDC Panel and Program Team meetings, training sessions and staff meetings with third parties.

Mr Enright apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator Milne's question (Hansard page 57; 31 October 2006):

Senator Milne — Two days before the federal election in 2004 ABARE brought out a report detailing the costs to the Australian economy if Australia ratified the Kyoto protocol. If you can quantify the costs, why can you not quantify the costs of not ratifying?

Dr Gunasekera answered:

Dr Gunasekera — I am not really sure what you mean by 'not ratifying' because in our analysis of what we have looked at, if you are going to reduce emissions by using various mechanisms that could have an impact on various sectors in the economy. Those are the aspects that we have looked at in analysing the impact of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I am not really sure what you mean by not signing the Kyoto protocol.

Dr Gunasekera wishes to clarify the point he wanted to make:

I am not really sure what you mean by 'not ratifying'. **In our analysis we have looked at various mechanisms to reduce emissions** that could have an impact on various sectors in the economy. Those are the aspects that we have looked at in analysing the impact of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I am not really sure what you mean by not signing the Kyoto protocol.

Dr Gunasekera apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator Ian Macdonald's question (Hansard page 83; 31 October 2006):

Senator Ian Macdonald, "With respect to prawns, white spot syndrome is around"

Ms Hewitt answered:

Ms Hewitt — I am hoping to be able to have a detailed conversation with you on the next occasion about that, because we have a draft assessment due to be released within a week.

Ms Hewitt wishes to advise the committee not the draft assessment was due to be released 'within weeks' not 'within a week'.

Ms Hewitt apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not her intention.

In answering Senator O'Brien's question (Hansard pages 94 to 96; 31 October 2006):

Senator O'Brien— I want to ask about a press release issued by the APVMA on 18 April which says:.....?

Dr Smith answered:

Dr Smith— 'As to the announcements regarding the decisions on the 2,4-D high volatile ester, there were three particular forms of 2,4-D that related to that press release.'.

Dr Smith wishes to advise the Committee that, in his responses to this and subsequent questions, he was referring to information contained in the 18 April press release and a subsequent APVMA press release of 3 October, which announced the APVMA Board's decision on the 2,4-D high volatile esters review taken after the period of public comment following the April press release.

Dr Smith apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the Committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator O'Brien's question (Hansard page 100; 31 October 2006):

Senator Kerry O'Brien — What work, if any, is BRS undertaking in relation to climate change?

Dr Ritman answered:

Dr Ritman—Climate change is here, and we see that manifested in agriculture with climatic variability. Last year was the hottest year on record. We have got consistent drying across south-west and south east Australia. This variability is what the bureau has concentrated its climate work on, in particular taking an approach of adaptation to climate change. Back in 2002, the bureau set up the Climate Impact Sciences Program. That was done for two main reasons. One was to undertake drought exceptional circumstance assessments. The other one was to start work on climate change

formally within a program. From that climate change work, we saw a science for decision makers publication called *Climate change: adaptations in agriculture* come out in 2003. We ran a workshop in 2004 with industry and published a report called *Farming profitably in climate change: a risk management approach* out of that.

Dr Ritman wishes to advise the committee that the comment made regarding the establishment of Climate Impact Sciences Program was incorrect. The Climate Impact Sciences Programme was established in June 2003 and commenced operation from 1 July in the 2003-2004 financial year, not 2002 as quoted.

Dr Ritman apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator O'Brien's question (Hansard page 107; 31 October 2006):

Senator Kerry O'Brien — Last time you told us that there was a work plan underway and you would report to PIMC this month.

Dr Ritman and Dr Samson answered:

Dr Ritman—The Primary Industries Ministerial Council. There will be a work plan report from the irrigated industries. As you would appreciate, it covers quite a deal of different sorts of information that we have to get together for the NAMS—a lot of the water information that would help in irrigated industries. There is an ongoing work plan for the whole of this year and there will be a report as to the progress of the project.

Dr Samson—The work plan was looked at by the ministerial council meeting earlier this month and agreed to. We can check and get back to you, but my recollection of the work plan is that substantial progress will be made on bringing irrigated industries into the NAMS system by the end of the current financial year.

Dr Samson wishes to advise the committee that the comment made regarding the NAMS work plan was incorrect. The work plan was agreed to by the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) on 19 October 2006, not the Primary Industries Ministerial Council as quoted.

Dr Samson apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator Sterle's question (Hansard page 118; 14 February 2006):

Senator STERLE—Do you still anticipate that harvest strategies will be in place for all Commonwealth fisheries by 1 June 2008?

Mr Sisson answered:

Mr Sisson — Indeed.

Mr Sisson wishes to advise the committee the date should have been 1 January 2008, which is the date in the media release.

Mr Sisson apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.
