

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 01

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Clearing of native forest under the CPRS

Hansard Page: 105 (20/10/2008)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Can you confirm for me that where a native forest is cleared by clear felling and then replaced by regeneration or a plantation, because there is no change in land use it is deemed to be carbon neutral? Is that a fact?

Mr Gibbs—I would have to take that on notice. That would be something that DCC could answer.

Answer:

Native forest harvesting and conversion of native forest to plantation forest are not included in Australia's Kyoto Protocol accounts because these activities do not constitute land use change under the accounting rules for the first commitment period.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 02

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Garnaut Climate Change Review

Hansard Page: 108, 109, 110 and 111 (20/10/2008)

Senator Boswell/McGauran asked:

Senator BOSWELL - Do you agree with the Garnaut review proposal to replace seven million cattle and 36 million sheep with 240 million kangaroos?

....

Mr Quinlivan—I am quite confident in saying that Professor Garnaut did not propose this.

Senator McGAURAN—Can we get the words that he used?

CHAIR—Let Mr Quinlivan answer.

Mr Quinlivan—The precise words I will need to take on notice as I do not have them here in front of me.

...

Dr O'Connell—Professor Garnaut was making an assumption that it would be. Professor Garnaut is not looking at the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, Professor Garnaut is looking at an emissions trading scheme.

Senator Sherry—Firstly, Mr Garnaut is an adviser to government. Secondly, you describe it as a proposal. I do not know whether it was a proposal or not. My understanding is that it is not, but I am happy to take that on notice and clarify whether in fact Mr Garnaut was proposing what you suggest as a proposal, so we will seek some response from Professor Garnaut direct.

...

Senator Sherry—I have indicated that I am happy to take on notice to request the minister's office to clarify, if clarification is required, as to what exactly it is that Professor Garnaut has commented on. I do not believe it is appropriate for you to go to press clippings again.

....

Senator Sherry—I have asked whether you can point me to a page number in a report that lists a plan, proposal or an option, through your research that you do when in opposition, but you cannot. I am happy to take on notice to seek clarification about what I would describe as anything more than a scenario. I do not see any evidence of a proposal, plans or a specific instance or any evidence of that, but I am happy to have that clarified. If the minister can speak for himself and we will come back on notice.

...

Senator BOSWELL—I know that, but I am asking: do you agree with it. You will not—

Senator Sherry—It is up to the minister to—

Senator BOSWELL—You are the minister—

Senator Sherry—Yes. You seem to believe I am the minister. I am not the minister. I am here representing the minister, as you should know. As I have indicated I think on three or four occasions so far, I am pleased to take your question on notice and it will be passed on to the minister and there will be a response.

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Question: CC 02 (continued)

Answer:

The Garnaut Review highlights without advocating or proposing:

- that beef and sheep production is more emissions intensive than kangaroo production and
- research comparing the potential for kangaroo production to beef and sheep production.

Table 22.2 (page 542) of the Garnaut Review provides a range of potential processes that have the ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. The table identifies the potential to reduce emissions from enteric fermentation by 16 Mt CO₂-e per year on an ongoing basis “based on either deployment of antimethanogen technology for ruminant livestock, or shifting of meat production from a minority proportion...of ruminant livestock by kangaroos”.

The chapter also cites research (p547-8) undertaken by Edwards and Wilson (*Native wildlife on rangelands to minimize methane and produce lower-emission meat: kangaroos versus livestock*, 2008) that concludes that “by 2020 beef cattle and sheep numbers in the rangelands could be reduced by 7 million and 36 million respectively, and that this would create the opportunity for an increase in kangaroo numbers from 34 million today to 240 million by 2020”. The report also notes that the research estimates “...that meat production from 175 million kangaroos would be sufficient to replace the forgone lamb and beef meat production, and that meat production from kangaroos would become more profitable than cattle and sheep when emissions permit prices exceed \$40 per tonne CO₂-e. The net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions would be about 16 Mt CO₂-e per year”.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 03

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Climate Change Adjustment Program

Hansard Page: 117 (20/10/2008)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK – What I am after is what the individual annual targets are so that we can try and get an assessment of where the program might be going. So, I think it is easier if you take that on notice so we do not get a confusion of numbers.

Mr Mortimer – Yes. That might be a good idea.

Answer:

The Climate Change Adjustment Program (CCAP) includes grants for Re-establishment (up to \$150 000), Advice and Training (up to \$5 500).

Climate Change Adjustment Program Funding

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
Advice and Training Grant	\$8 900 000	\$8 900 000	\$8 900 000	\$5 500 000	\$32 200 000
Re-establishment Grant	\$3 500 000	\$3 500 000	\$3 600 000	\$2 000 000	\$12 600 000

Transitional Income Support is available until the 30 June 2009 and is linked to the CCAP Advice and Training Grant. The CCAP Advice and Training measure provides funds for the farmer to complete their mutual obligation requirements for the Transitional Income Support program. As a result of this linkage, the majority of farmers applying for the \$5 500 CCAP Advice and Training Grant have also applied for Transitional Income Support.

As at 2 November 2008:

- 553 claims for CCAP have been received
- 136 claims granted (56 claims granted immediate access to payments under the hardship provisions)
- 192 claims rejected
- 225 claims not actioned pending further information

As at 2 November 2008, Centrelink has not received any claims for a CCAP Re-establishment Grant. This is primarily due to the availability of Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grants until 30 June 2009.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 04

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Green Paper Emission Intensive Trade Exposed (EITE) Table

Hansard Page: 122/123 (20/10/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—This is in the agricultural field? I must confess I have not read the report.

Mr Gibbs—This is in the agriculture sphere. The other one would be pigs. There is a table in the back of the green paper that we can reproduce for you if you like. We can take that on notice. The secretary is correct that there has been some debate obviously through the green paper consultation process, and the Department of Climate Change are taking on board those comments and having consultations as we speak on the emissions intensive trade exposed nature and how they will treat them in the white paper.

...

Senator IAN MACDONALD—My four minutes is almost over so can you take on notice and give me, if

you would, a list of what your department assesses are rural industries that are trade exposed by whatever the definition is—perhaps you can tell me what that is—and emissions intensive?

Mr Quinlivan—Senator, we agree with the analysis in the green paper so the table in the green paper we agree with completely. It will make perfect sense to you when you see it and we will make sure you get it quickly.

Mr Gibbs—The analysis which has been undertaken to date is based at industry level across the nation. So those figures can be calculated and they have been calculated for some time because we report on them internationally.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are they accepted by the industries involved?

Mr Gibbs—The numbers have been around for some time and they are internationally accepted definitions.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are they accepted by the industries involved?

Perhaps you can take that on notice.

Mr Gibbs—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

It is the Government's preferred position in the Green Paper that Emissions Intensive Trade Exposed (EITE) assistance be provided to those industries that face the greatest material impact of the carbon cost (emission intensive) and are constrained in their ability to pass on these costs because of international competition (trade exposed).

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Question: CC 04 (continued)

The Green Paper presented an analysis of EITE industries (attached). The department indicated at the hearing that it agreed with the analysis presented in the Green Paper for EITE industries. The attached table is based on an analysis conducted by the Centre for Integrated Sustainability Analysis, University of Sydney, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian National Accounts Input-Output Tables 2001-02, the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2002 and various industry specific sources.

Industry has provided extensive feedback on the EITE assistance in the Green Paper. Some parts of the industry have advocated a value added metric approach as an alternative method to the revenue approach presented in the Green Paper.

A subsequent discussion paper on the value added metric approach was released by the Department of Climate Change, followed by a Roundtable discussion on 14 October 2008 with industry representatives (including from the agriculture sector).

The government is currently considering EITE assistance as part of the finalisation of the scheme design.

CC 04 Attachment A - Green Paper Appendix D: Analysis of the emissions intensity of Australian industries

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Question: CC 05

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Measurement of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture

Hansard Page: 124 (20/10/2008)

Senator Ian Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Finally, how far advanced are we on working out how much rural industries contribute to abatement of greenhouse gases, for example through lack of tree clearing, sugar cane growing, grass growing on the plains and prairies, tree planting and all those sort of things? Have we got an accurate way of determining what carbon abatement comes from rural industries?

Mr Gibbs—We have a relatively accurate assessment of tree growing across the nation.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—All the others?

Mr Gibbs—No, that is developing.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—You are developing that? Can you take the rest of my question on notice please.

Mr Gibbs—The development part of the question?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Well, what work you have got that we and the industries can confidently use. My understanding is that here is not a way of calculating the abatement effect of grasses and things, but you tell me about it.

Answer:

Australia's reporting and measurement capabilities are consistent with our international reporting obligations. Consequently Australia has advanced measurement capabilities for tree clearing and planting but not for sugar cane growing or grass growing on plains and prairies, because we do not account for these emissions under our Kyoto Protocol obligations.

The government will continue to develop capabilities for estimating emissions from farm activities in the lead up to its consideration of agriculture's possible inclusion in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 06

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Rural Financial Counselling Service in Western Australia

Hansard Page: 128 (20/10/2008)

Senator Adams asked:

Senator ADAMS—Thank you very much. Ms Kidman, I follow up on that rural counselling issue I asked you about at the last estimates. It was about a tender, pertaining to why the Western Australian rural counselling service were not the successful applicants. You told us at that estimates hearing that the North East Farming Futures were the successful tenderers. I would like to follow up on just where that program is and how that organisation is going. You did state at that stage that you were going to have ongoing negotiations with them.

Ms Kidman—Rural Financial Counselling Service program actually sits with the climate change division that was just on recently. I am not aware of the recent developments for that program.

Senator ADAMS—All right. Once again we get the—

Dr O'Connell—Can we take that on notice?

Answer:

North East Farming Futures (NEFF) began trading as Rural Financial Counselling Service – Western Australia from 1 July 2008, providing free rural financial counselling services in the Western Australian agricultural zone and the Murchison and Southern Gascoyne region. The Western Australian Rural Counselling Association (WARCA) Inc failed to gain an interlocutory injunction and writ of prohibition through the Federal Court of Australia to prevent the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry appointing NEFF as the deliverers of the Rural Financial Counselling Service in Western Australia for 2008-11. WARCA and the Commonwealth subsequently settled the matter out of court.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 07

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Boswell asked:

1. What if any steps have been taken to estimate the costs of the government's response to climate change including the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme for every department, agency and program within this portfolio?
2. What are the costs and estimated costs identified (reported separately)?
3. Have any costs been included in forward estimates and if so where?

Answer:

1. None.
2. None.
3. No.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 08

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. How many exceptional circumstances exit grants have been paid in the past 12 months?
2. How many are outstanding or waiting to be approved?
3. Please provide an electorate by electorate breakdown of successful applicants and the amount of each exit grant in that electorate.

Answers:

1. As at 5 November 2008, 88 EC Exit Grants have been approved and paid since the program commenced on 25 September 2007.
2. As at 5 November 2008, there are 145 applications that have passed a pre-assessment by Centrelink. Exit grants will not be payable until the farm has been sold and the farmer's circumstances (including total net assets) at the time of sale have been determined. There are 91 claims currently being processed.
3. See attached table.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 08 (continued)

CC 08 Table – Total EC Exit Grant payments made in each electorate.

Electorate	No. of Successful Applicants	Total funding
Barker	10	\$ 1,477,278.00
Bendigo	1	\$ 38,195.58
Blair	1	\$ 140,441.70
Brand	1	\$ 150,000.00
Calare	2	\$ 133,294.51
Calwell	1	\$ 150,000.00
Capricornia	1	\$ 57,712.24
Dunkley	1	\$ 150,000.00
Eden-Monaro	1	\$ 150,000.00
Farrer	5	\$ 750,000.00
Flinders	1	\$ 31,337.41
Fowler	1	\$ 71,854.00
Gellibrand	1	\$ 150,000.00
Gippsland	2	\$ 300,000.00
Grey	1	\$ 150,000.00
Gwydir	1	\$ 150,000.00
Holt	1	\$ 150,000.00
Lalor	2	\$ 283,131.10
Lindsay	1	\$ 150,000.00
Longman	1	\$ 150,000.00
Lyne	3	\$ 357,714.08
Lyons	1	\$ 150,000.00
Mallee	19	\$ 2,355,528.00
Mayo	2	\$ 300,000.00
McEwen	1	\$ 87,188.76
McMillan	2	\$ 225,424.63
Murray	7	\$ 887,374.05
New England	1	\$ 150,000.00
Oxley	1	\$ 103,140.84
Parkes	3	\$ 419,663.44
Paterson	1	\$ 150,000.00
Riverina	3	\$ 450,000.00
Wakefield	5	\$ 604,090.94
Wannon	2	\$ 300,000.00
Wide Bay	1	\$ 144,332.07
Grand Total	88	\$11,467,701.35

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 09

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

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

Answers:

1. As of 5 November 2008, 600 applications for the EC Exit Grant had been received by Centrelink. 509 applications have been processed and 91 remain on hand.
2. The table below details the number of applicants by electorate, excluding the 91 applications currently on hand.

Electorate	Total				
Adelaide	1	Gilmore	1	Melbourne	2
Ballarat	4	Gippsland	10	Melbourne	
Barker	41	Greenway	1	Ports	1
Bendigo	32	Grey	20	Menzies	1
Blair	1	Groom	1	Moreton	1
Brand	2	Gwydir	17	Murray	35
Bruce	1	Hinkler	2	New England	7
Calare	16	Holt	2	O'Connor	7
Calwell	6	Hume	5	Oxley	2
Canberra	1	Indi	16	Page	8
Capricornia	1	Kalgoorlie	6	Parkes	20
Corangamite	1	Kennedy	3	Paterson	3
Corio	1	Kingston	1	Perth	1
Dawson	1	Lalor	4	Port Adelaide	1
Deakin	2	Lindsay	7	Richmond	1
Dobell	1	Longman	1	Riverina	24
Dunkley	1	Lyne	7	Scullin	1
Eden-Monaro	3	Lyons	1	Solomon	1
Fairfax	1	Macarthur	1	Sturt	1
Farrer	23	Macquarie	1	Wakefield	18
Fisher	1	Mallee	70	Wannon	4
Flinders	2	Maranoa	14	Wide Bay	4
Fowler	3	Mayo	10	Wills	1
Gellibrand	1	McEwen	13	Grand Total	509
		McMillan	4		

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 10

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Why were these exit grants unsuccessful?

Answer:

As of 5 November 2008, 276 exit grant applications have been rejected. The most common reasons for rejection include:

- Customer not in control of farm
- Failed to provide information
- Farm assets too high
- No derived income from farm
- Did not own farm for at least 5 years
- Not contributed labour and capital
- Sold farm before 25 September 2007

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 11

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

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

Answer:

It is a demand driven program and up-take numbers are difficult to predict. Uptake to date has been less than predicted.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 12

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – 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 not presently proposing to change the program criteria.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 13

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

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

Answer:

1. Yes, all customers receive written notification from Centrelink outlining the reasons their application has not been approved.
2. Not applicable.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 14

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – 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. 20 applicants for the exit grant who have been refused have appealed.
2. Section 4 of the Exceptional Circumstances Exit Package 2007 Policy Guidelines states:

If a person's claim is rejected for the three grants described in the guidelines and a notice is given to the person advising them of the decision, the person has three months after the notice is given to request a review of the decision by Centrelink.

If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision following a review by the original decision maker, a further review can be requested through an authorised officer.

If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision following the decision of the authorised officer, 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 Rural Programs team will be final, with the person able to make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, who can consider the complaint including issues related to whether or not the policy is "unreasonable, unjust or improperly discriminatory".

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 15

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Have any of the rejected applicants taken their appeal to the Ombudsman?

Answer:

As at 26 November 2008, the Ombudsman has received a total of 15 complaints about the Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 16

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Drought – Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

What were the grounds of their appeals? Were any of them successful?

Answer:

As at 5 November 2008, two appeals were made for “not being in control of the farm at the time of the sale” and two were for “no significant income derived or labour provided to the farm enterprise”.

None of the appeals were successful.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 17

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances and 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 country is this?

Answer:

As at 3 November 2008, 69 areas across Australia remain Exceptional Circumstances declared equating to around 48 per cent of Australia's agricultural land.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 18

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances – farmers receiving assistance

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. How many farmers are receiving EC assistance?
2. 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, 2007/8 and estimated for 2008/09.

Answer:

1. As at 26 September 2008, there were 21 307 farming families accessing EC income support and approximately 18 300 approved applications for interest rate subsidies for the 2007-2008 financial year for farmers.
2. A region by region breakdown of Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate Subsidy and the Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment (Household Support) is provided in the attached tables. Statistics are current from 26 September 2008.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 19

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances – requests for reinstatement

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. Have any of the State Governments written to the Government asking for any regions which were removed from 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. Has the NSW Government asked for the Brewarrina Rural Lands Protection Board to be reviewed or to be placed back into Drought EC status?

Answer:

1. No. No requests have been received after an area has ceased.
2. Whilst no requests have been received after EC assistance has ceased, the federal government has received requests prior to the expiry date from the Victorian and New South Wales governments after the announcements to cease assistance.
The Victorian Government submitted additional information on 18 September (prior to the 30 September expiry date) about a revised and reduced boundary for the Central and East Gippsland EC declared area. On 1 October 2008 EC assistance was extended to a revised Central and East Gippsland EC declared area.
The New South Wales Government submitted additional information on 30 September (on the 30 September expiry date) about revised reduced boundaries for the Central North North-West EC declared area. As at 12 November 2008, the Government is considering NRAC's advice on this issue.
3. No.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 20

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought Policy

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

When will the Government be releasing the different components of the drought review it is currently undertaking?

Answer:

There are three assessments being undertaken to inform the national review of drought policy:

- 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 was 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 was publicly released on 23 October 2008.
- A draft report on the Inquiry into Government Drought Support by the Productivity Commission was publicly released on 30 October 2008. A final report is to be provided to government in February 2009.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 21

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought Policy

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How will the Government be devising new drought policy and when will this policy be released?

Answer:

On 23 April 2008 the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Tony Burke MP, 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 assessments 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 draft report was publicly released on 30 October 2008. A final report is to be provided to the government in 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. The timing of the improved arrangements will be a matter for the government to decide.

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Question: CC 22

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Drought – FMDs

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

How much money is currently held by farmers in FMDs?

Answer:

As at 30 June 2008, 41 355 holders held a total of \$2.879 billion in FMDs.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 23

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Williams asked:

1. Given the food manufacturing sector is vital to agriculture, whether it be abattoirs or milk processing plants, will food manufactures such as abattoirs be allowed under an ETS to pass their increased costs back on to farmers?
2. For example will dairy farmers be forced to take a farm gate cut to the price they receive for milk to pay for the energy intensive manufacturing of cheese, milk powder and pasteurising milk?

Answer:

1. The management of increased costs associated with the introduction of the CPRS is a commercial matter for individual firms. The government is not introducing any additional regulations governing commercial relationships.
2. The CPRS Green Paper does not specify what actions an entity can adopt to pass on costs associated with the CPRS.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 24

Division/Agency: Climate Change

Topic: Forestry

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Abetz asked:

Forestry

1. Can I be provided with a full explanation as to Mr Tony Bartlett's move from the Forestry section of the portfolio?
2. Was Mr Bartlett's move anything to do with a letter dated 23rd June 2008 which was forwarded to the Executive Officers of the Private Forestry Development Committees?
3. Is it correct that notification of the outcome of the funding cuts to PFDCs came with very short notice before the existing funding expired?
4. How much warning/notification of the outcome of the funding situation was given to each of the PFDCs?
5. Did the Department do everything they could to push the decision process along and to support the need for funding as asserted in Mr Bartlett's letter of 23/06/08?
6. If so, what was the delay in achieving a decision in this area?
7. Is it true there are many other bodies and programs previously funded by the National Heritage Trust that found themselves in the same position as the PFDCs?

Answer:

1. Mr Tony Bartlett's move from the Forestry Branch of the portfolio on 30 June 2008 reflected the view of the DAFF executive on where to best place senior executive officers.
2. See 1 above.
3. All State Government agencies and individual PFDCs were notified on 23 June 2008 that there would be no specific allocation of funds to the program under the new Caring for our Country initiative, but that individual PFDCs should consider applying for funds through the Caring for our Country Open Grants process.
4. The most recent funding of Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) was put in place in July 2005 as a three year commitment to participating State Governments to provide funds up to 30 June 2008. There was no commitment provided for funding beyond 30 June 2008.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: CC 24 (continued)

5. The Department was aware of the lapsing of funding for the PFDCs at 30 June 2008 when the Caring for our Country initiative was developed.
6. See 5 above.
7. A number of bodies previously funded under the Natural Heritage Trust have not been funded in the Caring for our Country Initiative.