

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 38

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: SCoPI—drought review pilot

Proof Hansard page: 94-95

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

CHAIR: I welcome officers from Climate Change.

Senator WILLIAMS: Ms Willock, the Standing Council on Primary Industries was due to meet this month to develop the new drought policy. Has that meeting been held yet?

Senator Ludwig: No. It is on the 26th.

Senator WILLIAMS: When can we expect a package of new measures to be announced and will they be for further consultation? Or is what is announced going to be the policy?

Senator Ludwig: Can I have your help to make sure that we get agreement? It presupposes that we get agreement—that is what SCoPI is all about—so we have to get the state and territory ministers around the table, listen to them, find an outcome, and then I will be in a position to answer the next questions. I am sure I can rely on you to help me with the New South Wales primary industries minister.

Senator WILLIAMS: I would love to do that, Minister. I want to raise the drought review pilot in Western Australia that was extended until 30 June this year. How much did the federal government contribute to the two-year trial?

Ms Willock: The overall package was \$81 million. That was by the Western Australian government and the Australian government. The Australian government contribution was \$65 million.

Senator WILLIAMS: How much of the expenditure was actual departmental expenses, do you have a separation of that? What was actually owed to farmers and what were departmental expenses?

Ms Willock: I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The total Australian Government contribution to the Western Australian Pilot of Drought Reform measures was \$65.342 million. Of the \$65.342 million, \$52.817 million was administered funding and \$12.525 million was departmental funding.

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Question: 39

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: WA Pilot—Drought review pilot exit support numbers

Proof Hansard page: 95-96

Senator SIEWERT asked:

Senator SIEWERT: So all we know is for drought policy we have a meeting on the 26th and that is it.

Ms Anderson: At the meeting in April this year SCoPI ministers did say that they would consider the package that is being brought forward by officials on 26 October, which is what the minister has referred to, with a view to implementing a new package from July 2014. There is an implementation time frame, and obviously, depending on what the outcome of that meeting is, there may need to be consideration by individual governments as well.

Senator SIEWERT: Can I go to the WA trial and ask a few more questions about that, building on what Senator Williams was asking. The trial area was expanded quite significantly last financial year. Of the increase in the number of people that did choose an exit process, how many of those came from that expanded area?

Ms Willock: I would have to take on notice how many came from that expanded area.

Senator SIEWERT: I am interested in a breakdown of the numbers in the original area and those in the expanded area.

Dr O'Connell: Is this numbers for exit support?

Senator SIEWERT: Yes.

Dr O'Connell: There were eight grants paid in 2011-12 and one in 2012-13.

Ms Willock: We have updated figures.

Senator SIEWERT: I want an update of the figures on the website, which are from March. I would like them to June, if that is possible. I am specifically after an understanding of whether there was a response from the people in that expanded area. I cannot tell from the figures whether the following applications were in that original area, which is more your Wheatbelt area, or where it has expanded and gets into your Northern Ag area and some of the drier areas up north. That is what I am interested in—did some more people come out of that area. Obviously I do not want to know names—I do not want the information if you think it is going to identify people, but I am interested in looking at that.

Senator Ludwig: We will have a look at it. It will depend on the size of the group. If the size is very small, it maybe identifiable, in which case I suspect we would be not helpful. If we do not think we will identify them by their geography, then we can provide a number. That is the only caveat I would place on it—the concern that you might be able to identify them by the small size of the sample.

Senator SIEWERT: I totally understand what you are saying. If it is possible to provide that for the other components of the program, that would be appreciated too—the breakdown between the original area and the expanded area. With the mentoring program, is there a process for keeping on board the people who took up the roles of mentors, or is that process now completely finished?

Ms Willock: That process is now completed. It was part of the trial and, as you are aware, the trial has concluded.

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Question: 39 (continued)

Answer:

The Australian and Western Australian Governments extended the pilot in 2011–12, covering an expanded region of Western Australia.

The table below shows uptake of the programs under the WA pilot broken up by the original pilot region and the expanded pilot region. The data reported for the expanded region does not include uptake in the original pilot area in 2011–12.

	Original WA pilot region only (2010–11 and 2011–12 data)	Expanded WA pilot region only (2011–12 data)
Farm Planning*	813	343
Building Farm Businesses	532	265
Farm Family Support	641	80
Farm Exit Support	13	2
Farm Social Support— Rural Support Initiative	16 660 <i>(Rural Services Officer Contact)</i>	3 079 <i>(Rural Services Officer Contact)</i>
	2 967 <i>(Rural Social Worker Contact)</i>	762 <i>(Rural Social Worker Contact)</i>
Farm Social Support— Rural and Regional Family Support Service	3 251 <i>(clients assisted by service outlets)</i>	3 039 <i>(clients assisted by service outlets)</i>
Farm Social Support— Online Counselling for Rural Young Australians (ehedspace)	48 <i>(contacts with young rural Australians)</i>	392 <i>(contacts with young rural Australians)</i>
Beyond Farming	24 <i>(farmers mentored)</i>	6 <i>(farmers mentored)</i>

*The number of approved applications over the two-year period, not the number of farm businesses that attended the courses.

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Question: 40

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Transitional Income Support redirection of funds

Proof Hansard page: 97

Senator NASH asked:

Senator NASH: Earlier this morning I was asking some questions about a redirection of funding, which I think Dr O'Connell you were kindly going to see whether you could get somebody who might be able to run me through that to explain—

Ms Freeman: To clarify, referring to your question today, what we have is that the 2012–13 PBS notes that \$1.3 million was allocated to the 2011–12 Australian Year of the Farmer—which, for completeness, is footnote 3 on page 20 of the PBS and refers to Australia's Farming Future, the Climate Change Adaptation Partnership. This funding was redirected from the Professional Advice and Planning Grant program. The Professional Advice and Planning Grant program closed in 2011–12 and had sufficient unspent funds remaining to cover the \$1.3 million allocation to the Australian Year of the Farmer.

Senator NASH: I did not have any indication that it was the Year of the Farmer. I thought it was exactly the same program.

Ms Freeman: Senator, if I can continue, I suspect there is some confusion over the Climate Change Adaptation Partnerships and the Climate Change Adjustment Program. One involved the movement of \$1.3 million and the other was a movement of \$1.2 million.

Dr O'Connell: And the acronym for both is CCAP.

Senator NASH: Okay, terrific. Can I ask you to take that on notice for me?

Ms Freeman: That is very easy. We suspected that that was what the issue.

Senator NASH: If you could do that for me, that would be much appreciated.

Ms Freeman: Sure.

Answer:

Due to an increase in projected uptake, \$1.2 million was redirected to the Climate Change Adjustment Program (Transitional Income Support) in 2011–12, from funding earmarked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, part of the International Market Access Program.

Separate to this, \$1.3 million, sourced from an underspend in the Drought Assistance—Professional Advice Program, was redirected to the Australian Year of the Farmer for 2011–12, part of the Climate Change Adaptation Partnerships Program.

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Question: 41

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Carbon Farming Initiative

Proof Hansard page: 97-98

Senator NASH asked:

Senator NASH: I know it is predominantly not your department but you have—thank you very much—answered some questions on notice on the Carbon Farming Initiative. I want to follow up some of the answers you gave. I note that in your answer you said that there were four methodologies approved with another nine under consideration. Having checked the website, I think there have been some more recent ones. Can you run me through how many actually are approved, what they are, what is currently undergoing the process of approval and what we have got in the bucket?

Ms Gaglia: There are four methodologies that have been approved by the minister for climate change and there are currently 15 methodologies under consideration by the Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee.

Senator NASH: How long have those 15 been on the list to be considered?

Ms Gaglia: There are different time frames. Some have been under consideration for quite some time. Some of them have been through an assessment process and gone back to the applicant for more details and some have only gone through the public consultation period and are now going through a full assessment. The majority of them are actually back with the applicants for more information and detail.

Senator NASH: Obviously since you answered that question on notice for me, which was not that long ago, another five have come on the list.

Ms Gaglia: That is right.

Senator NASH: Can you take on notice to provide the time line for each of those, when the applications came in and their current status? In that answer I think at that stage there were no methodologies relating to soil carbon. Are there any now?

Ms Gaglia: From memory, I think there are three relating to soil carbon. They are all back with the applicants for more information.

Senator NASH: Great. Again if you would not mind taking on notice to give me some more information around that. Is there a targeted optimum length of time for this process or is it just open-ended—how long is a piece of string?—and just as long as it takes?

Answer:

Carbon Farming Initiative offset methodologies which are under the consideration of the Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee are listed on the website of the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCEEE), available at www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/methodology-development/methodologies-under-consideration.aspx.

Requests for further information on the assessment timeframes for these methodologies should be referred to DCCEE.

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Question: 42

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Soil carbon testing

Proof Hansard page: 99

Senator NASH asked:

Senator NASH: I might have misheard you, but I thought you said that you had not looked at them yet because there isn't a firm price for the soil testing.

Ms Gaglia: No, we know which laboratories are currently using the new technology.

Senator NASH: When will you have an idea of the efficacy of that and some certainty around the drop in price?

Ms Gaglia: At the end of this month, all of the data collected as part of the Soil Carbon Research Program will be made public, so it will be available to all laboratories, which will allow them to do the calibrations within their scanning systems. Once they have done that and they can see that they can modify their systems, we would hope that the majority of laboratories would start bringing their costs down and implement the new technology.

Senator NASH: Do you think they will? You would imagine it must be almost prohibitive if it is going to be \$1,000 a test.

Ms Gaglia: Yes.

Senator NASH: So does the whole thing fall over if you cannot drop the price of the soil carbon testing?

Ms Gaglia: I imagine that they will drop the prices.

Senator NASH: We will have to wait and see, won't we? Would you mind, in case it is before the next set of estimates, taking it on notice, if you do receive any information about the certainty of the cost of doing that testing, to pass it to the committee?

Answer:

The Soil Carbon Research Program has demonstrated the potential use of a more rapid and cost-effective method of soil analysis than the more traditional time consuming, labour intensive and expensive laboratory analyses. This is based on mid-infrared spectroscopy combined with partial least squares regression analysis (MIR/PLSR).

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is currently evaluating the ability of ten state department and university MIR laboratories to complete similar analysis. All laboratories have been provided with a set of 200 calibration and 87 validation samples. The results obtained across the ten laboratories will be used to assess the capability of the new technology to deliver consistent results across the country. A final report detailing the results of the standardisation process will be released in March 2013.

It is expected that commercial laboratories will wait for the outcome of this testing before they consider providing a service based on this technology including the cost to consumers.

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Question: 43

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Investigations in relation to the Tasmanian Forest Contractors Exit Assistance Program

Proof Hansard page: 102

Senator COLBECK asked:

What are the sorts of things that you looked at? One that has been put to me is an interfamily sale of equipment and business, effectively, which means that the family continues in the business but gets the advantage of an exit package. Was anything like that looked at? You did not investigate anything of the kind that I described just a moment ago?

Mr Aldred: I cannot recall specifically. I could take it on notice.

Answer:

Under the terms of the Tasmanian Forest Contractors Exit Assistance Program there were no conditions placed on the sale of a business or of business machinery to a family member. However, the business entity if sold could not access native forest contracts. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has not received any formal allegations along these lines.

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Questions: 44 and 45

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Peer Review of Tasmanian Forest Intergovernmental Agreement process

Independent Verification Group research

Proof Hansard page: Pages 102-03

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: And I do not know any particular or specific details around that. I was just interested to inquire as to where that was all at. In respect of the intergovernmental agreement process itself, has there been any work done around peer review of information in the report that was handed down by the expert panel? There has been some discussion and some work around the edges looking at some of the issues that were raised around that. I think I recall that the chair of the panel talked about the need to do some peer review work. I am interested to know whether anything has actually happened.

Ms Freeman: We will take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK: But surely providing peer review would assist them in that process, particularly with respect to some of the redefinitions that have been designed. As I said, I have seen some work that has been done on a voluntary basis that questions some of the assertions that are made in that document and questions them to the extent that it would raise concerns about what is being said or what is being asserted in those documents. We are not looking at doing anything in the context of that and how that might flow into future decision-making processes or how it might be, for example, portrayed as being reality when it is effectively a redefinition for the purposes of gaining a particular outcome in this process?

Mr Tucker: I have not been involved in the recent discussion, so I will have to take it on notice, but, in terms of your broader point about it potentially influencing RFA reviews, we are currently in the process of preparing for the government how we may approach that. I do not recall that particular issue coming up, but

Answer:

A comprehensive assessment of the Tasmanian forestry industry's timber supply requirements and the conservation values of nominated areas of Tasmania's native forests was undertaken by an Independent Verification Group, led by Professor Jonathan West. The terms of reference required that the design and implementation be conducted in consultation with the Signatories to the Tasmanian Forests Statement of Principles. The terms of reference did not include a requirement for peer review.

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Questions: 44 and 45 (continued)

The Statement of Principles processes are community-led and their assessments focussed on the issues and forest areas of concern for the industry, environment and union groups that comprise the Signatories.

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Question: 46

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Forestry standards

Proof Hansard page: 106

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: I will start with forestry standards. Are you aware of any benchmarking of the two key standards that exist globally—the PEFC, which is obviously an umbrella under which the Australian Forestry Standard sits, and the Forest Stewardship Council? Are you aware of any global benchmarking that makes a comparison of those two standards?

Mr McNamara: We are not aware, but we could certainly take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is aware of two international processes which have undertaken global benchmarking of both the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification through an independent and continuous assessment based on criteria developed in a multi-stakeholder forum.

The first is by the Central Point for Expertise in Timber Procurement or more commonly referred to as CPET based in London, UK (www.cpet.org.uk). The relevant web page for the results of the review of forest certification schemes is www.cpet.org.uk/cpet-news/news%20stories/2011-archive/results-of-cpet2019s-2010-review-of-forest-certification-schemes/.

The second is by the Timber Procurement Assessment Committee or more commonly referred to as TPAC based in Den Hague, The Netherlands (www.tpac.smk.nl). The relevant web page for the summary reports of the review of forest certification schemes is www.tpac.smk.nl/nl/s517/TPAC-home/c413-Documents.

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Question: 47 and 48

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division
Topic: Assessment of Forest Stewardship Council
Proof Hansard page: 107

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: Has there been an assessment of FSC to see if that actually meets Standards Australia principles? Are you aware of any assessment in that context?

Mr McNamara: I am not aware, but I can certainly take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK: I would appreciate that if you could. Does the government differentiate in any way in respect of the two standards in any of the programs that it operates?

Mr McNamara: Senator, the government does not form a view between the two standards. Both standards are a matter for industry. Provided they provide a reasonable level of certification, and again I would go back to the fact that they are both recognised globally in many countries, then the government does not differentiate between the two of them.

Senator COLBECK: I understand that is the view that is taken in a number of other countries. I have had conversations in the UK in particular where they do not discriminate between either of them based on their global reach. So, effectively, it is left as a market mechanism—although I do understand Minister Burke intervened with the Green Building Council a couple of years ago to suggest that they should also recognise the Australian forestry standard. Is that right?

Mr McNamara: We would have to take that one on notice—or it might be something you want to put to SEWPaC.

Senator COLBECK: No, it was done before, when he was previously in this portfolio. That is my recollection.

Ms Freeman: We will take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK: We do not always agree, but I agreed with him on that particular principle. I think it was a correct one for him to take. So, where a senator says the AFS is not credible and not respected, it might just be their personal perspective.

Mr Tucker: I am not aware of what Minister Burke said.

Senator COLBECK: Okay. I will move on from that. We will go to—

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is not aware of any assessments of the Forest Stewardship Council against the standard setting requirements of Standards Australia.

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Question: 47 and 48 (continued)

The standards to which the Hon Senators refers are private, commercial entities and aim to provide a methodology to build consumer confidence that the product on a shelf is harvested in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest management. Various interests in the sector have called on the government to support other FSC, the Australia Forestry Standard or both.

In 2009 Minister Burke, in his then capacity as chair of the Primary Industries Ministerial Council, called on the Green Building Council of Australia to accredit the Australian Forest Certification Scheme as a Forest Management Scheme for Green Star Certification.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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Question: 49

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Illegal Logging Program

Proof Hansard page: 107–108

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: Back in 2008-09, there was \$1 million allocated to identify illegally logged timber and restrict its import into Australia. The information that I have, based on question on notice No. 231, is that there were two projects. One was \$79,000 spent with URS to develop a framework for differentiating legality verification and chain-of-custody schemes; that was completed in 2010. The other was \$74,000 spent with Poyry on a risk assessment framework for the legality of timber and wood products imported into Australia. Is that all the money that was actually expended out of that \$1 million?

Mr McNamara: I am just looking at the question on notice now. Out of the \$1 million, there was around \$792,000 spent on various consultancies.

Senator COLBECK: \$792,000?

Mr McNamara: Yes. And, as I understand it, the unspent money out of that \$1 million was returned to consolidated revenue.

Senator COLBECK: That would be about \$208,000 then, by those numbers.

Mr McNamara: Roughly, yes—\$207½ thousand.

Senator COLBECK: Okay. What I might get you to do for me on notice is give me a list of the projects that were funded under that program.

Mr McNamara: Yes, absolutely.

Answer:

1. No.
2. Question 238 (Climate Change Division) from May budget estimates provided a table summary of funded projects undertaken from 2008–09 to 2009–10 to support the illegal logging policy.

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Question: 50

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: WA RFA

Proof Hansard page: 109

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Looking at some of the Western Australian experiences, does the department monitor whether the Western Australian government complies with its legally binding obligations contained in clause 95 of the Western Australian RFA?

Mr Tucker: Through the regular reporting requirements we would ask them to report against the particular provisions of the RFA. I would have to take on notice that specific clause. It is not before me.

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you.

Answer:

Yes

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Question: 51

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Clause WA RFA

Proof Hansard page: 109

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you. Staying with Western Australia, if the department finds the Western Australian government is in breach of its obligations under the RFA, what actions will the department take to ensure implementation?

Mr Tucker: The RFA itself contains clauses concerning where there are disagreements or where one party believes another party has not fulfilled its obligations, and that would be the first port of call in how we would address those issues.

Senator RHIANNON: Have any of those been activated?

Mr McNamara: Not to my understanding.

Senator RHIANNON: Is that specific to Western Australia or to RFAs in general?

Senator Ludwig: That is RFAs generally. As I understand it, none have been recently activated.

Senator RHIANNON: Sorry, could you repeat that?

Senator Ludwig: It applies to all RFAs. There is a mechanism within the RFAs themselves and to my knowledge the clause that was referred to by Mr Tucker has not been activated in recent times, in the last 12 months.

Senator RHIANNON: So we have not had problems in the past 12 months. Has it been activated at other times?

Senator Ludwig: That was only my recollection.

Mr Tucker: We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

All Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) contain dispute resolution clauses. These clauses outline a process for the parties if the parties are in dispute.

These clauses have not been activated in any of the RFAs.

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Question: 52

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: 109-110

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: I will come back to New South Wales. I am interested in the sawmill biomass fuel study. Under what program was that funded?

Senator Ludwig: Do you have a bit more information?

Senator RHIANNON: It is on your website under 'bioenergy'. It is a sawmill biomass fuel study that has gone to south-east fibre exports.

Senator Ludwig: Whereabouts on our website?

Senator RHIANNON: It is at www.daff.gov.au/forestry/national/climate-change-research/bioenergy. Doesn't ring a bell?

Dr O'Connell: No. I will have to take that on notice

Answer:

The South East Fibre Exports sawmill biomass fuel study was funded under the Forest Industries Climate Change Research Fund – part of the 2007, \$20 million 'Preparing Forest Industries for the Future' election commitment.

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Question: 53

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: 110

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Yes. I was interested in how it is being funded and what the conditions of the grant are. Has a report been put in? I understand money has been handed over, so I am interested in how this has been managed.

Ms Freeman: We will take that on notice and get back to you.

Answer:

The South East Fibre Exports sawmill biomass fuel study was funded through a competitive grants program – the Forest Industries Climate Change Research Fund – part of the 2007, \$20 million ‘Preparing Forest Industries for the Future’ election commitment.

The project was funded through a standard funding deed with payments made against satisfactory delivery of agreed milestones including a final report addressing the research outputs of the Project.

Three milestone payments were made. The final payment was made upon receipt of the final report on 6 July 2011.

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Question: 54

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: 110

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Can you take that it on notice to inform the committee whether the report will be made public and, if so, when?

Mr McNamara: Yes.

Answer:

The South East Fibre Exports Sawmill biomass fuel study report will be made public. The report is currently being prepared for publication and it will be published on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry web site soon.

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Question: 55

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: 110

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Essentially the project, as I understand it, is about biomass for bioenergy at timber processing facilities? Considering you do not have the detail before you on that specific grant, could you provide details to the committee about what work that has been done in that area generally?

Mr McNamara: We will take that on notice.

Senator RHIANNON: Seriously—nobody here tonight is able to talk about biomass for bioenergy? Minister, is that not surprising considering that, periodically, your government has given emphasis to the whole issue of biomass and how it should be managed in terms of energy delivery? It has been quite controversial.

Answer:

As part of the 2007, \$20 million ‘Preparing Forest Industries for the Future’ election commitment, the government funded research projects to promote the development of sustainable bioenergy generation based on forest industries’ resources on a commercial scale. Research was also focused on identifying the resources required to realise the opportunities presented by bioenergy. There were six grants awarded, as described below.

	Grantee	Project
1	Enecon Pty Ltd.	Forest based bioenergy generation in Australia
2	University of New England	Conversion of eucalyptus forest waste residues to biofuel
3	South East Fibre Exports Pty Ltd.	Sawmill biomass fuel study
4	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Mitigating climate change through the sustainable production and use of forest biomass for bioenergy production—identifying native forest species as potential biofuel crops
5	CSIRO	Assessment of the environmental and economic opportunities and constraints associated with bioenergy production from forest biomass in two prospective regions of Australia
6	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Adapting and mitigating climate change through the sustainable production and use of forest biomass for commercial scale bioenergy production

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Question: 157

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Late Reports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

QON 139 identified two reports, “Review and assessment of assistance provided to primary producers through the provision of tax concessions” and “Review of the national BioSIRT program”, due in March 2012 that had not yet been provided to government. Provide an update on these reports.

If they are not yet available, what reasons have been provided and when are they expected to be available?

Answer:

In August 2011, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry commissioned an assessment of assistance provided to primary producers through the provision of tax concessions. The assessment report was provided to the department by the consultant in April 2012. The department is currently considering the report.

A review of the national Biosecurity Surveillance Incident Response and Tracing (BioSIRT) program has been completed. The program was reviewed to determine future strategic direction. The report will be provided out of session to the Standing Council on Primary Industries.

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Question: 158

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Publication costs

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

QON 139 identified three reviews involving the National Rural Advisory Council are planned, with end dates in September 2012, October 2012 and May 2013 with estimated costs "yet to be determined".

Provide details of the status and estimated costs of these reviews.

Provide details of any additional reviews and reports being undertaken.

Answer:

In April 2012, the National Rural Advisory Council was tasked with undertaking the following reviews:

Review title	Start date	End date	Provided to Government	Estimated cost
An assessment of agricultural insurance products, including multi-peril crop insurance and its feasibility in Australia.	1 July 2012	28 September 2012	28 September 2012	\$113 094 (includes \$80 000 for ABARES report).
An assessment into the effectiveness of the Farm Management Deposits scheme in Australia.	1 July 2012	31 October 2012	31 October 2012	Yet to be finalised. Estimated cost approximately \$40,000.
An assessment of agricultural employers' workforce planning capabilities.	1 July 2012	31 May 2013		Yet to be determined. Consultation process commences December 2012.

There are currently no additional reviews or reports being undertaken by the National Rural Advisory Council.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 215

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Biochar Capacity Building Program, Filling the Research Gap Program, Action on the Ground Program

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Provide details of all projects contracted under these programs, including:

- Name of successful organisation(s)
- Location of successful organisation(s)
- Title of successful projects
- Agricultural commodities involved in project
- Date contracted
- Date commenced
- Date due for completion / of completion
- Value of contract
- Location where project will be undertaken

Answer:

The requested information has been provided in three attached spreadsheets

Biochar Capacity Building Program

Filling the Research Gap Program (projects will be conducted at a mixture of laboratory sites, field sampling sites and field trial sites)

Action on the Ground Program

Question 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Action on the Ground

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Mingenew Irwin Group	Mingenew, WA	Shrubs for Emissions Reduction and Carbon Storage (SERCS)	Grazing - sheep and cattle	12/06/2012	12/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$527 185	Dongara, Morowa, Narromine, Cooma, Bungendore and Warrenbayne
University Of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Mitigating greenhouse gases with nitrification inhibitors and biochar in fallows	Cropping	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$472 816	Cunderdin and Pingelly
Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority	Coffs Harbour, NSW	Best Management Practices of Carbon Management on Northern Rivers farms	Horticulture, dairy and beef	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$548 000	Bellingen, Dorrigo, Lawrence, Kyogle, Nimbin, Casino, Grafton, Glenn Inness, Tenterfield, Guyra, Walcha, Wauchope, Comboyne and Kempsey
Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation	Barton, ACT	Using tea tree residues & legumes to develop a low-emission tea tree industry	Tea tree	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$307 273	Casino
Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry - Queensland	Toowoomba, Qld	Informed carbon strategies on mixed farms: Practices & carbon compared	Cropping and grazing	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$547 727	Roma and Chinchilla
Department Of Agriculture & Food	South Perth, WA	The 'economies' of managing soil organic carbon	Cropping	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$549 845	Mingenew and Albany
Perth Region Natural Resources Management Incorporated	Midland, WA	Evaluation of soil ameliorates with strong potential to reduce N2O emissions	Horticulture	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$357 273	Midland and Pickering Brook
Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board	Port Lincoln, SA	Improved nitrogen efficiency across biophysical regions of the Eyre Peninsula	Cropping and grazing	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$322 295	Minnipa and Edillilie
Department Of Primary Industries And Regions	Adelaide, SA	Livestock and pasture case studies to demonstrate greenhouse gas abatement	Livestock production	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$215 486	Narracoorte, Milang and Mt Compass
Crop Facts Pty. Ltd.	Mandurang South, Vic.	Farmers leading and learning about the soil carbon frontier	Cropping and grazing	8/06/2012	8/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Birchip, Cressey, Minnipa and Condobolin
Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association (Inc.)	Crawley, WA	Precision placement of carbon amendments in no-tillage cropping systems	Cropping	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$377 273	Cunderin, Bolgart and Bodallin
Upper North Farming Systems	Jamestown, SA	Perennial pasture management systems for soil carbon stocks in cereal zones - SA	Grazing and pasture	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$549 682	Orroroo, Jamestown, Kimba and Murray Town
Stipa Native Grasses Association Incorporated	Branxholme, Vic.	Soil carbon sequestration through Landscape Function improvement	Grazing	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$309 637	Branxholme, Nenalla, Wellington and Bungendore
Southern Farming Systems Ltd.	Inverleigh, Vic.	Increased nitrogen use efficiency by cropping farmers in south Vic.toria and Tas.mania	Cropping	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$540 909	Geelong, Streatham, Hamilton, Gippsland and Launceston

Question 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Action on the Ground

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Yarram Yarram Landcare Network	Yarram, Vic.	Gippsland Plains Soil Carbon Trials - Productivity & Climate Change Responses	Grazing	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$428 455	Woodside, Seaspray and Yarram
University Of Tasmania	Hobart, Tas.	Increasing Soil Carbon Storage in Extensive Grazing Systems in Temperate Regions	Grazing	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2014	\$430 942	Bruny Is, Richmond, St Mary's and Cressy,
Tweed Shire Council	Murwillumbah, NSW	Increasing Soil Carbon in Tweed Valley Farmland	Sugar cane, horticulture, dairy and beef	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$533 182	Duranbah, Uki, Cudgen, Condong, Tyalgum and Tumbulgum
Monash University	Clayton, Vic.	Decreasing dairy farm greenhouse gas emissions and building soil C	Dairy	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$546 715	Simpson, Bastock Creek and Camperdown
South Australian No-Till Farmers Association Incorporated	Clare, SA	Antimethogenic Stockfeed via Eremophylla pellets	Livestock production	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$390 909	Langhones Creek, Birdwood and, Blevidere
Riverine Plains Incorporated	Yarrawonga, Vic.	Increased soil carbon by accelerated humus formation from crop residues	Cropping	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$492 727	Browns Plains, Pretty Pine, and Culcairn
The Liebe Group (Inc.)	Dalwallinu, WA	Innovative Carbon Storage and Nitrogen management strategies in the WA Wheatbelt	Cropping and grazing	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$519 200	Watheroo, Buntine, Kalannie, Wongan Hills and Miling
The University Of Adelaide	Adelaide, SA	Rapid post-weaning growth of steers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Feedlot - cattle	12/06/2012	12/06/2012	28/02/2015	\$231 818	Meningie
Monaro Farming Systems Cmc Incorporated	Bombala, NSW	Monaro farm management strategies and their effects on soil carbon	Cropping and grazing	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$251 808	Bombala, Delegate, Nimmitabel, Cooma and Craigie
Southern Farming Systems Ltd.	Inverleigh, Vic.	Improving Nitrogen use efficiency using Precision farming technology	Cropping	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$321 045	Streatham, Lake Bolac, Inverleigh, Westmere, Avoca, Cressy and Launceston
Western Dairy Incorporated	Mundijong, WA	Lowering nitrous oxide emissions in intensively grazed pasture systems	Dairy and pasture	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$343 182	Karridale, Boyanup and Capel, Yolla, Ouse and Ringarooma
Applied Horticultural Research Pty Ltd.	Eveleigh, NSW	Horticulture: taking action to capture carbon and reduce nitrous oxide emissions	Horticulture	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$394 000	Cowra, Camden and Bathurst
Department Of Trade & Investment Regional Infrastructure And SerVices	Orange, NSW	Compost for carbon in agriculture	Grazing	6/06/2012	6/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$549 382	Merriwa, Mudgee, Tarlo and Coraki
Condamine Catchment Natural Resource Management Corporation Limited	Toowoomba, Qld	Increasing soil carbon in degraded cropping and grazing land	Cropping and grazing	13/06/2012	13/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$539 432	Clifton, Bell, Jandowae and Chinchilla
Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry - Queensland	Nambour, Qld	Improving Soil Fertiliser Irrigation Management for SEQ Ginger Production	Horticulture	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$482 436	Beerwah, Kandanga and Valdora

Question 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Action on the Ground

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga, NSW	Enabling landholders to adopt profitable & sustainable carbon cropping practices	Cropping	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$543 636	Tottenham, Condobolin, Harden, Holbrook, Jerilderie, Deniliquin, Moulamein, Lockhart, Inverleigh and Lake Bolac
Birchip Cropping Group Incorporated	Birchip, Vic.	Early Finishing of Lambs in On-Farm Feedlots to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Feedlot - Sheep	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$232 385	Birchip, Nullawil and Quambatook
South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.	Albany, WA	Empowering Farmers to Adopt Behaviour Change in a Carbon Economy	Cropping	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$487 685	Bremer Bay, Kendenup and Mt Barker
Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd.	Mareeba, Qld	Nitrous oxide reduction and soil carbon increase in tropical fruit tree crops	Horticulture	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$420 254	Mareeba, Dimbulah, Mutchilba and Tolga
Northern Territory Of Australia	Darwin, NT	Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved nitrogen management on NT farms	Horticulture and cropping	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$548 300	Darwin, Katherine, Humpty Doo, Murrumbidgee and Berry Springs
B. Adams & D.D Curr	Atherton, Qld	Improved Cattle Grazing Practices to Reduce Methane & Benefit Soil Carbon	Grazing and pasture	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$ 534 364	Lakeland
Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry - Queensland	Red Hill, Qld	Northern grazing carbon farming - integrating production and GHG outcomes 1	Grazing - cattle	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$549 909	Richmond, Georgetown, Rolleston, Middlemount and Duaringa, Katherine and Tennant Creek NT
The Australian Wine Research Institute	Glen Osmond, SA	Greenhouse gas abatement in viticulture	Wine grapes	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$548 046	Cessnock, Tanunda, Lobethal, Margaret and Coldstream
University Of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Grazing into the future - building soil health and carbon with pasture management	Grazing	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$291 545	Wagin and Central Wheatbelt
Kilter Pty Ltd.	Bendigo, Vic.	Sequestering Soil Carbon in an Irrigated Landscape turned Dry Ecological Grazing	Grazing	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$399 455	Lake Boga
Central West Farming Systems Inc.	Condobolin, NSW	Impact of farming systems on soil carbon and health in a dry cropping zone	Cropping	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Condobolin, Forbes, Trundle and Lake Cargelligo
Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Ltd.	Mackay, Qld	The clean energy benefits of tropical agricultural management systems	Horticulture and grazing	13/06/2012	13/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Calen, Walkerston, Eton, North Eton, Septimus and Bloomsbury
The University Of New England	Armidale, NSW	Dietary nitrate reduces methane emissions from beef cattle	Grazing - beef cattle	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Mt Isa, Charleville and Armidale
NSW Farmers' Association	Sydney, NSW	Soil Carbon in Commercial Cropping Systems - Science to Best Agronomic Practice	Cropping	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Premer, Binya, Walgett, Breeza, Moree, Narrabri, Forbes and Mulwalla

Question 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Action on the Ground

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Southern Farming Systems Ltd.	Inverleigh, Vic.	Organic amendments to increase carbon in cropping soils	Grazing	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$353 488	Bairnsdale and Gifford
Southern Gulf Catchments Ltd.	Mt Isa, Qld	Grazing land rehabilitation to increase soil carbon storage in north-west Qld	Horticulture and pasture	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$550 000	Cloncurry, Camooweal and Julia Creek
Botanical Resources Australia-Agricultural SerVices Pty Ltd.	Ulverstone, Tas.	The potential of pyrethrum marc as a soil amendment for enhancing carbon storage	Dairy	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$234 183	Forth, Penguin, Riana, Ulverstone Moriarty and North and Motton
Zero Discharge Pty Ltd.	Prahran, Vic.	Demonstration of Innovative Methane Capture & Nutrient stripping Algae System	Grazing	13/06/2012	13/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$468 058	Korumburra, Leongatha, Swan Hill, Yarrum, Myall and Warragul
Victorian Irrigated Cropping Council Inc.	Kerang, Vic.	Nitrous Oxide Emissions From Irrigated Cropping	Cropping	13/06/2012	13/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$187 500	Deniliquin and Kerang
Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry - Queensland	Red Hill, Qld	Northern grazing carbon farming - integrating production and GHG outcomes 2	Grazing	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$540 273	Roma, Longreach, Bollon and Windorah
Wimmera Catchment Authority	Horsham, Vic.	Cropping with compost for increasing carbon stored in soil	Cropping and grazing	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$270 691	Wonwondah, Telopea Downs, Horsham and Jeparit
Singleton Shire Landcare Network Incorporated	Westbrook, NSW	Increasing soil carbon storage in NSW coastal grazing lands	Cropping and grazing	14/06/2012	14/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$212 990	Singleton, Gloucester and Wards River
B.B Maurice & R.T Maurice	Wellington, NSW	Innovative biological farming Systems	Horticulture	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$479 855	Wellington
South Australian No-Till Farmers Association Inc.	Clare, SA	Aqua-Till - N-Injection	Cropping	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	31/11/2014	\$185 000	Tarlee and Wollongbar
Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry - Queensland	Nambour, Qld	Improved fertiliser and soil management in SEQ intensive horticulture	Horticulture	19/06/2012	19/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$517 273	Wamuran, Elimbah, Beerwah and Glasshouse Mountain
Wimmera Catchment Authority	Horsham, Vic.	Improved rotations and fertiliser decisions to decrease N2O losses	Horticulture	13/06/2012	13/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$321 879	Taylors Lake and Warracknabeal
Birchip Cropping Group Inc.	Birchip, Vic.	Efficient grain production compared with N2O emission	Grazing	12/06/2012	12/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$455 663	Birchip, Marnoo, Westmere, Merbein, Booleroo, Minnipa, Cressy and Condobolin
South East Queensland Catchments Ltd.	Brisbane, Qld	Enhanced compost trials on cane and tree crops on the Sunshine Coast	Sugar cane	18/06/2012	18/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$394 000	Yandina, Kenilworth, Palmwoods, Woombyne and Mapleton

Question 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Action on the Ground

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Inc.	Jerramungup, WA	Managing Soil Carbon and Nitrogen in Kikuyu pastures in the Fitzgerald Biosphere	Cropping and pasture	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$420 908	Bremer Bay and Jerramungup
Farmacist Pty Ltd.	Koumala, Qld	Using distribution of organic carbon as a basis for reducing N application rates	Irrigated cropping	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/06/2015	\$152 173	Palmyra, Sarina, Walkerston and Barkers Creek,

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under the Biochar Capacity Building Program

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)	Project location
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Adelaide, SA	National Biochar Initiative II	Cropping, livestock	15/06/2012	15/06/2012	14/06/2014	\$1 050 411	CSIRO Adelaide, SA; Wollongbar, NSW; TIA Forth and Huon Valley, Tas; University of Sydney, NSW.
Monash University	Melbourne, Vic.	The contribution of biochar in increasing soil carbon in native woody bioenergy crops and on-farm revegetation	Native woody bioenergy crops	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	15/06/2014	\$263 770	Western Vic. Laboratory work at Monash University, Vic and Newcastle University, NSW.
North East Catchment Management Authority	Wodonga, Vic.	Understanding and observing the benefits of biochar in the carbon cycle	Grains, livestock, horticulture	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	15/06/2014	\$250 000	North east Vic and southern NSW.
James Cook University	Cairns, Qld	Direct quantification of biochar that is stable on centennial timescales	Laboratory based	22/06/2012	22/06/2012	15/06/2014	\$143 079	Laboratory work Monash University, Vic.
South Australian No Till Farming Association	Clare, SA	Integrated riverine land management system using biochar	Dairy	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	30/05/2014	\$292 740	Mypolonga, Clare and Bridgewater, SA; Wollongbar, NSW.

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Filling the Research Gap

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)
Australian Pork Limited	Kingston, ACT	Coordination of the National Agricultural Manure Management Program	Intensive livestock industries	26/07/2012	26/07/2012	30/06/2015	\$185 196
Feedlot Services Australia Pty Ltd (trading as FSA Consulting)	Toowoomba, Qld	Pork greenhouse gas mitigation	Pork	26/07/2012	21/08/2012	1/06/2015	\$673 625
Feedlot Services Australia Pty Ltd (trading as FSA Consulting)	Toowoomba, Qld	Poultry greenhouse gas mitigation	Poultry	26/07/2012	21/08/2012	1/06/2015	\$464 420
Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation	Toowoomba, Qld	Advancing livestock waste as low emission-high efficiency fertilisers	Livestock	26/07/2012	21/08/2012	1/06/2015	\$996 124
The University of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Mitigating the greenhouse gas potential of Australian soils amended with livestock manure	Livestock	26/07/2012	21/08/2012	1/06/2015	\$655 563
Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	Brisbane, Qld	Coordination of the National Soil Carbon Program / Soil carbon increase through rangeland restoration by facilitating native forest regrowth	Agricultural production	26/07/2012	26/07/2012	30/06/2015	\$1 500 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Canberra, ACT	Environmental plantings for soil carbon sequestration on farms	Environmental plantings	26/07/2012	2/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 000 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Urrbrae, SA	Native perennial vegetation: Building stable soil carbon and farm resilience	Native vegetation	26/07/2012	28/09/2012	01/05/2014	\$350 000
Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Maroochydore, Qld	Soil carbon benefits through reforestation in sub-tropical and tropical Australia	Reforestation	26/07/2012	30/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 677 632
Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre	Crawley, WA	EverCrop® Carbon Plus: Perennial forage plants in cropping systems to manage soil carbon	Grains and livestock	26/07/2012	25/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 000 000
James Cook University	Cairns, Qld	Compost and biochar amendments for increased carbon sequestration, increased soil resilience and decreased greenhouse gas fluxes in tropical agricultural soils	Grains	26/07/2012	31/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 000 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Glen Osmond, SA	An assessment of the carbon sequestration potential of organic soil amendments	Grains	26/07/2012	28/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$802 797
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Glen Osmond, SA	Quantifying temporal variability of soil carbon	Grains	26/07/2012	2/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 000 000

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Filling the Research Gap

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Urrbrae, SA	Improved measurement and understanding of soil carbon and its fractions	Laboratory based	26/07/2012	28/09/2012	01/05/2013	\$150 000
Geo Carbon Services Pty Ltd	Sydney, NSW	A method for efficient and accurate project level soil organic carbon determination using in situ spectrophotometry and advanced spatial analysis	Livestock	26/07/2012	23/08/2012	01/05/2013	\$195 550
Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia	South Perth, WA	Maintenance of soil organic carbon levels supporting grain production systems: The influence of management and environment on carbon and nitrogen turnover	Grains	26/07/2012	21/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 009 884
Department of Primary Industries, Victoria	Hamilton, Vic.	Increasing soil carbon in eastern Australian farming systems: Linking management, nitrogen and productivity	Livestock and grains	26/07/2012	31/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$2 782 312
The University of Adelaide	Glen Osmond, SA	Increasing carbon storage in alkaline sodic soils through improved productivity and greater organic carbon retention	Livestock and grains	26/07/2012	23/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 068 022
New South Wales Department of Primary Industries	Trangie, NSW	Understanding the influence of grazing pressure changes on soil organic carbon in the semi-arid rangelands of western NSW	Livestock	26/07/2012	23/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$316 365
Queensland University of Technology	Brisbane, Qld	The fate of aboveground carbon inputs: A key process that is poorly understood	Grains	26/07/2012	23/08/2012	01/05/2015	\$378 161
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Kingston, ACT	Managing an integrated, data synthesis and modelling research network for reducing nitrous oxide emissions from Australian soils	Agricultural production	2/08/2012	2/08/2012	30/06/2015	\$400 000
The University of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Does increasing soil carbon in sandy soils increase soil nitrous oxide emissions from grain production?	Grains	2/08/2012	7/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$707 221
Queensland University of Technology	Brisbane, Qld	Advanced process level understanding of factors controlling gaseous nitrogen partitioning to reduce nitrous oxide losses from Australian agricultural soils	Laboratory based	2/08/2012	7/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$498 761
Queensland University of Technology	Brisbane, Qld	An integrated assessment of management practices for reducing nitrous oxide emission and improving nitrogen use efficiency for subtropical dairy systems	Dairy	2/08/2012	7/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$500 000

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Filling the Research Gap

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)
Queensland University of Technology	Brisbane, Qld	National coordination of an integrated, data synthesis and modelling network for reducing nitrous oxide emissions from Australian soils	Agricultural production	2/08/2012	7/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 992 259
New South Wales Department of Primary Industries	Tamworth, NSW	Options for reducing nitrous oxide emissions from the NSW dryland grains industry	Grains	2/08/2012	26/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 603 371
The University of Melbourne	Parkville, Vic.	Reducing nitrous oxide emissions from applied nitrogen with nitrification inhibitors: Identification of the key drivers of performance.	Grains, horticulture, dairy and sugarcane	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$500 000
Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation/University of Queensland	Kingaroy, Qld	Quantifying nitrous oxide losses and nitrogen use efficiency in grains cropping systems on clay soils with contrasting soil carbon status and land management.	Grains	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 598 997
The University of Melbourne	Parkville, Vic.	Mitigation of indirect greenhouse gases in intensive agricultural production systems with the use of inhibitors	Dairy and vegetables	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$576 446
Department of Primary Industries, Victoria	Tatura, Vic.	The use of inhibitors to improve nitrogen cycling and reduce nitrous oxide losses from intensively grazed pasture systems	Dairy	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$700 000
Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	Brisbane, Qld	Effective management practices to reduce nitrous oxide emissions from sugarcane soils	Sugarcane	2/08/2012	7/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 000 000
The University of Sydney	Sydney, NSW	Improved carbon and greenhouse gas outcomes through better understanding and management of soils and plant inputs at the farm scale	Grains	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$700 000
Department of Primary Industries, Victoria	Hamilton, Vic.	Improving nitrous oxide abatement in high rainfall cropping systems	Grains	2/08/2012	26/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 415 000
New South Wales Department of Primary Industries	Richmond, NSW	The effect of fertiliser nitrogen breakdown inhibitors and nitrogen rate on greenhouse gas emissions, nitrate leaching and nitrogen use efficiency in intensive dairy pasture systems in hot dry climates	Dairy	2/08/2012	26/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$731 614
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Glen Osmond, SA	Characterising nitrous oxide emissions from nitrification	Laboratory based	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$144 398

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Filling the Research Gap

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)
The University of Newcastle	Callaghan, NSW	Development of a low-emission nitrogen fertiliser based on slow release of ammonium from clay-modified activated charcoal	Laboratory based	2/08/2012	26/09/2012	01/05/2013	\$300 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Griffith, NSW	Assessing opportunities for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from irrigated broad-acre cropping systems in the southern Murray-Darling Basin.	Grains	2/08/2012	12/10/2012	01/05/2015	\$750 000
Meat and Livestock Australia	Fortitude Valley, Qld	Coordination of the National Livestock Methane Program	Livestock	28/06/2012	28/06/2012	30/05/2015	\$1 350 000
New South Wales Department of Primary Industries	Orange, NSW	Genetic technologies to reduce methane emissions from Australian beef cattle	Livestock	28/06/2012	21/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$3 000 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	St Lucia, Qld	Measuring methane in the rumen under different production systems as a predictor of methane emissions	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$353 265
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	St Lucia, Qld	Supplementation with tea saponins and statins to reduce methane emissions from ruminants	Livestock	28/06/2012	20/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$250 000
Department of Primary Industries, Victoria	Warrnambool, Vic.	Enteric methane mitigation strategies through manipulation of feeding systems for ruminant production in Southern Australia	Livestock	28/06/2012	20/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 970 000
Australian Wine Research Institute	Glen Osmond, SA	Understanding methane reducing tannins in enteric fermentation using grape marc as a model tannin source	Livestock	28/06/2012	20/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$500 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	St Lucia, Qld	Impacts of <i>Leucaena</i> plantations on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration in northern Australian cattle production systems	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$750 000
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University	Melbourne, Vic.	Development of gas selective membranes (for intra-ruminal capsules)	Livestock	28/06/2012	21/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$840 000
University of New England	Armidale, NSW	Evaluating and optimisation of GreenFeed Emission Monitoring units for measuring methane emissions from sheep and cattle	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$465 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	St Lucia, Qld	Culture-independent metagenomic approaches for understanding the functional metabolic potential of methanogen communities in ruminant livestock	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$507 494

Question: 215 (continued)

Details of all projects under Round 1 of Filling the Research Gap

Organisation name	Organisation location	Project title	Agricultural commodities	Date contracted	Date commenced	Date due for completion	Contract amount (ex GST)
The University of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Best choice shrub and inter-row species for reducing emissions and emissions intensity	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$500 000
The University of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	The mechanism of antimethanogenic effects of bioactive plants and products on methane production in the rumen	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$250 000
The University of Western Australia	Crawley, WA	Efficient Livestock and Low Emissions (ELLE) from southern grazing systems	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$1 500 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Townsville, Qld	Development of algae based functional foods for reducing enteric methane emissions from cattle	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$500 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	St Lucia, Qld	Comparative analyses of rumen microbiomes to mitigate ruminant methane and improve feed utilization.	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$508 878
University of New England	Armidale, NSW	Strategic science to develop dietary nitrate and defaunation as mitigation methodologies for grazing ruminants	Livestock	28/06/2012	24/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$400 000
Ridley AgriProducts Pty Ltd	Pakenham, Vic.	Practical and sustainable considerations for the mitigation of methane emissions in the northern Australian beef herd using nitrate supplements	Livestock	28/06/2012	20/09/2012	01/05/2015	\$200 000
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Canberra, ACT	Facilitation of improvement in systems modelling capacity for Carbon Farming Futures	Livestock and grains	15/06/2012	15/06/2012	01/05/2015	\$629 816
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Canberra, ACT	Potential soil carbon sequestration in Australian grain regions and its impact on soil productivity and greenhouse gas emissions	Grains	15/06/2012	15/06/2012	01/06/2015	\$639 283
The University of Melbourne	Parkville, Vic.	Whole farm systems analysis of greenhouse gas abatement options for the southern Australian grazing industries	Southern livestock industries	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	15/06/2015	\$537 902

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Question: 216

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Surveys of common practice

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

What activities will ABS undertake to determine “common practice”?

Is this a purely office based assessment?

Is there any on site verification of practices?

What is the definition of “common”?

Answer:

The Australian Government has commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to design and undertake a biennial land management practice survey. This is a direct survey of approximately 50,000 agricultural businesses across Australia and will provide data necessary for the common practice assessments being carried out by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) to assess additionality under the Carbon Farming Initiative.

The ABS ensures the quality of all their data through the ‘ABS Data Quality Framework’. This framework ensures a broad and inclusive approach to quality control and covers the seven dimensions of institutional environment, relevance, timeliness, accuracy, coherence, interpretability and accessibility.

On 15 August 2012, ABARES released a technical paper outlining its proposed common practice framework (http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aac/9aacm/cfcdfd9abcm00320120815/CrbnFrmInitPrp sdCmmnPracFramAssesAdd_v1.0.0.pdf). Under this framework, an activity is considered common practice when it reaches what is deemed the ‘take-off point’. This is the point at which an activity is being rapidly adopted and becoming widespread in a comparable industry and/or region. In many cases, this point appears to occur at around 20 per cent adoption.

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Question: 217

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division
Topic: Rural Financial Counselling Service Program
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

What are the trends in demands for Rural Financial Counselling Services?

Has the demand gone up in Tasmania and if so in which regions?

What do you attribute this to?

Answer:

It is difficult to determine common trends for the demand for Rural Financial Counselling Services (RFCS). Each of the 14 RFCS service providers deals with issues unique to their geographic location, climate, and local enterprise types, as well as other industry specific and nation-wide conditions (e.g. water reform outcomes, commodity prices, value of the Australian dollar, access to finance etc).

While a regional breakdown is not available, total RFCS client numbers for Tasmania are shown in the table below. The Tasmanian agricultural sector is experiencing pressures commonly being felt nationally (eg increased bank activity, lower commodity prices), as well factors unique to some Tasmanian industries (eg reduced supply contracts and declining local markets for vegetable and poppies). Client numbers can vary significantly with Rural Financial Counsellor availability, the complexity of client needs and the types of government assistance available (eg income support).

Year	Total Clients Assisted
2008/09	300
2009/10	278
2010/11	195
2011/12	139
2012/13	103 (as at 01/09/12)
Total	1,015

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Question: 218

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: **Illegal Logging Program**

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

How much of the \$1 million appropriated to DAFF in 2008-09 was returned to revenue?

Answer:

As previously answered in May budget estimates, Question 238 provided a summary table of funded projects undertaken from 2008–09 to 2009–10 totalling \$792 561.00 to support the illegal logging policy.

Unspent money from the \$1 million appropriation was returned to revenue.

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Question: 219

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Carbon Tax

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Does the department believe that farmers are price takers and have limited market power?

Does the department have any evidence to support farmers and agricultural industry being able to pass the extra costs imposed on them through the Carbon Tax such as increased electricity costs, refrigerants, up the supply chain?

If so, what is that evidence?

Does the department have any evidence to support farmers and agricultural industry not being able to pass the extra costs imposed on them through the Carbon Tax such as increased electricity costs, refrigerants, up the supply chain?

If so, what is that evidence?

Did the Prime Minister or Minister Combet get advice from the department before they publicly stated that farmers will be able to pass these costs onto consumers?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is aware that farmers are under input price pressures and face a number of challenges such as the impact of a high Australian dollar on exports and a tough domestic retail environment.

The potential for farmers and agricultural industries to pass on costs is determined by a range of complex factors which can vary depending on the industry. These include but are not limited to: elasticity of demand by final consumers in international and domestic markets; market structure of the industry; the international competitiveness of Australian production on world markets; and the ability of farmers and agricultural industries to absorb increases in costs and remain profitable.

DAFF relies on research and modelling carried out by industry, government, academic institutions and independent research organisations when considering complex economic factors and how they relate to policy implementation. Importantly, evidential sources can vary significantly between industries in relation to passing on costs.

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Question: 219 (continued)

DAFF relies on the same evidence as it does when assessing the ability of farm business and agricultural industries to pass on costs.

N/A

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency work closely with the department on a range of issues, including modelling the impact of the carbon price on farm businesses.

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Question: 236

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Tasmanian forestry contractors

Proof Hansard page: written

Senator MILNE asked:

1. Are there any Tasmanian forestry contractors or other businesses who received funding under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement and who also accepted an exit package under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement? If so, please provide details of the businesses, the relevant sums of money, and the dates of receipt.
2. Are there any Tasmanian forestry contractors or other businesses who received funding under the Tasmanian Forest Contractors Financial Support Program and who also accepted an exit package under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement? If so, please provide details of the business, the relevant sums of money, and the dates of receipt.

Answer:

1. Yes. The business entities which received grants under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) and which received exit grants under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement Contractors Voluntary Exit Grants Program (IGACEP) are listed below. As TCFA payments were made over multiple milestones the year of the final milestone payment has been provided.

Business	TCFA grant payment (\$) (GST exclusive)	Year paid	IGACEP grant payment (\$) (GST exclusive)	Year paid
Trustee for Aprin Logging Trust	630 259.50	2008	2 286 900.00	2012
G&W Harvesting	501 084.60	2008	612 000.00	2012
DM & SJ Iles	347 887.20	2007	571 792.20	2012
Howells Logging Pty Ltd	212 225.00	2008	1 415 000.00	2012
Chatwin Logging Pty Ltd	212 903.42	2007	73 195.50	2012
Saunders Logging Pty Ltd	761 949.73	2008	442 591.80	2012
Riella Pty Ltd	209 168.78	2007	1 000 000.00	2012
Wildcat Contracting Pty Ltd	49 729.84	2007	1 200 000.00	2012
Kevin Morgan Pty Ltd	677 328.60	2008	3 000 000.00	2012

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2. Yes. The business entities which received grants under the Tasmanian Forest Contractors Financial Support Program (TFCFSP) and which received exit grants under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement Contractors Voluntary Exit Grants Program (IGACEP) are listed below. The Tasmanian Forest Contractors Financial Support Program (TFCFSP) was administered by the Tasmanian Government. DAFF is therefore unable to provide the date of payment. The information provided on TFCFSP grantees and grant amounts paid has been taken from the TFCFSP final report available on the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources web site via the following link:
http://www.dier.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/61788/Final_Report_to_DAFF.pdf

Business	TFCFSP grant paid (\$) (GST exclusive)	IGACEP grant paid (\$) (GST exclusive)	Year Paid
Arbre Pty Ltd	256 304	1 252 553.05	2012
D M and S J Iles Pty Ltd	79 198	571 792.20	2012
Dave Wagner Pty Ltd	300 000	2 113 012.99	2012
DJ & SM Scott Pty Ltd	55 085	1 730 000.00	2012
EA Triffett and Son Pty Ltd	162 282	1 500 000.00	2012
Gillie Harvesting Pty Ltd	37 585	825 000.00	2012
Harback Logging Pty Ltd	123 582	1 230 000.00	2012
Heybridge Enterprises Pty Ltd	21 374	1 700 000.00	2012
Highlander Operations Pty Ltd	31 587	610 500.00	2012
Howell Logging Pty Ltd	113 785	1 415 000.00	2012
MV & DM Jordan trading as Jordan Brothers	144 707	551 418.00	2012
Kevin Morgan Pty Ltd	300 000	3 000 000.00	2012
KG & KJ Marsh	24 969	175 000.00	2012
KJ and SM Williams Pty Ltd	100 000	1 974 255.85	2012
KJ Padgett and Co Pty Ltd	100 000	825 000.00	2012
Neville Wray and Co Pty Ltd	47 144	187 500.00	2012
Oakley Logging Pty Ltd	78 364	650 000.00	2012
P and J Stone Pty Ltd	45 569	122 543.40	2012
Radfords Logging Enterprises Pty Ltd	14 150	250 000.00	2012
Red Roo Contractors	128 423	900 000.00	2012
Riella Pty Ltd	30 016	1 000 000.00	2012
Rodane Pty Ltd	165 551	840 000.00	2012
Samjack Pty Ltd	100 000	2 000 000.00	2012
Saunders Logging Pty Ltd	158 592	442 591.80	2012
T & D Contract Harvesting Pty Ltd	21 301	470 000.00	2012
Tas Timber and Transport Pty Ltd	135 880	796 250.00	2012

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Tasmanian Timber Harvesting Co Pty Ltd	271 015	729 829.80	2012
WB & BP Triffett Logging Pty Ltd	105 515	984 000.00	2012
Whatley Haulage Pty Ltd	100 000	868 513.00	2012
Wildcat Contracting Pty Ltd	29 621	1 200 000.00	2012
Woodland Management Pty Ltd	79 233	115 385.20	2012

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Question: 286

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: WA Pilot—Annual report

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator MCKENZIE asked:

Page 5 of the DAFF Annual Report says that one of the ways in which DAFF is helping to tackle climate change is through providing direct financial assistance to rural households facing hardship.

How does providing direct financial assistance to rural households facing hardship tackle climate change?

Answer:

The Transitional Farm Family Payment assists farm families who are experiencing financial difficulty to manage the impacts of climate change variability and market fluctuations, regardless of their location.

Transitional Farm Family Payment recipients must complete mutual obligations and are individually case managed by Rural Financial Counsellors to improve their long-term financial security and ability to adapt to challenges such as climate change.

The Transitional Farm Family Payment also includes a clean energy component to assist payment recipients to meet the impacts of carbon pricing on living expenses.

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Question: 287

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. Under what program was the Sawmill biomass fuel study project funded? What were the conditions of the grant?
2. Were applications sought, if so by what means? Were they advertised in the media? Solicited from the industry? On what date?
3. How much was SEFE granted? On what date?
4. When was the report completed?
5. When was the report received by the department?
6. Was the report made public? If not, why not?
7. When will the report be made public?

Answer:

1. Please refer to the answer QoN 53 Climate Change Division from the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing in October 2012.
2. Applications were sought through advertisements in national and major state newspapers on 11 July 2009.
3. \$66 467.00 (GST exclusive), 8 June 2010
4. 6 July 2011
5. 6 July 2011
6. Final reports to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) under the Forest Industries Climate Change Research Fund address and fulfil the milestones and performance indicators for the department's purposes. The research outputs in some cases are made publically available through journal articles and other communications products that grantees have published after their final reports are provided to DAFF. A summary of the research outputs is available on the department's website.
7. Please refer to the answer QoN 54 Climate Change Division from the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing in October 2012.

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Question: 288

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Sawmill biomass fuel study

Proof Hansard page: written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. Was any federal funding provided to Timber Communities Australia in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012? Please detail amounts.
2. Are there any export controls over the export of wood pellets made from native forest wood, for whole logs or woodchips destined to be burned for electricity?
3. What are the current guidelines for each federal Government Renewable Energy program in relation to native forest biomass? What is the definition used in each instance.
4. What grants or other payments were made to the Australia Forest Products Association (AFPA) or its predecessor, the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) in 2009, 2010 and 2011, 2012. Under what program was each grant made. What were the conditions or guidelines attached to each grant.
5. What is the total amount of the Diesel Fuel Rebate claimed by the logging industry in each of the past 4 years by RFA region?

Answer:

1. In July 2009 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry contributed \$94 000 (excluding GST) to Timber Communities Australia to help it establish a Timber Community and Forest Industry Bushfire Recovery and Rebuilding Centre in Healesville, Victoria.
2. The *Export Control Act 1982*, and the regulations under this Act, requires an export licence from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for 2 tonnes or more of, woodchips, wood in the round which is intended to undergo further processing following export or wood with a cross sectional area of 225 square centimetres or greater which is intended to undergo further processing following export.
3. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has no current renewable energy programs. The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism has portfolio responsibility for energy.,
4. From 2009 to 2010 the department provided AFPA with \$51 720 (GST exclusive) under the Australia-China Agricultural Technical Cooperation Programme to carry out a benchmarking study between China's draft forest certification scheme and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes.

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From 2009 to 2012 the department provided AFPA with \$220,875 (GST exclusive) for a FarmReady Industry Grant. The program guidelines are available from the department's website – www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/australias-farming-future/farmready/farmready_industry_grants2/industry_grants_guidelines.

From 2010 to 2011 the department provided NAFI with \$16 740 (GST exclusive) under the now closed Promoting Australian Produce program. The program guidelines are available from the department's website - www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/australian-produce.

In March 2011 the department provided NAFI with \$10 000 (GST exclusive) in sponsorship for a dinner launching the International Year of Forests held at Parliament House on 21 March 2011. Around 290 people attended.

The department is not aware of other grants or payments that have been made to AFPA or NAFI.

5. The Australian Tax Office has responsibility for taxation issues including the fuel tax credits scheme.

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Question: 289

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: Compliance with the WA Regional Forest Agreement

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Page 6 of DAFF's Annual Report 2011-12 states: 'We continued to enable a productive and sustainable Australian forestry industry: working on the review and implementation of Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania...'

Questions:

1. Does the Department monitor whether the West Australian government complies with its legally binding obligations contained in Clause 95 of the West Australian RFA?
 - a. If yes to (2), how?
 - b. If no to (2), why?
2. If the Department finds that the WA government is in breach of its obligations under the RFA, what actions will the Department take to ensure implementation?
3. What money has been allocated in the 2012-2013 budget to the implementation of the West Australian RFA?
4. Clauses 34 and 36 of the RFA require the Commonwealth to conduct reviews and reports on WA's performance against the milestones and commitments made in the RFA and the State's FMP. I note that the Department's website contains only one such report, for the year 2000. Page 76 of the Department's Annual Report 2011 – 2012 states: 'We continued to work with the Western Australian Government on reviewing the first and second five-yearly periods of the South-West Forests Region RFA.' I ask:
 - a) When will these reviews and reports be completed?
 - b) When will the reports be made publicly available?
5. The RFA is scheduled for review 15 years after the date of signing, which is in 2014. I ask:
 - a) What resources have been allocated to this review?
 - b) Who will be conducting it?
 - c) What community consultation is planned in the process?
6. Page 6 of the Department's Annual Report 2011 – 2012 states that 'the target for the discussion of RFA renewal processes with the states was not met. Governments have yet to formally initiate the third five-yearly RFA reviews, which are the precursor to the renewal process.' I ask: Will the Department ensure the current RFA is complied with before undertaking the renewal process?
7. How does the Minister ensure that the values and obligations of the EPBC Act are upheld in the areas under the RFA?

1 Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of WA, 1999, p. 12.

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) monitors compliance with issues identified under Clause 95 of the Western Australian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) through the five-yearly reviews/report.

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Question: 289 (continued)

- 1 a. The information provided under Clauses 42, 70 and 87 (and any relevant Appendices) within the five-yearly report on performance will provide details of the Western Australian Government's compliance with Clause 95.
2. The Australian Government would be able to activate the relevant clauses under the Dispute Resolution section of the Western Australian RFA.
3. There is no direct allocation for undertaking RFA reviews. The costs associated with undertaking RFA reviews are drawn from departmental funds within DAFF.
4. a) Reporting on progress with implementation of the Western Australian RFA occurred, in accordance with Clause 34, through statements in Western Australian agency annual reports by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the Forest Products Commission (FPC).
A Scoping Agreement for the combined first and second five-yearly review on performance of the Western Australian RFA is currently being finalised and it is expected that the combined first and second five-yearly review report on performance will be released early in 2013.

b) The agencies' annual reports are available on the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) web site for the then CALM reports as well as the FPC web site. The combined first and second five-yearly review report on performance is expected to be publicly available through a public consultation process in early 2013.
5. a) DAFF, as the lead Australian Government agency will adequately resource the third five-yearly review process at the appropriate time.

b) A reviewer for the third five-yearly review process will be jointly appointed by the parties at the appropriate time.

c) As with all RFA reviews that have been undertaken to date, the review report on performance will be made publicly available to allow for public submissions.
6. Clause 6 of the Western Australian RFA states the process for extending the Agreement for a further period will be agreed by the parties as part of the fifteen year review set out in clause 36. The completion of the fifteen year review will require demonstration of performance against milestones and commitments contained within the Western Australian RFA.
7. The Western Australian RFA contains clauses that outline the requirements for Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management, Threatened Flora and Fauna and the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System. These clauses are utilised to deliver equivalent values and obligations to that of the EPBC Act. These clauses will be reported against in the combined first and second five-yearly review report on performance that is expected to be released in early 2013.

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Question: 293

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: WA Pilot—Farm Exit Grants

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator McKENZIE asked:

Farm Exit Grants were intended to provide support for farmers wishing to leave their farm, but the program was severely underfunded and was suspended after only 5 weeks.

The government later announced some farmers may be eligible for Act of Grace payments having sold their farms and finding themselves without the promised government support.

How many people applied for an Act of Grace payment?

How many have received a payment?

How many are still waiting?

Answer:

As at 31 October 2012:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has been asked by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD) to provide submissions on 29 act of grace claims relating to the closure of the Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant program.

DoFD has granted payment to 18 of the 29 act of grace claims; 17 of these have now received payment.

There are 10 act of grace claims where the outcome is still to be determined.

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Question: 294

Division/Agency: Climate Change Division

Topic: WA Pilot—Farm Exit Grants

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator McKENZIE asked:

I have a constituent who made his Act of Grace payment application on December 19 last year. He was afforded extensions on his application but is still waiting.

How much longer can he expect to wait, it's almost been a year?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) cannot comment on the details of individual act of grace claims; however, some individual cases have involved very complex assessments of their circumstances.

The process of preparing submissions for act of grace claims involves a detailed assessment of claimant circumstances by DAFF, the Department of Human Services and then by the Department of Finance and Deregulation before a decision is made by the Special Minister of State (the decision maker in the case of Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant closure-related act of grace claims).

Applicant can check on the status of their act of grace claim by contacting the Department of Finance and Deregulation's Special Financial Claims area on 1800 227 572 or sfc@finance.gov.au