

## Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

Answers to questions on notice

### Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

**Inquiry:** Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Amendment (Agriculture, Water and the Environment Measures No. 1) Regulations 2021 [F2021L00288]

**Question No:** IQ21-000072

**Hearing Date:** 02 August 2021

**Division/Agency:** Water Division

**Topic:** Notification of the grants program to Senators or MPs

**Hansard Page:** 1-2

**Question Date:** 02 August 2021

**Question Type:** Spoken

#### Senator Sterle asked:

Senator STERLE: Advertisements and email. Were MPs or senators notified of this grants program?

Dr Derham: That's a matter for the minister's office. All I am aware of is that we had the initiative to seek public input around the design of the program, and we have done that in good faith.

Senator STERLE: Doctor, just to make that clear for me—I don't play games—when I ask 'were they notified' do you know whether they were or weren't?

Dr Derham: I'm unaware.

Senator STERLE: Okay. That's a lot easier. Was anyone else in the department aware? Are you on your own?

Dr Derham: I'm on my own, Senator. I cannot answer that question. I'm not aware.

Senator STERLE: I'll you what I'll ask you to do—I don't do this very often, so I'm making myself vomit here. I'll ask you to take that on notice. I hate anything being taken on notice. If you could go back to your department and ask if anyone else through the department would be able to tell me if senators or MPs were notified of the grants program.

Dr Derham: I'm happy to take that on notice.

Senator STERLE: Thank you. While you're at it, and I'm happy to put this on notice if I have to too, could you tell me if the MPs or senators were provided with any materials to notify their community about the grants program? Is that one to be taken on notice as well?

Dr Derham: I can advise that some media material was provided to some ministers as part of promoting that community feedback, but I can provide that information to you on notice.

Senator STERLE: That was to ministers?

Dr Derham: Yes. For example, Damian Drum provided some media releases that helped encourage the community to get involved in this particular program and its design.

Senator STERLE: You must forgive my ignorance here: is Mr Drum a minister?

Dr Derham: Not currently, Senator.

Senator STERLE: Okay. So am I right to assume that there were other MPs or senators who were also advised or provided with media material?

Dr Derham: We'll certainly provide that detail to you on notice, Senator, as requested.

...

Senator STERLE: Alright. Dr Derham, if there were senators, members or ministers provided with media materials or whatever for notifying the community, could you provide who and on what dates they were notified, please?

Dr Derham: Certainly.

**Answer:**

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is aware of the following media releases issued by federal Members of Parliament in relation to the Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program:

<b>Date of media release</b>	<b>Issuers of media release</b>	<b>Title and link to media release</b>
21 December 2020	The Hon Damian Drum MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Have your say on Murray–Darling community programs</a>
22 December 2020	Tony Pasin MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Have your say on the design of community grants programs</a>
2 March 2021	The Hon Keith Pitt MP The Hon Sussan Ley MP Senator Perin Davey	<a href="#">Joint media release: Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
2 March 2021	Senator Perin Davey The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
2 March 2021	The Hon Damian Drum MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">\$20 million Healthy Rivers Program now flowing</a>
2 March 2021	Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
2 March 2021	Tony Pasin MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
3 March 2021	The Hon Mark Coulton MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
3 March 2021	The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Communities, jobs at the heart of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan</a>
10 March 2021	The Hon David Littleproud MP	<a href="#">Grants to improve the health of rivers and wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin</a>
28 July 2021	The Hon Mark Coulton MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Healthy Rivers grants making a splash in the Parkes electorate</a>
28 July 2021	Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Funding flowing for Basin rivers and wetlands</a>
29 July 2021	The Hon Sussan Ley MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Making healthier rivers across Farrer</a>
29 July 2021	Tony Pasin MP The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">South Australian Murray benefiting from Coalition investment</a>
30 July 2021	Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC The Hon Keith Pitt MP	<a href="#">Healthy Rivers Program delivers for Mayo communities</a>