

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Inquiry Question on Notice

Select Committee on the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

IQ24-000097

Division/Agency: DIV - Data Research Strategy and Net Zero

Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 52-53 (13 November 2024)

Topic: Date TFES data was last provided to the Committee

Nick McKim asked:

Senator McKIM: I can list a basket of timber industry players, primarily headed up by Western Junction Sawmill, which I might add is owned by Heywood mills in Victoria, which is half owned by the Victorian government. From 2019 to 2023—this is based on the data that's been provided to the committee—Western Junction received just under \$8 million from TFES, but in 2023 they received \$5.5 million of that \$8 million. From 2019 to 2023, a basket of timber industry players in Tasmania over that period—by the way, these don't include people such as Norske Skog, who are genuine manufacturers, in my view, of timber products—who in the main are likely to be whole-log exporters of essentially unprocessed wood that bizarrely is categorised as 'processed' under the ministerial direction received over \$20 million. The same people in 2023 received \$10 million of that \$20 million. Half of the 4.5-year payments were in the last 12 months of that period. Do you have any more up-to-date data than the 2023 year? Why is there such a lag?

Mr Smurthwaite: In terms of the information we get from Services Australia, we get two dumps a year six months apart. Because we have been reporting to you and continue to do so about the dates where the product was shipped, there is a time lag because claimants have six months to put in a bid. We would have only recently received our most recent dataset, which would take us to the end of 2023.

Senator McKIM: The most recent one would be the last six months of the 2023 calendar year? Is that right?

Mr Smurthwaite: I believe the most recent data that we have received from Services Australia is in August 2024, which, because of the six-month lag, takes us up to the end of 2023. Yes, that is correct.

Senator McKIM: The end of the 2023 calendar year?

Mr Smurthwaite: That's correct.

Senator McKIM: We're not talking about financial years; we're talking about calendar years?

Mr Smurthwaite: Correct. To the end of 2023 calendar year, noting there are some claims already in there that have got in ahead of the six months, but it's in no way a full dataset.

Senator McKIM: Has that latest tranche of data been provided to this committee?

Ms Scott: We can check through our records here and perhaps come back to you.

Mr McAuley: I believe there has been data provided from that August data release. We would probably have to go back and check whether all of the ones that have been provided are from that release or how far that goes back.

Answer:

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Inquiry Question on Notice

Select Committee on the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

All figures provided to the Committee incorporated the August 2024 update to the data.