

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: 1.8 Australian Government Disaster Financial Support Payments

Question No. SBE16/104

Senator Urquhart asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2016:

Regarding flood remediation and repair following on from the exchange with Mr Costello in Environment and Communications Estimates (p.93 of Hansard and pasted below).

- After the mid-year floods in Tasmania, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull specifically promised extra federal support for Tasmanian farmers affected by the floods. Could you advise whether the Prime Minister or his office requested that the Department provide extra resources or support to Tasmanian farmers? Could you advise whether the Minister requested that the Department provide extra resources or support to Tasmanian farmers? If yes, can you outline the details of the request(s), what the Department did to accommodate them, and the cost?
- In the recent Environment Estimates hearing, Mr Costello said that Tasmanian regional NRM bodies used 'some other funding' to 'run workshops and other things on rehabilitation' out of disaster recovery funds. Did any extra funding provided to Tasmanian NRM bodies after the mid-year floods come from your department? If yes, could you provide details of the projects, the date they approved and the amount contributed by the department?
- Has the Tasmanian state government made representations to the Minister or the Department about disaster repair and remediation and support for farmers after the mid-year floods in Tasmania?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

States and territories have primary responsibility for responding to natural disasters, including determining the level and type of relief and recovery assistance provided to affected communities.

The Australian Government provides support to states following a natural disaster through the jointly-funded Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

In recognition of the impact of the June 2016 Tasmanian floods, a range of relief and recovery assistance measures have been made available to the disaster affected communities. These measures include the Primary Producer Clean-Up Grants of up to \$10,000 for eligible primary producers to undertake clean-up and restoration activities including removing debris, disposing of dead livestock, salvaging crops, grain and feed, and repairing plant and equipment. These grants were approved by the Prime Minister following a request from the Tasmanian Premier, Mr Will Hodgman MP.

These grants were on top of assistance announced immediately following the floods, including NDRRA assistance for individuals, councils and local businesses to assist with clean-up efforts and to restore damaged infrastructure; and the Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Allowance, which provides income assistance to eligible employees, small businesses and primary producers.

The department has not provided any funding to Tasmania NRM bodies following the flood event.

The Tasmanian Premier, Mr Will Hodgman MP, further requested exceptional circumstances funding assistance under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. The Prime Minister agreed to contribute up to \$6.84 million in additional funding to help restore national parks and reserves, provide access to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and stabilise the Beaconsfield Hart Shaft.