

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates, 5 May 2016
Agriculture and Water Resources Portfolio

Senate No.	Departmental No.	Program/ Division or Agency	Senator	Broad topic	Question	Proof Hansard page & hearing date or Written question	Date received
1	RIRDC01	RIRDC	Cameron	RIRDC Relocation Costs	<p>Mr Harvey: Not at this point in time. We have located premises and we are in negotiations with the university.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: So there is no contract signed; there are no staff who have moved?</p> <p>Mr Harvey: Correct.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: We will be in caretaker mode next week. What are your plans for consulting with the opposition on this issue?</p> <p>Prof. Stehlik: We will be discussing that at the board meeting next week. I will just make it clear that our contract on the leased premises we hold in Canberra expires at the end of September.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: What is the standing cost of the lease? You can take that on notice</p> <p>Prof. Stehlik: Yes, we can take that on notice.</p>	7	28/09/2016

2	GRDC01	GRDC	Heffernan	GRDC Relocation Costs	<p>Dr Hone: The situation is the same as at the last estimates. We have established the Adelaide office. We have appointed the six people in Adelaide. We have inducted the six people in Adelaide. In Canberra we continue to have an office.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Have you got the contracts signed?</p> <p>Dr Hone: The contract is signed with the lease in Adelaide. The launch of the Adelaide office has occurred.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: So that is all underway.</p> <p>CHAIR: Can I go back a minute? Is the person who owns the building an independent or industry super fund?</p> <p>Ms Howitt: I am not sure of the details.</p> <p>CHAIR: Can you find that out?</p> <p>Ms Howitt: Sure.</p>	8	28/09/2016
3	GRDC02	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Thank you. Who decided that Mr Jones and Mr Bartlett were of equal value?</p> <p>Ms Lord: In what regard?</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: In terms of Mr Jones getting paid \$60,000 for three events and Mr Bartlett receiving \$20,000 for one event.</p> <p>Ms Lord: I would have to take it on notice and actually give you a breakdown of all the costs.</p>	10	28/09/2016

4	GRDC03	Grains Research and Development Corporation	Cameron	Payment to Fairfax Media	<p>Senator CAMERON: If you would just stop talking for a minute—I am asking the questions. You are the professional. You negotiated the package. But you cannot tell us why Alan Jones was valued the same as Mr Bartlett. You cannot tell me that now?</p> <p>Senator EDWARDS: We are getting to the big issues here this morning.</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I think we had already established that payment was made to Fairfax Media.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: That is not what you said in questions on notice.</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I do not know that we would actually presume to understand how Fairfax might construct its accounts. If you would like us to take that on notice, we are more than happy to do so.</p>	11	28/09/2016
5	GRDC04	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Ms Lord: We had in the order of 262 stakeholders, not including staff and support people. Consequently, we also produced four podcasts of the event and those have been downloaded and listened to 1,300 times so far. So there have been approximately 1,500 people at this point. But, as I said, we are only at the very early stages—</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Downloading is not what I have asked you. I asked how many people attended the events. That is 262.</p> <p>Ms Lord: Yes, 262.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How many were actually growers?</p>	11	28/09/2016

					<p>Ms Lord: Two hundred and sixty two is the number, which is not staff and support.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How many were growers?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I would have to take that on notice and get a breakdown. I have a list of the 262, but some wear dual hats. some are growers, some are researchers, some are industry and some are representatives. There is quite a mix.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Do you have that with you?</p> <p>Ms Lord: No, I do not. I would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator STERLE: Has someone behind you got it? I cannot believe that you have come to Senate estimates and you cannot provide basic information such as this.</p>		
6	GRDC05	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Ms Lord: May I answer that question? I just alluded before to the case studies that we put together on key research outcomes. Five thousand one hundred people over a seven-week period have already engaged with the top two; the first one was No Till Pays Bills, and the second one was focused on the grains industry's sustainability. Both of these case studies are trying to give growers insights and to raise awareness of things that they can do to increase their profitability, and that is core to GRDC's business. We are always looking for innovative and different ways to get our message across, and we really felt that someone who had a reach at this level, with this type of interest in the</p>	12-13	28/09/2016

					<p>agriculture sector, would be a good way to do that. I think it would be too early to give you final results. We are still in the process of doing these. We are promoting this through our online channels, through Facebook and through our own accounts, so it would be too early to give you a full evaluation, but early signs tell us—5,100 people viewing a case study is a very significant number in our industry.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you provide all of your internal documentation in relation to the development of this program—all memos and all file notes in relation to it?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I would be happy to provide them on notice.</p>		
7	GRDC06	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Were the radio ads running in Canberra?</p> <p>Ms Lord: They were running across 56 regional hubs. I will have to check whether they were running in Canberra. I will take it on notice.</p>	13	28/09/2016
8	GRDC07	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Can you then provide the actual transcript of the ads that went out?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I would be happy to take that on notice.</p>	13	28/09/2016
9	GRDC08	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Could you then specifically indicate to me, by a separate question on notice, how these ads specifically gave an enticement, basically, to young people in the western suburbs of</p>	13	28/09/2016

					Sydney to get a job in the grain industry? Because that is what you said they would do. I would like to know exactly where that comes.		
10		GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: How many GRDC board members and staff attended each roadshow?</p> <p>Ms Lord: We had a board director speak on each of the panels, except for the Orange panel, which we tied into an actual board meeting, because we were doing a regional board meeting in Dubbo and Orange, so the entire board attended that event.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How many are on the board?</p> <p>Ms Lord: Eight board directors.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How many staff attended?</p> <p>Ms Lord: Myself. I was at every event. At two events, I had one other communications person with me.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you provide details of the costs for staff and board members to stay at these functions? Can you provide itemised accounts for accommodation, for food and any other costs associated with the board members and the staff members attending these roadshows? Were all flights and accommodation paid for, for the Perth seminar?</p>	14	28/09/2016
11	GRDC09	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Have you ever paid for his attendance at a Liberal Party fundraiser?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I would have to take that on notice.</p>	15	28/09/2016

12	GRDC10	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Relocation Costs	<p>Senator CAMERON: You will be getting to prayers soon. Six months is a long time. This is a direct cost to the organisation with no sign that that can be fixed. Were there any discussions with the minister's office about this exact issue prior to the minister directing you that you should take up this hub-and-spoke approach?</p> <p>Ms Howitt: Not to my knowledge.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Mr Thomas?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: We would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Surely you would remember. Did you raise with the minister the cost of having this office space left lying vacant?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I was not the managing director at the time.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: It does not matter whether you were. I am talking about you as an organisation. Have you got any file notes that you have raised this with the minister?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I would have to take it on notice.</p>	18-19	28/09/2016
13	GRDC11	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Relocation Costs	<p>Senator CAMERON: Okay, Mr Thomas, could you take on notice whether your organisation raised this issue of vacant office space being a dead weight in terms of a financial cost on the organisation as a result of Minister Joyce making this decision?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: Certainly we will look into whether those discussions were held.</p>	19	28/09/2016

14	GRDC12	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Any file notes between you and the minister's office on these issues, telephone calls or any correspondence on the issue would be welcome. Have there been any complaints to the organisation in relation to the roadshows?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I am aware that there are some growers and some members of the public who do not agree with the approach that was taken.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: I am sure that that granny in Greystanes would want to listen to something other than your research, but she maybe was not one of them. Who has complained?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I do not have that with me. I would have to take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: You cannot give me any idea? You said 'some of the growers'. You must know something about it.</p> <p>Mr Thomas: What I said was that there were a range of people in the regional areas. That could include growers. It could include advisers.</p>	19	28/09/2016
15	GRDC13	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Was there a specific fee to Alan Jones?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I will happily take that on notice. I have provided the costings from the first event. Alan has publicly said that he has done the event and he did not accept a fee, but I would have to take that on notice and ask Fairfax for that.</p>	19	28/09/2016

16	GRDC14	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: I would not expect Alan Jones to be—well, \$2,000? It depends on what the caviar costs. I am not sure, but who knows? What is the \$1,166 incidental cost?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I would have to take it on notice. I would assume it covered things like printed materials, projectors—</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: No, I do not want an assumption.</p> <p>Ms Lord: I will take it on notice and provide it to you.</p>	20	28/09/2016
17	APD01	Agricultural Policy	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Minister, does the minister support these roadshows and this expenditure of public money?</p> <p>Senator Ruston: I would have to take that on notice, Senator. I have not had a discussion with Minister Joyce on this.</p>	20	28/09/2016
18	GRDC15	GRDC	Cameron	GRDC Awareness Campaign	<p>Senator CAMERON: Ms Lord, could you provide details of the attendance at the food forum?</p> <p>Ms Lord: All attendees?</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Yes, all attendees. Could you indicate whether they were growers and what classification of people were in attendance, the numbers and the cost-benefit analysis that had been done? Has there been any cost-benefit analysis done in relation to this?</p> <p>Ms Lord: We are in the early stages because the event is obviously one part of that sponsorship and now a lot of the editorial content will come out.</p>	21	28/09/2016

					<p>From our perspective, in terms of guests who attended, we invited some key grower groups, some industry representative organisations, other research and development corporations—so we had a range of guests there as well.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: So could you provide then also that detail I am asking for about who attended? Could you also provide all the papers relating to the business case for this whole program?</p> <p>Ms Lord: I am happy to do that.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: That is the food forum and the advertising. What work was done to develop the business case? Can you provide the business case that said this is what you should do?</p> <p>Ms Lord: Absolutely.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: So all correspondence and all file notes in relation to your business case.</p> <p>Ms Lord: I will be more than happy to.</p>		
19	GRDC16	GRDC	Gallacher	GRDC Relocation Costs	<p>Senator GALLACHER: You have 50 permanent staff and you have 15 contractors so you have 32 square metres per person, which is roughly double the most generous allowance in the public sector of about 12 to 14 metres per person. So your rent is twice what a normal public service department has. Do you accept that?</p> <p>Mr Thomas: I would have to take it on notice to look at all the figures.</p>	21-22	28/09/2016
20	CSG01	Corporate Divisions	Cameron	Staffing Levels	<p>Senator CAMERON: What are these particular increases in staffing levels in relation to the white paper? What are they—what are you doing?</p>	29	28/09/2016

					Ms Evans: I have not got those with me, so I will have to take that on notice.		
21		Outcome One Divisions	Sterle	Backpacker Tax	ACTING CHAIR: What are the average earnings of the backpackers? Do we know? I am sure the industry would have some figures. Ms Freeman: I do not know. I would have to take that on notice.	30	28/09/2016
22	APD02	Outcome One Divisions	Cameron	Backpacker Tax	Senator CAMERON: Can you outline the process of consultation that took place between the minister and the industry before this decision was made? Senator Ruston: I am unaware of the consultation process that took place with the minister and industry. Senator CAMERON: Do you know if there was any consultation? Senator Ruston: I would have to take that on notice and ask the minister. I have only been involved in it since—	33	28/09/2016
23	APD03	Outcome One Divisions	Cameron	Backpacker Tax	Senator CAMERON: So the minister did not give you any instructions. Did you provide any advice to the minister about the implications of this backpacker tax? Ms Freeman: We have provided a range of facts and figures in relation to our knowledge of numbers of visa holders under different categories, for example. So we have been providing information. Senator CAMERON: I am not asking you what	34	28/09/2016

					<p>advice you provided the minister, but when did you first start providing advice to the minister on this issue?</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I would have to take that on notice, but the comment I would make is, obviously, as Senator Sterle commented, employment in the agricultural sector is an ongoing issue, particularly for the horticultural sector. We would provide not infrequently statistics and information to ministers' offices in relation to this. The point I am genuinely trying to make is that we would often provide information of this nature to the office.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: I am not asking what advice you provided, but have you provided advice in relation to the implications of increasing tax on backpackers on the productivity of the industry?</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I would have to take that on notice, but my suspicion is probably, specifically to that question, no.</p>		
24	APD04	Outcome One Divisions	Cameron	Backpacker Tax	<p>Senator CAMERON: I just want to continue on this tax issue. Labor would have supported this on the basis that due diligence would have been done on the decision. We were not in government at the time. The decision was made. We would have expected due diligence to have been done. Senator Ruston, what due diligence did Minister Joyce undertake to ensure that this decision would not disproportionately affect the industry?</p> <p>Senator Ruston: I will have to take that on notice.</p>	38	28/09/2016

25	APD05	Outcome One Divisions	Cameron	Backpacker Tax	<p>Senator CAMERON: Then, Ms Freeman, did you have any discussion with ABARES on the implications for the economic wellbeing of the industry arising from this tax decision?</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan: I think that is the same question we answered a little while ago; I think Ms Freeman said we had provided quite a lot of information to ministers and to various interdepartmental processes on this, over the last—</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: I am not asking about the minister; I am asking about how the department internally dealt with what people are saying is a huge threat to the industry—that is what I am trying to deal with.</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I would have to check on a case-by-case basis; there is engagement with ABS on a regular basis on a range of issues across the divisions and, on this particular one, I would have to take it on notice.</p>	38	28/09/2016
26	APD06	Outcome One Divisions	Siewert	Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Scheme	<p>Senator SIEWERT: Lismore is northern New South Wales. When was that decision made?</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I can actually tell you that.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR: Sorry, Senator Siewert, I still do not understand what that all meant. If you could follow that up for us, please do.</p> <p>Ms Freeman: I would have to take it on notice, but I think the decision was probably made by the minister in January, from my recollection. I beg your pardon; I am getting confused. The minister</p>	46-47	28/09/2016

					announced on 14 April that Southern Cross University would be delivering the program.		
27	APD07	Outcome One Divisions	Sterle	Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Scheme	<p>ACTING CHAIR: I want to come back to you, Ms Freeman: how did this pilot program end up at Southern Cross?</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: The minister asked for it.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR: You mentioned a lot of bureaucratic processes.</p> <p>Ms Freeman: When the program was announced, RIRDC was engaged to do some extensive industry consultation and come up with a program framework. In October last year, the minister asked Mr Hogan to assist him and provide advice on this measure, and Mr Hogan undertook an extensive consultation process of his own. He had provided his report to the minister just prior to Christmas—again, that was all tabled in the QONs—on where he thought Southern Cross University may have merit potentially, and the minister asked us to investigate that.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR: An extensive consultation process.</p>	48	28/09/2016
28		ABARES	Cameron	Climate Change	<p>Ms Schneider: We are doing longer term work. We are doing a piece of work that looks at the links between farm productivity and climate change, and that is looking at the longer term.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you provide details of what exactly that is doing. When is it going to report? Do you know when it is reporting?</p>	58	28/09/2016

					<p>Mr Gooday: It is a work in progress.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How many people are engaged on it?</p> <p>Mr Gooday: There are probably three people engaged on it.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you tell me what the terms of reference are for this project, when the report will be available and any progress on where it is up to.</p> <p>Mr Gooday: Yes, that should not be a problem.</p>		
29		ABARES	Cameron	Climate Change	<p>Senator CAMERON: On notice, could you provide details of your expenditure on climate change associated research within ABARES from 2007 through to now?</p> <p>Ms Schneider: We will take that on notice.</p>	59	28/09/2016