

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 303  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Agency  
**Program:** Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)  
**Topic:** Weather Radar for Western NSW  
**Hansard Page:** n/a  
**Question Date:** 01 November 2016  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Rhiannon, Lee asked:**

The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) has unsuccessfully applied for a weather radar for western NSW a number of times, with a 2013 OROC report detailing the cost of having no weather radar in the region specifically covering the region west of Dubbo.

Given the importance of accurate weather data to rural enterprises, and given the challenges posed by changing weather systems caused by climate change:

- a) What are the specific reasons for not yet funding this important piece of agricultural infrastructure?
- b) What are the plans to ensure full weather radar coverage in the Central West of NSW?
- c) Has the department yet provided detailed feedback to OROC on its submission and why the proposal has not been successful yet? If not, why not?
- d) What are the processes that would allow the OROC to be involved in the forward planning for the siting of a weather radar to provide full coverage of the region?

**Answer:**

- a) The Bureau of Meteorology does not have provision within its appropriation for expansion of its radar network. The Bureau's departmental capital budget is used to replace assets, including radars, that reach end of life and is not intended to fund network expansion.

The Bureau has a range of other observing technologies, including satellites and automatic weather stations, at its disposal to provide real-time weather observations across Australia. It is not economical to provide radar coverage over the entire country.

- b) The Bureau does not have any plans for full weather radar coverage of the Central West of NSW. The area is covered by satellite images every 10 minutes and the public will soon have access to lightning observations in near-real time.
- c) In December 2014, the then Parliamentary Secretary responsible for the Bureau, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, provided a formal response to OROC. The response indicated that there was no funding available for a new radar, but that the Bureau would welcome discussing industry or community funding.
- d) The Bureau welcomes opportunities provided by alternative funding sources including state governments, as recently occurred with the West Australian Government agreement to fund three radars in south-west Western Australia. Bureau officers would be happy to meet with OROC representatives to discuss their requirements and outline available Bureau services.