

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

Group 3

Programs 1.7 and 1.2

Question No. 24

Senator Cameron asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:

Mr Sheehan: At the time of the declaration of AGDRP for the Blue Mountains, we were within the period of 24 hours after the event. The declaration was in relation to those severely affected. The department, on an ongoing basis, then reviewed the situation in the Blue Mountains and is obviously aware of the various criteria that have been used for AGDRP over time and can obviously take that information into account. But, at the time of the declaration, we were within 24 hours of the event, so information in relation to electricity and people's residences was very limited.

Senator CAMERON: In relation to the Victorian and Tasmanian bushfires, these declarations are made fairly quickly. The declarations in Victoria and Tasmania went to this 'moderately affected' situation. Is that correct?

Mr Sheehan: Which fires? Are we referring to historical fires? Tasmania one year ago and Victoria—

Senator CAMERON: I do not know the exact date, but they were the recent Victorian—the last Victorian—bushfires.

Mr Sheehan: With respect to Tasmania, I would have to take on notice the time lines for declarations. I do not have the details of the time line for declaration. In respect of the Victorian fires, there has been activation of the cost-sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and Victoria under what is known as NDRRA—Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. In the time available I should be able to give you details of when that occurred.

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

The most recent bushfires in Tasmania for which the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) was provided were the Dunalley and Lake Repulse bushfires which commenced on 3 January 2013. The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) was initially activated for the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Sorrell, Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay on 6 January 2013. This payment was extended to the district of Ellendale on 11 January 2013 and to the Local Government Area of Central Highlands on 7 March 2013.

Category A and Category B of the jointly-funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) were notified by Tasmania on 5 January 2013 for the affected LGAs of Central Highlands, Circular Head, Derwent Valley, Glamorgan-Spring Bay, Sorell and Tasman.

The AGDRP was not activated for the most recent Victorian bushfires in January and February 2014. The January bushfires commenced on 15 January 2014 and Category A and Category B of the NDRRA were notified by Victoria on 22 January 2014. This assistance was activated for the affected LGAs of Ararat, East Gippsland, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Mildura, Northern Grampians,

Southern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. The February bushfires commenced between 8-9 February 2014 and Categories A and B of the NDRRA were notified by Victoria on 13 February 2014. This assistance was activated for the affected LGAs of Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Greater Shepparton, Hume, Latrobe, Macedon Ranges, Manningham, Mitchell, Moira, Nillumbik, Wellington and Yarra Ranges.