

**Kennedy, Cassandra**

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**From:** Croker, Craig  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 October 2014 6:39 PM  
**To:** Kennedy, Cassandra  
**Subject:** FW: Today's Questions [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Categories:** AS meeting

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**From:** Croker, Craig  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 October 2014 6:34 PM  
**To:** Henderson, Andrew  
**Subject:** RE: Today's Questions [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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**From:** Henderson, Andrew  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 October 2014 6:20 PM  
**To:** Croker, Craig  
**Subject:** RE: Today's Questions [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi mate we are on a strict timeframe to get corrections back and accepted, can you take a look over this for me?  
Corrections I have made are in Red:

Thanks,

Andrew

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Drought

**Mr FITZGIBBON** (Hunter) (14:32): My question is also to the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, it is now eight months since you announced with some fanfare your drought assistance package for farmers. How much has the government actually paid in drought assistance to farming families and how many farming families have benefited from that drought assistance?

**Mr JOYCE** (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (14:32): I thank the member for Hunter for his question. He would be happy to know that Nearly 4,000 applications have been approved for the farm household allowance. This is a substantial amount of money. This means that they are receiving between \$900 and \$1,000 a fortnight. We have actually changed conditions so that we can bring dignity back into these people's lives. We have actually made it happen. You would be happy to know, Madam Speaker, that we approved \$280 million in our drought package and concessional rates of four per cent. We have put money on the table—over \$22 million for other water infrastructure. These are the sorts of real outcomes that we are providing.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr JOYCE:** You would be happy to know that if we had gone with your conditions they would have got hardly anything. It was under your conditions—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Agriculture will resume his seat. The member for Hunter on a point of order.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** I rise on a point of order on relevance. It was a pretty specific question: how much has been paid and how many families have benefited? To put it into context, it would help if the minister told us how many farming families have applied.

**The SPEAKER:** The minister is being relevant to the question. You asked how many had been assisted and about the drought. The Minister for Agriculture has the call.

**Mr JOYCE:** Madam Speaker, I cannot be much more relevant than actually giving the numbers. If he does not accept the numbers, what does he want to accept? I know you are bit light on in that side—

*Dr Chalmers interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rankin has been warned; once more and you will leave.

**Mr JOYCE:** on the numbers department, but I have told you: nearly 4,000 have received the farm household allowance. Once they apply for it, it is approved and they receive it until it is knocked out.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** I rise on a point of order.

**Mr JOYCE:** Straight away, you clown.

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat and withdraw that last comment.

**Mr JOYCE:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter on a point of order other than relevance.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** I did not ask about farm household allowance. We will pursue that in estimates, the minister can be assured about that. And I know he will not like the outcome of that.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** He is still not answering the question, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** You had your point of order on the question of relevance and you know perfectly well you can only have one. The Minister for Agriculture has the call.

**Mr JOYCE:** I am happy to announce that when we arrived in government they had not signed up all of the states and territories, so we actually got the conditions in place for the concessional farm finance package, which they might have started but could never actually finish. We actually got those conditions in place so that we could start getting that money out. We actually approved \$280 million to add to that, so we got \$700 million of available finance. We actually changed the

conditions of the farm household allowance so that we could have a higher net asset test so more people could actually get access to the money. We are happy with the fact that nearly 4,000 applications have been through and if they were also a recipient of the Interim Farm household Allowance you actually get the money until the department decides that you are not allowed to get the money. So you keep on getting the money until such time as, on the application being assessed, they decide if you are not eligible for it. But it is not a case that you apply for the money and then you have to wait for your application to be approved unless it is a new application. You actually get the money straight away. So this is part of a process that is helping us look after the farmers that you left behind.