

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 250

Division/Agency: Water Division

Topic: On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

The Department has contracted a Review of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program from 5 Feb to 30 Jun 2016 at a cost of \$300,000.00.

1. Can you provide information about the process by which this contract was undertaken?
2. Is this an efficient spend of money in an election year?
3. What is the department aiming to achieve with the review?
4. How was a lack of capability within the department determined before outsourcing this review?

Answer:

1. The contract was entered into via an approved panel of providers established by the Australian Government.
2. The programme review is conducted in accordance with the *Public Governance, Accountability and Accountability Act 2013* and helps to ensure value for money in administration of public funding.
3. The department is undertaking an independent financial and governance review of compliance with funding agreements as part of the ongoing management and administration of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program, consistent with relevant funding agreement requirements with the programme delivery partners.
4. The department conducts its own ongoing monitoring of the programme and from time to time seeks independent expert reviews to complement this. In this case the skills needed to undertake the review included accounting and audit capabilities.