Australian Government
Department of Agriculture

Ref:

Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan
Chair
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Heffernan

Having reviewed the transcript of the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing conducted by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 May 2014, the Department of Agriculture would like to make the following corrections.

The first correction relates to Ms Mellors response to a question by Senator Farrell. The relevant dialogue is on page 52 of the Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Ms Mellor: With horses we generally have 80 to 100 chattel stallions and ponies through our facilities every year.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 52 I mistakenly stated that 80 to 100 chattel shuttle stallions and ponies go through our quarantine facilities every year. I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing, it has been drawn to my attention that approximately 450-500 horses go through our quarantine facilities each year.

Ms Mellor: With horses we generally have 450-500 shuttle stallions and ponies through our facilities every year.

The second correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Siewert. The relevant dialogue is on page 70 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: Most of the member terms expired in February and April 2013. A number of other members would have continued to April 2014, May 2014 and one to October 2015.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: Most of the member terms expired in April 2013. One other member would have continued to October 2014, two to October 2015 and one to December 2015.

The third correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Siewert. The relevant dialogue is on page 71 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: The appointment continues to October 2015.

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I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: The appointment continues to October 2014.

The fourth correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Lines. The relevant dialogue is on page 72 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: 6 December 2015—that person resigned on 26 May 2014, and there was one who has not resigned formally whose tenure would have expired on 11 October 2015.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: 6 December 2015—that person resigned on 26 May 2014, and there was one who has not resigned formally whose tenure would have expired on 11 October 2014.

The fifth correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Lines. The relevant dialogue is on page 75 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: Normally we update our websites as soon as we can. As I said, some of these resignations only took place on 23 and 26 May and we only became aware of them late last week. I would expect them to be updated relatively quickly, the next day or so.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: Normally we update our websites as soon as we can. As I said, some of these resignations only took place on 26 May and we only became aware of them late last week. I would expect them to be updated relatively quickly, the next day or so.

The sixth correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Lines. The relevant dialogue is on page 75 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: One of the recent resignations. It was not the one on 2 May.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: One of the recent resignations. It was not the one on 23 May.

The seventh correction relates to Mr Norrish's response to a question by Senator Lines. The relevant dialogue is on page 76 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Dr Norrish: Not specifically. We were requested to provide input on the draft white paper.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Landcare Australia Limited has corrected details provided by Mr Shane Norrish i.e. any reference to 'draft white paper' in Mr Norrish's transcript should read 'draft Statement of Requirement'.

Dr Norrish: Not specifically. We were requested to provide input on the draft Statement of Requirement.

The eighth correction relates to Mr Norrish's response to a question by Acting Chair. The relevant dialogue is on page 82 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Dr Norrish: That is correct.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Landcare Australia Limited has corrected details provided by Mr Shane Norrish.

Dr Norrish: That is correct. There are approximately 6,000 Landcare groups.

The ninth correction relates to Mr Glyde's response to a question by Senator Back. The relevant dialogue is on page 128 of the proof Hansard of Wednesday 28 May 2014.

Mr Glyde: As far as we are aware the ESCAS arrangements have gone from strength to strength each subsequent festival to the point, I think, where we have something like a lot more slaughter points.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing it has been drawn to my attention that the number of slaughter points has not expanded since the introduction of ESCAS.

Mr Glyde: The ESCAS arrangements have gone from strength to strength each subsequent festival. The number of slaughter points has not expanded since the introduction of ESCAS. However, there is work underway with the Singapore authorities to consider expansion this year.

The tenth correction relates to Ms Gaglia's response to a question by Senator Farrell. The relevant dialogue is on page 18 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Gaglia: There are four piggeries that currently have approved projects under the CFI.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 18 I mistakenly stated the incorrect number of piggeries projects under the CFI.

Ms Gaglia: There are seven approved piggeries projects under the CFI.

The eleventh correction relates to Ms Willock's response to a question by Senator Gallacher. The relevant dialogue is on page 19 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Willock: For Queensland, 160 applications have been received.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing it has been drawn to my attention that I provided the incorrect figure of 160 applications to Senator Gallacher.

Ms Willock: For Queensland, 168 applications have been received.

The twelfth correction relates to Ms Freeman's response to a question by Senator Farrell. The relevant dialogue is on page 23 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Freeman: I think he went to Walgett as well.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 23 I mistakenly stated that the Prime Minister went to Walgett during his tour of drought-affected areas in February 2014. The Prime Minister did not visit Walgett. He visited Bourke in New South Wales and Longreach in Queensland on 16 February 2014 and Broken Hill in New South Wales on 17 February 2014.

Ms Freeman: The Prime Minister visited Bourke and Broken Hill in New South Wales and Longreach in Queensland.

The thirteenth correction relates to Ms Freeman's response to a question by Senator O'Sullivan. The relevant dialogue is on page 31 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Freeman: Certainly some of the money that was announced by the government in December included providing money to the Queensland government for their water infrastructure rebates. The subsequent package that was announced by the government was a topping up of that money for 2014-15 and also an allocation of money for 2014-15 for New South Wales.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 31 I mistakenly stated that money was announced by the Government in December. The money was announced on 6 November 2013.

I would also like to clarify that funding was made available to Queensland and New South Wales for water infrastructure.

Ms Freeman: Certainly some of the money that was announced by the government in November included providing money to the Queensland government for their water infrastructure rebates. The subsequent package that was announced by the government was a topping up of that money for 2014-15 and also an allocation of money for 2014-15 for New South Wales and Queensland.

The fourteenth correction relates to Ms Gaglia's response to a question by Senator Edwards. The relevant dialogue is on page 31 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

ACTING CHAIR: In wrapping up this session, if I may, I would just like to go back to some comments that the minister made. In March access to the interim farm household allowance was announced. How many claims have you had on that? What would be the total number of claims that you have had now under that system?
Ms Gaglia: Since it started on 1 March there have been 619 new claims. That is on top of the 459 recipients of the transitional farm family payment that transferred automatically onto the new payment. It is a total of 1,078 recipients.
ACTING CHAIR: How does that compare with previous similar programs that have been run?
Ms Gaglia: It is almost a tripling at the moment, compared to the transitional farm family payment.
ACTING CHAIR: Sorry, it is a tripling of?
Ms Gaglia: The number of applicants.
ACTING CHAIR: Is that because there is a lower threshold?
Ms Gaglia: There is a higher asset threshold
ACTING CHAIR: A higher asset threshold?
Ms Gaglia: If I can just add to that, that number, 1,078, is the total applicants. We estimate about 80 per cent of those are partnered. So it is a greater number of people actually receiving the income support.

I wish to advise the committee that the correct terminology is "619 new claims granted payment". The terminology "619 new claims" could be interpreted to mean "applications lodged" rather than assistance being provided.

Additionally, the later reference to numbers that says "1,078 is the total applicants" should also refer to the cumulative total of new claims granted in the financial year to date.

Ms Gaglia: Since it started on 1 March there have been 619 new claims granted payment. That is on top of the 459 recipients of the transitional farm family payment that transferred automatically onto the new payment. It is a total of 1,078 recipients.

Ms Gaglia: If I can just add to that, that number, 1,078, is the total number of recipients who have been granted payment in the financial year to 9 May 2014. We estimate about 80 per cent of those are partnered. So it is a greater number of people actually receiving the income support.

The fifteenth correction relates to Ms Gaglia's response to a question by Senator Edwards. The relevant dialogue is on page 32 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Gaglia: In the transitional farm family payment, the asset threshold was $1.55 million. It is $2.55 million assets under the interim farm household allowance.

I wish to highlight to the committee that on page 32 I mistakenly stated the incorrect asset threshold for the transitional farm family payment.

Ms Gaglia: In the transitional farm family payment, the asset threshold was $1.5 million.

The sixteenth correction relates to Ms Barbour's response to a question by Senator Sterle. The relevant dialogue is on page 82 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Ms Barbour: A Monday letter.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing it has been drawn to my attention that Ms Barbour did not make the statement. It is believed the statement was voiced by a female Senator.

The seventeenth correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Lines. The relevant dialogue is on page 89 of the proof Hansard of 29 May 2014.

Mr Thompson: Mr Pak Poy might have caught up with your numbers there, but certainly we are waiting for a written resignation from the person who was to resign on 11 October 2015.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Sustainable Resource Management Division has corrected the details provided by Mr Thompson.

Mr Thompson: Mr Pak Poy might have caught up with your numbers there, but certainly we are waiting for a written resignation from the person who was to resign on 11 October 2014.

The eighteenth correction relates to Mr Thompson's response to a question by Senator Farrell. The relevant dialogue is on page 92 of the proof Hansard of Thursday 29 May 2014:

Mr Thompson: My understanding is the rule that relates to being able to account for the sequestration of carbon in a farming systems. The current arrangement brings down the period for which the carbon sequestration counts from 100 to 25 years and the concern in the farming and forestry sectors is that in long-lived planting systems it may be harder for them to measure and claim the carbon benefits under the changed arrangements—not impossible, but harder.

I wish to advise the committee that since the hearing Agricultural Adaptation and Forestry Division has clarified the 100-year permanence rule relating to carbon capture.

Mr Thompson: All carbon sequestration projects under the CFI are subject to a 100-year permanency obligation. This means that the project proponent is liable for any reversal in carbon stores during this period, except when the reversal is from a natural disturbance. When the Carbon Farming Initiative transitions to the Emissions Reduction Fund, carbon sequestration projects will have a choice of either a 25-year or 100-year permanence option.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the transcript of the Budget Estimates hearings held on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 May 2014 and to provide clarification on the above points.

Yours sincerely

Nick Stathis

Acting Assistant Secretary
Parliamentary and Executive Business Branch

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