

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 48

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Vacancy rates of GRDC's building

Proof Hansard page: 27 (25.5.2015)

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

CHAIR: Can I just pause it there? Could you describe to me—or are you not aware—Mr Glyde, of the difference for GRDC, who rent in the city? What percentage of the building they rent is vacant? It holds probably 40 per cent in the same area as APVMA or whoever it is, who is out at Fyshwick. Can you describe the difference in the rent and then I will describe to you the difference in the rent in a regional centre?

Mr Glyde: We can try that. Ms Freeman might have some of the estimates for that.

Ms Freeman: The current lease costs per square metre for the organisations are as follows: for GRDC, \$473.90—

CHAIR: Could I just pause you there.

Ms Freeman: Certainly.

CHAIR: I recently negotiated a floor in one of the best buildings, with the best harbour view in Sydney, for \$375,000 a square metre, with a full fit-out.

Senator EDWARDS: \$375 per square—

Senator STERLE: Chair, you are a better senator than you are negotiator!

CHAIR: Sorry, \$375 a square metre, with a full fit-out. Could you go on and just give the rest?

Ms Freeman: Certainly. For RIRDC, \$343 per square metre.

CHAIR: Where is that situated?

Ms Freeman: In Barton.

CHAIR: Where is the first one situated?

Ms Freeman: In Barton. FRDC, which I think is in Deakin, \$371 per square metre; APVMA, which is located in Symonston, \$403.70 per square metre.

CHAIR: I have to say that they are top-rate Sydney prices.

Senator CAMERON: Can I now continue?

Question: 48 (continued)

CHAIR: You can, for a few minutes. Just before you do, what is the vacancy factor in those?

Ms Freeman: I do not know that we have that information. We might have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: It came up the other day—

Ms Freeman: Yes. Mr Harvey may be able to answer that question when GRDC are on this afternoon. But I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The APVMA leases and occupies the entire premises at 18 Wormald Street, Symonston, ACT.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation have a vacancy rate of 32 per cent.

FRDC

- Lease cost to 31 July 2015 - \$370 per square metre
- Lease cost from 1 August to 31 July 2016 - \$381 per square metre

GRDC

The vacancy rate for the GRDC head office is approximately 25 per cent.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 49

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Breaking lease costs

Proof Hansard page: 27 (25.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: What are the costs of breaking any leases?

Ms Freeman: We can certainly provide that information.

Answer:

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA)

If the APVMA terminates the lease, the agency is liable for the rent until the lease expiry date of 26 October 2020 or until the property is re-let. It is possible to sublet under the lease.

The rent for the remaining years from 1 July 2016 is:

Financial Year	Annual Rent Expense (\$)
2016-17	1 339 390
2017-18	1 389 617
2018-19	1 441 727
2019-20	1 495 792
2020-21	489 288

In addition, the APVMA would be required to pay an additional amount of one (1) month in rent for each remaining year of the lease term towards the fitout contribution of the landlord when the premises were extended in 2012.

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

As at 31 May 2015 the current lease-break cost would be \$154 490

FRDC lease currently expires 31 July 2016.

Question: 49 (continued)

Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)

The current cost of GRDC breaking its lease is \$11.9 million should it not sublet under the provisions of the lease.

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's current lease expires on 30 September 2015.

If lease was to be broken 1 July 2015 the cost would be \$74 000.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 50

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Relocation of staff

Proof Hansard page: 34 (25.5.2015)

Senator STERLE asked:

ACTING CHAIR: Would it be unfair of me to assume—it is always dangerous to assume in Senate estimates—that there are some basic figures about staff that may not want to go? There would be some costs? You do not want to commit to them yet, but there must be some form of costing already that APVMA and the government are looking at—and the department?

Ms Freeman: Yes, there are.

Senator STERLE: Could you tell us what they are so far, bearing in mind that there are other factors that will change it?

Ms Freeman: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator STERLE: If you could. I understand. If you could come back to us pretty soon that would be appreciated, just while Senator Cameron is on the same line of questioning. Thank you.

Answer:

Assumed 80 per cent of staff would not relocate for costing purposes.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 51

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Meetings with ministerial staff - Relocation of RDC's

Proof Hansard page: 39-40 (25.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: Are you aware of any meetings that the ministerial staff have had separate from the department with the agencies?

Ms Freeman: No, not that I am aware of.

Mr Glyde: There may well have been, but—

Senator CAMERON: Senator Colbeck, are you aware of any meetings face to face?

Senator Colbeck: Not specifically, but I have occasional meetings with representatives out of RDCs. I have not had anything recently specifically in relation to this matter, but I have met members of the FRDC at a number of fisheries events around the country. This has not necessarily been a point of conversation, but I have run into people from FRDC at a number of events over the last month or so.

Senator CAMERON: And you have never raised this with them?

Senator Colbeck: At the last meeting I did not raise it with them and they did not raise it with me. That was an event in Western Australia that we were both at.

Senator CAMERON: Have you raised it during any events?

Senator Colbeck: We have had a couple of conversations but probably not since the last estimates. I think we discussed it then.

Senator CAMERON: When you say you have had a couple of conversations, were they formal conversations with the agencies?

Senator Colbeck: I can recall a meeting with the FRDC where the issue of relocation was one of the issues we talked about.

Senator CAMERON: Do you know when that was?

Senator Colbeck: It was a while ago and, as I said, I think it was probably before the last estimates.

Question: 51 (continued)

Senator CAMERON: How about taking on notice for us what meetings you have had formally with the agencies in terms of these relocations—

Senator Colbeck: I am happy to do that.

Senator CAMERON: and what informal meetings and discussions you have had, and dates and times?

Senator Colbeck: I would not have records of the informal meetings, because they are by nature informal. When we run across each other at events we are at, I do not keep records of that.

Senator CAMERON: Parliamentary Secretary, are you aware of whether Minister Joyce has met the face to face with any of the agencies on a formal basis on this issue?

Senator Colbeck: No, I am not. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: Can you also take on notice the details, if the minister has met, of dates and times? Can you also provide details of dates and times of the meetings with ministerial staff on this specific issue?

Senator Colbeck: I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

The department does not hold this information.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 52

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: APVMA – specialised staff

Proof Hansard page: 40 (25.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: With the APVMA, are these specialised staff? Can anyone tell me?

Senator Colbeck: There would be some specialised staff within the APVMA, yes.

Senator CAMERON: Some are recruited from overseas?

Senator Colbeck: Possibly.

Senator CAMERON: Does anyone know the answer to that?

Ms Mellor: We can take that on notice.

Answer:

Recruitment is conducted in accordance with Australian Public Service Recruitment guidelines and the current APS recruitment arrangements.

The APVMA employs specialist scientific staff with expertise in chemistry, toxicology, residues and environmental, agricultural and veterinary science. The APVMA does not undertake any specific international recruitment and selection processes.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 53

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Relocation by July

Proof Hansard page: 40 (25.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: What if an agency says they are not willing to relocate?

Senator Colbeck: I am presuming that they will communicate that with the minister and that will form part of the consideration of government when we get to final decision making. It is a fairly speculative question, I think, at this point in time.

Senator CAMERON: I think it is important. I accept that it is hypothetical, but you are asking the agencies to make a decision by the end of July. I do not know what the rhyme or reason for that is yet. You have not really—

Senator Colbeck: I did say—it is to put a time frame around the decision-making process. I said that just a moment ago.

Senator CAMERON: But for what reason? Why would it need to be by July?

Senator Colbeck: That is the time frame that the government has selected.

Senator CAMERON: The government or the minister? Is that a cabinet decision—July?

Senator Colbeck: At this point in time I would suggest it is probably the minister, but I am not certain about that.

Senator CAMERON: Can you clarify then whether there is a cabinet decision that there has to be a reallocation by July—

Senator Colbeck: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

It was the Minister's decision to place a timeframe on responses back from affected agencies to ensure timely progress of this matter, noting it has been under discussion since July 2014.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 54

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Agricultural White Paper

Proof Hansard page: 48 (25.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: So a white paper was produced and went to cabinet?

Mr Glyde: It is a more complicated process than that. An outline of the white paper has been agreed by cabinet and various initiatives have been proposed in relation to that and they are going through the process of being approved by cabinet. Part of that approval process is that various different drafts of documents that will go together to make up the white paper.

Senator CAMERON: When was the outline approved?

Mr Glyde: I do not have that detail but it was sometime earlier in the year.

Senator CAMERON: What is 'earlier in the year'? You get five months to pick from.

Mr Glyde: Early in the year, so I am thinking more around February, but could I take that on notice—

Senator CAMERON: Yes. Roughly February but you will clarify that?

Mr Glyde: Yes. What I am trying to get across is that it is an iterative process of development of the document, and indeed it has been going on since the start, with an issues paper and a green paper. The end result is the publication of the white paper, which will have within it the initiatives and the expenditure that the government proposes to have over the course of the coming years. That will not be known until the government launches it.

Answer:

The Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper has been progressively developed by the Government. An Issues Paper was released on 6 February 2014, followed by an extensive consultation process. The Green Paper was released on 20 October 2014, again followed by a consultation process. Since that time the Government has been preparing the White Paper including the various initiatives it may contain. The launch of the White Paper is a matter for the Government.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 55

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: MYEFO

Proof Hansard page: 52 (25.5.2015)

Senator SIEWERT asked:

Senator SIEWERT: Now that we have established that there will be offsets, potentially, from this agency of the department and other departments, is it something that would be done through MYEFO? Would you do it through a process such as that?

Mr Glyde: If a decision is taken to spend additional money and that changes the estimates, the next available time would be at MYEFO.

Senator SIEWERT: So we might not see it until MYEFO?

Senator Colbeck: I do not think that is a reasonable assumption.

Senator SIEWERT: Sorry?

Senator Colbeck: I would not agree with that. I do not think you will have to wait until MYEFO to see the white paper.

Senator SIEWERT: But if it contains new initiatives, new funding initiatives?

Senator Colbeck: It will go through the appropriate government processes to approve those new initiatives. I think you understand what they are and that is the process that it will go through

Mr Glyde: Like any new initiative that is taken outside the formal budget process, then they are announced, they are talked about. Should there be some additional funding, that will be announced and then our estimates will be updated in MYEFO to reflect it or indeed other departments' estimates might be updated to reflect it.

Senator Colbeck: The reporting of that process would appear in MYEFO.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you.

CHAIR: Just by way of furthering my curiosity, who is on the task force? Could you give us the details?

Mr Glyde: I can provide those. I do not know if we have got them to hand. You are talking about the names of the officials who are on—

Question: 55 (continued)

CHAIR: I would be interested to see whether dirt under the fingernails comes into it.

Mr Glyde: Sure. We are happy to provide you with those names.

Answer:

The Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper taskforce was established on 3 October 2013. It is headed by a SES Band 2 officer, Paul Morris who has extensive experience in agricultural policy, including having previously been the Executive Director of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES). Other staff have been drawn from relevant agencies as outlined below.

Level	Agency	Date Commenced	Date Concluded
SES Band 2	Department of Agriculture	03.10.2013	Ongoing
SES Band 1	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	28.10.2013	31.10.2014
SES Band 1	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	05.01.2015	Ongoing
SES Band 1	Department of Agriculture	13.01.2014	Ongoing
EL2	Department of Agriculture	10.10.2013	25.05.2015
EL2	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	14.10.2013	27.02.2015
EL2	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	21.11.2013	07.02.2014
EL2	Department of Agriculture	18.11.2013	Ongoing
EL1	Department of Agriculture	11.11.2013	Ongoing
EL1	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	16.12.2013	13.06.2014
EL1	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	12.06.2014	06.03.2015
EL1	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	10.12.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	11.11.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	16.12.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	11.03.2014	30.05.2014
APS6	Department of Industry and Science	17.12.2013	03.10.2014
APS6	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	30.03.2015	05.06.2015
APS6	Department of Industry and Science	13.10.2014	Ongoing
APS5	Department of Agriculture	10.10.2013	07.05.2015
APS5	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	18.05.2015	Ongoing

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 56

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Task force – list of names

Proof Hansard page: 52-53 (25.5.2015)

CHAIR asked:

CHAIR: Are there people on it from people who can cut the nuts out of a bull to the scientist who knows what BSE will do to you?

Senator CAMERON: There has to be a technical term for that.

Mr Glyde: I would not like to comment on the—

Senator Colbeck: I think that was the technical term, Senator!

Mr Glyde: extracurricular activities that the officers are involved in.

CHAIR: What I am saying is that you have got practical people, as well as academics?

Mr Glyde: The people that are on the task force, I think, to a large extent are public servants.

CHAIR: Yes, I'll bet!

Mr Glyde: As in all of these matters, they would be taking advice from experts on various matters, whether it be BSE or castration of animals.

CHAIR: It depends on whether the expert is a drip under pressure or someone that is out in the paddock.

Mr Glyde: All I can say is that these are very experienced and highly regarded public servants who know a lot about agriculture.

CHAIR: To end it quietly, could you just give us the names in a list and the people that they get their information from.

Mr Glyde: We will do that.

Question: 56 (continued)

Answer:

The Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper taskforce was established on 3 October 2013. It is headed by a SES Band 2 officer, Paul Morris who has extensive experience in agricultural policy, including having previously been the Executive Director of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES). Other staff have been drawn from relevant agencies as outlined below. Throughout the Issues Paper and Green Paper consultation processes the taskforce received more than a thousand submissions and talked directly to over a thousand people from across the country including industry, farmers and the broader community.

Level	Agency	Date Commenced	Date Concluded
SES Band 2	Department of Agriculture	03.10.2013	Ongoing
SES Band 1	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	28.10.2013	31.10.2014
SES Band 1	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	05.01.2015	Ongoing
SES Band 1	Department of Agriculture	13.01.2014	Ongoing
EL2	Department of Agriculture	10.10.2013	25.05.2015
EL2	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	14.10.2013	27.02.2015
EL2	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	21.11.2013	07.02.2014
EL2	Department of Agriculture	18.11.2013	Ongoing
EL1	Department of Agriculture	11.11.2013	Ongoing
EL1	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	16.12.2013	13.06.2014
EL1	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	12.06.2014	06.03.2015
EL1	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	10.12.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	11.11.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	16.12.2013	Ongoing
APS6	Department of Agriculture	11.03.2014	30.05.2014
APS6	Department of Industry and Science	17.12.2013	03.10.2014
APS6	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	30.03.2015	05.06.2015
APS6	Department of Industry and Science	13.10.2014	Ongoing
APS5	Department of Agriculture	10.10.2013	07.05.2015
APS5	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	18.05.2015	Ongoing

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 57

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Shearers retiring

Proof Hansard page: 71 (26.5.2015)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Do you foresee a shortage of shearers in the future, especially if the sheep numbers grow and the wool market continues to kick and grain prices stay pretty dormant at \$250 a tonne or whatever?

Ms Freeman: Employment for shearers has remained relatively steady in the past five years. It fell slightly in the long term, over a 10-year period. So, looking forward, employment for shearers to November 2018 is expected to remain relatively steady. Over the five years to that time, the number of job openings for shearers is expected to be low—equal to or less than 5,000. So that is basically advice from—

Senator WILLIAMS: Is that a year?

Ms Freeman: Over the period of five years to November 2018. That is according to—

Senator WILLIAMS: So you are saying that there is only room for another 5,000 shearers?

Ms Freeman: No. That is what it is expected to be for the employment for them.

Senator WILLIAMS: To take up to 5,000 shearers.

Ms Freeman: The source of that is the department of employment.

Senator WILLIAMS: How many will retire in five years?

Ms Freeman: I do not have the answer to that. I would have to go back. This is from the job outlook data from the department of employment.

Answer:

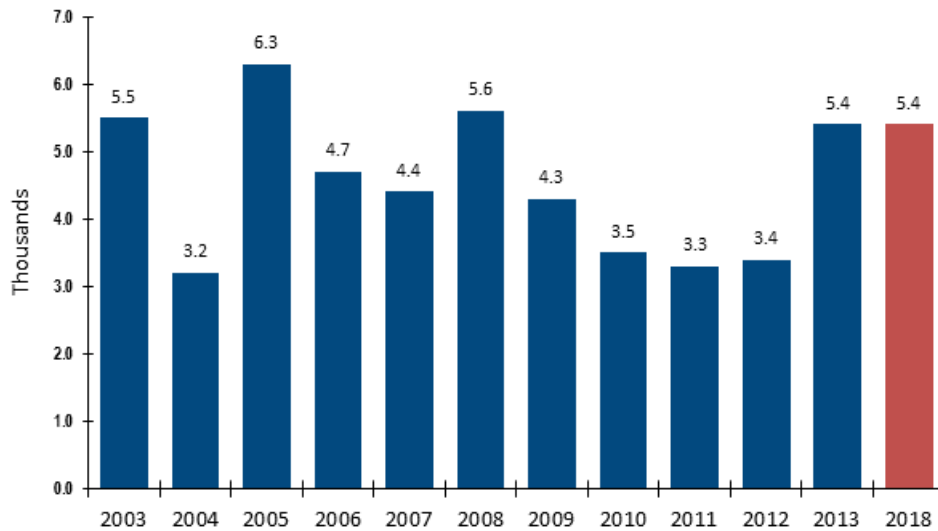
The Department of Agriculture does not have data on shearing workforce retirement expectations.

Question: 57 (continued)

According to the Department of Employment, employment for shearers remained relatively steady in the past five years. Looking forward, employment for shearers to November 2018 is expected to remain relatively steady. Over the five years to November 2018, the number of job openings for shearers is expected to be equal to or less than 5000.

(Source: Department of Employment, www.joboutlook.gov.au).

Employment Level (thousands)



This graph shows historical and projected (to 2018) employment levels (thousands) for this occupation.

(Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, Department of Employment trend data to November 2013 and Department of Employment projections to 2018. Estimates have been rounded).

Employment by age

The main age group of shearers in Australia is 45-54 years (36.6 per cent) and the median age is 46 years (compared to 40 years for all occupations). (Source: Department of Employment, www.joboutlook.gov.au)

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 58

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Herd rebuild

Proof Hansard page: 71-72 (26.5.2015)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

CHAIR: I want to test the integrity.

Ms Freeman: Please do.

CHAIR: What is the herd rebuild in that equation?

Ms Freeman: I would have to take that on notice. We just—

CHAIR: What is the build of Dorpers and sheep?

Ms Freeman: I understand.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture does not have data on the composition of the national sheep flock by sheep breed.

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) conduct a sheep industry survey every February, June and October, to assess the production capability of Australia's sheep flock.

The survey covers the key aspects of sheepmeat and wool production, including ewes on hand, lambs intended for sale by weight category, and numbers of sheep to be shorn.

Figures from Meat and Livestock Australia, from their most recent sheep and wool survey (February 2015) indicate the total sheep flock is estimated to be 69.8 million head.

From a pool of 24 million lambs:

- 5 per cent Dorper or a Dorper cross
- 60 per cent pure merino
- 35 per cent all other breeds (eg dorset, other crossbred, Suffolk etc)

Question: 58 (continued)

Of the breeding flock - 41 million ewes:

- 3 per cent Dorper or Dorper cross
- 52 per cent pure merino
- 45 per cent all other breeds (eg dorset, other crossbred, Suffolk etc)

The remaining 5 million are rams and wethers.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 59

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: Greyhound racing cruelty

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. Would you agree that the animal cruelty in the greyhound industry, revealed in ABC's Four Corners (in Feb), demonstrates a clear failure of the industry's self-regulation?
2. What is the federal response to the systemic cruelty in the greyhound industry across states?
3. Have there been any discussions about coordinating a response to this issue at a federal level, or by the federal Dept Agriculture, given the clear need to properly and independently regulate the greyhound industry across borders? If yes, may I have the details and agreed outcomes of those discussions?

Answer:

1. State and territory governments are responsible for animal welfare laws, and the enforcement of these laws. This allows state and territory laws to reflect local geographical and climatic conditions, and community expectations. In relation to the greyhound racing incidents of cruelty, the state and territory governments are responsible for regulating the greyhound racing industry.
2. The Australian Government is not responsible for domestic animal welfare and has no role in the licensing, regulation and conduct of the greyhound racing industry.
3. No.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 60

Division/Agency: Agricultural Policy Division

Topic: RDC relocation

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator GALLAGHER asked:

Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce MP has called for the relocation of several Canberra-based agencies to various locations.

These include:

- •Grains Research and Development Corporation to Wagga Wagga
- •Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority to Armidale or Toowoomba
- •Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation to Albury-Wodonga
- •Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to Hobart.

Has a business case been completed for these proposed relocations?

What assessment process has been put in place to inform decision making in relation to any proposed relocation of agencies or public servants from their current location in Canberra?

Have costings been prepared?

If not, why not?

What modelling has been done in relation to the cost of:

- Staff redundancies?
- Relocations?
- Increased travel budget to and from Canberra?
- Office accommodation, including current leasing arrangements and new accommodation in the new location?
- What are the current rules for the Commonwealth obtaining 'value for money' in relation to this move?
- What consultation has taken place with the key stakeholder organisations affected by the proposed move?

Question: 60 (continued)

Answer:

The department provided advice on the proposed relocation of the agencies to inform the government's consideration. This included evaluation of the possible redundancies, increased travel and other office relocation costs. All affected agencies were consulted during the process. A decision will be made following advice from the agencies on consultation with their staff and stakeholders.