

Rural Policy and Innovation

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Department

Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: RPI 01

Topic: Exceptional Circumstances

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Senator O'Brien asked:

Could you get me a breakdown of the estimates for each exceptional circumstances region and the now-budgeted figure for the region?

Answer:

A breakdown of the estimated cost of each Exceptional Circumstances declared region and the revised estimated cost is provided below:

REVISED EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (EC) ESTIMATES AS AT 2004 - 05 PORTFOLIO ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES

Area	2002-2007 Estimated EC Costings	2002-2007 Revised Estimated EC Costings
NSW		
Bourke and Brewarrina	10.399	9.624
Western Division	32.297	29.589
Riverina	28.544	25.417
Walgett and parts	24.275	20.065
Casino	12.994	11.386
Grafton/Kempsey	29.474	22.805
Northern New England	9.634	7.614
Central North	54.362	48.026
Condobolin & Narrandera	35.672	31.512
Nyngan	7.786	6.896
Hay	8.770	7.767
South Coast and Moss Vale	22.103	19.702
South West Slopes and Plains	16.792	13.118
Young	11.310	9.658
Armidale	10.815	9.480
Forbes	30.179	25.435
Hume	7.160	6.002
Mudgee-Merriwa	7.198	5.991

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Area	2002-2007 Estimated EC Costings	2002-2007 Revised Estimated EC Costings
Central Tablelands	24.346	20.578
Braidwood	7.379	5.855
Gundagai	7.645	6.117
Goulburn/Yass	23.985	14.831
Molong	18.654	20.156
Dubbo	18.070	15.984
Cooma-Bombala-ACT	2.523	2.141
VIC		
North western Mallee (incl Eastern Mallee)	11.602	4.493
Goulburn Irrigation	64.623	62.398
North East	26.298	19.577
Central	5.745	3.962
Northern Victoria	8.510	5.542
Central and Eastern Gippsland	30.196	24.094
QLD		
SE Queensland	3.441	23.571
Peak Downs	9.300	8.611
South West	25.807	24.029
Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Region	6.532	5.157
Western Downs-Maranoa	34.597	30.960
Southern South Eastern	8.354	6.742
Central Coastal	14.318	11.077
Burnett	27.817	22.533
Stanthorpe-Inglewood	8.004	5.729
Murweh	3.278	2.833
Central Darling Downs	7.015	4.894
Northern Darling Downs	10.548	8.153
Southern Darling Downs	5.819	4.355
Atherton Tablelands	2.867	2.443
Emerald and Bauhinia Shires	9.937	9.274
Mackay	4.471	0.965

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Area	2002-2007 Estimated EC Costings	2002-2007 Revised Estimated EC Costings
Central Mid West	16.388	14.741
Hinchinbrook Thuringowa	4.067	3.080
Ashy Downs	10.352	9.534
SA		
Central north-east	4.668	3.702
Central North SA	0.176	0.030
WA		
Southern Eastern Wheatbelt	22.818	22.416
Northern Wheatbelt	10.888	9.711
Central Wheatbelt	13.505	10.551
Southern Rangelands	5.815	5.239

Note: The above table consists of estimates for Exceptional Circumstances assistance including prima facie income assistance. It does not include the costings for the additional drought assistance measures announced on 9 December 2002.

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Question: RPI 02

Topic: Division responsibilities

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Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator, if the division title is causing you some confusion we would be happy to provide you with a list of those issues that we are responsible for, if that would be helpful.

Senator O'Brien – Yes, I think that might be helpful. It will not help me today but it might be helpful in the future.

Answer:

The issues that the Rural Policy and Innovation Division are responsible for are:

Drought Task Force

Area/Program	Description
Drought Task Force Drought Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administers the department's response to drought, in particular Exceptional Circumstances assistance. It also manages the development of the National Drought Policy.

Rural Support and Adjustment

Area/Program	Description
Industry Partnerships (including Industry Leadership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works with industries to improve their long-term viability and success by focusing on business solutions related to the industry's capacity to skill, inform, gather and disseminate information and plan for the future.• Delivers specific capacity building activities that foster leadership and skill development for young people (aged 18-35 years), women, and Indigenous people in rural industries.
Farm Business Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages the FarmBis Program at a national level, including representing the Australian Government as members on each of the

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Topic: Division responsibilities

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Area/Program	Description
	FarmBis State Planning Groups. The program is delivered in conjunction with the States/Northern Territory, who are responsible for the day to day administration and delivery of the AAA FarmBis program within their jurisdiction. AAA FarmBis provides financial assistance to primary producers and land managers to undertake business and natural resource management training and education activities.
Rural Financial Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides grants to non-profit community groups to assist with the provision of a free and impartial rural financial counselling service to primary producers and small rural businesses in serious financial difficulty.
Welfare and Adjustment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farm Welfare Assistance• Rural Adjustment and Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy and program management in relation to generic welfare and adjustment assistance programs – including Farm Help.

Science and Economic Policy

Area/Program	Description
Science and Innovation Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• R&D Science Policy• R&D – Study of RDC Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures that research and development (R&D) funding through the rural R&D corporations and related companies is appropriately managed and complies with Government requirements.• Pursues increased effectiveness and efficiency of the RDC model to maintain competitiveness and sustainability of portfolio industries and rural and regional Australia.• Ensures portfolio perspectives are taken into account in developing domestic innovation, science and technology strategies and programs.

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Area/Program	Description
Biotechnology Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides advice to the Minister on agricultural biotechnology issues. Using funding under the National Biotechnology Strategy the Section is involved in commissioning research and activities to fill information gaps in the debate on agricultural biotechnology.
Economic Policy and Operating Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deals with matters relating to economic, taxation and general rural operating environment policy. Also administers the Farm Management Deposits Scheme and provides secretariat support for the Agricultural Finance Forum.