

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BRS 01

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Signposts for Australian Agriculture project

Hansard page: 119 – 120 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—Thank you. What are the aims of the Signposts for Australian Agriculture project?

Answer:

Signposts for Australian Agriculture has been designed through a partnership involving government, researchers and industry to assess the environmental, economic and social benefits and impacts associated with Australian agricultural industries.

A profile for the grains industry has been developed and work on profiles for the cotton, dairy, beef, horticulture and wine industries is in train.

As an example, the profile for the grains industry can be viewed at www.signposts4ag.com.

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Question no: BRS 02

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: BRS Contracts

Hansard page: 121 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—Can the committee receive on notice the detail of the contracts which can be accounted for in that \$15 million additional expenditure?

Mr McGovern—Yes, we will provide it on notice.

Senator O'Brien—Thanks for that.

Answer:

The details of the contracts are provided in the **attached** table.

[BRS 02 attachment]

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Question no: BRS 03

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Classification of Fish Species

Hansard page: 122 (14/02/07)

Senator Siewert asked:

Dr Bygrave—For example, it would not be fair to say that all of the nine species that were unclassified in 2004 have gone into other classifications in 2005.

Senator Siewert—What does that mean then? Does that mean you did not classify them at all this time?

Dr Bygrave—I would have to take that on notice. But my guesstimate at this stage would be that it reflects that we have not focused our energies on those particular species and that we have focused our energies in particular on those high-value stocks.

Answer:

Over time, new fish stocks have been added to the Fishery Status Reports. This generally occurs as fisheries change and develop, as new data becomes available and when stocks come under new management arrangements (such as catch quotas). When stocks are added to the reports they are assigned a status of “uncertain”, “overfished” or “not overfished”.

The “status not classified” portion of the table on page 5 of the *2005 Fishery Status Reports* is used to account for fish stocks that were not included in previous editions of the reports. In the latest year of reporting, there are always zero stocks assigned to “status not classified” as stocks are only added to the reports when they have been classified.

The transition of fish stocks between status categories from 2004 to 2005 is illustrated in Figure 1.

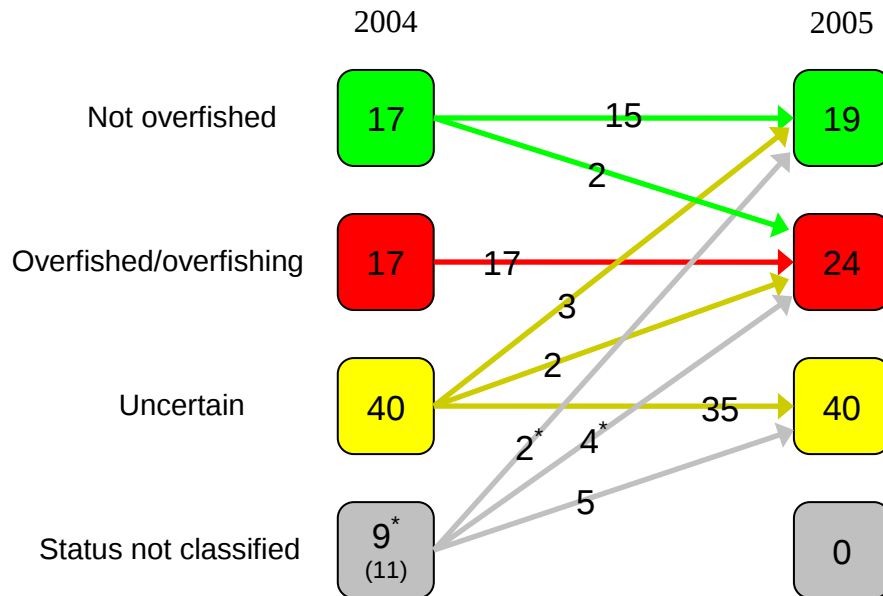
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Figure 1: Transitions in Commonwealth fish stocks between status categories in the Fishery Status Reports from 2004 to 2005



* The 9 stocks listed for 2004 as “Status not classified” on Page 5 of the 2005 Fishery Status Reports are comprised of 7 stocks not included in previous editions of the Status Reports and a splitting of 2 previously-classified ‘stocks’ into 4 separate stocks (orange roughy and a small pelagic species). Hence there are 11 ‘new’ classifications but a net result of 9 for the purposes of the table.

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Question no: BRS 04

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Research into Orange Roughy

Hansard page: 21 (14/02/07)

Senator Siewert asked:

Mr McLoughlin—Yes, that has been done. I think all the separate areas of orange roughy fishing have been looked at genetically.

Senator Siewert—Is that information publicly available?

Mr Hurry—I would assume it would be. I would have to check, but I cannot see any reason why it would not be.

Answer:

The linkages between Australian populations of orange roughy remain highly uncertain despite considerable research using many methods, including genetics. These studies suggest that there may be four stocks of orange roughy in southern Australian waters comprising two stocks in the southern management zone, one on the Cascade Plateau and one in the western part of the Great Australian Bight. Orange roughy found on offshore seamounts and ocean ridges may also form separate stocks to these. These stocks are not necessarily genetically distinct although they may still need to be managed separately.

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Question no: BRS 05

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Publications on Climate Change

Hansard page: 119 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—What are you publishing, if anything?

Dr Ritman—We are publishing in the area of climate change and those models.

Senator O'Brien—Perhaps you can give us on notice a list of the material you have published.

Dr Ritman—That we have published?

Senator O'Brien—Yes, and what you are intending to publish as well.

Dr Ritman—We have undertaken reports on farming profitably under climate change. We have a *Science for Decision Makers* on climate adaptation and we have in plan some others which we will take on notice too.

Answer:

In February 2006 BRS produced two publications on climate change. These are: Clark, A., Barratt, D., Munro, B., Sims, J., Laughlin, G. and Poulter, D. 2006 *"Climate Change: Adaptation in Agriculture"* Science for Decision Makers. (Australian Government: Bureau of Rural Sciences).

Steffen, W., Sims, J. and Walcott, J. (2006) *"Farming Profitably in a changing climate: A risk-management approach"* (Australian Government: Bureau of Rural Sciences).

Please note that the BRS also contributed to the *"National Agriculture & Climate Change Action Plan (2006-2009)"*, published by DAFF on behalf of the Natural Resource Ministerial Council.