

Estimates Questions on Notice Additional Estimates 2007-2008

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 February 2008

QON No.	Date Asked	Hansard Reference/ Written	Senator	Question
ABARE 01		Written	Siewert	<p><i>GTEM economic model</i></p> <p>Can ABARE confirm that it recently put its GTEM economic model (global trade and environment) into the public domain?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When did this happen? b. What was the reason for this decision? c. Who made it? d. How many staff hours were spent producing this model? e. Do you have an estimate of its value? f. Are you aware of anyone in particular now using this model or publishing results that rely on it? g. Is this a model that anyone could simply pick up and use? h. What do you need to know to be able to use it effectively to produce robust and reliable results? i. Is it accurate to say that to be able to use this kind of model effectively you need to have intimate knowledge of its development, the way it works and the assumptions it makes?
AFMA 01	19/02/2008	113-114	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—What about percentage of apprehensions in relation to sightings?</p> <p>Mr Venslovas—They fluctuate on a month-to-month basis.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Of course they do. Can you provide us, on notice if you do not have them, the number of sightings per month, the number of apprehensions per month—if you have them available, of course, I would be delighted to have them now—and the number of legislative forfeitures.</p> <p>Mr Venslovas—I would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—All right. How are our friends in Papua New Guinea going with their banana boats?</p> <p>Senator McLucas—Senator Abetz, over what period of time do you want that material?</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—I thought we were talking about the last six months.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—Okay, that is fine.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—But we could get, say, from 1 July 2007 through to 31 December 2007, plus the month of January 2008—and, by the time you get around to giving the answer, I am sure you will have the figures for February and March as well. Would that be a fair guess, or not? So please give us from 1 July 2007 up to date, as far as you can take us.</p>

AFMA 02	19/02/2008	114	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—All right. How many banana boats? I understand there was a bit of increased activity coming out of Papua New Guinea into the Torres Strait islands area.</p> <p>Mr Venslovas—In 2007-08 there were six legislative forfeitures. I will have to take on notice how many of those were actually banana boats, but I can recall at least two. More recently there has been some activity in the Torres Strait, in particular on Warrior Reef, with PNG boats—or banana boats—targeting trepang, and there have been three apprehensions of banana boats.</p>
AFMA 03	19/02/2008	124	IAN MACDONALD	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is there anywhere I can read this that is publicly available?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—Yes. I can give you the copies of the minutes from the last meeting. The last meeting is not up on the website yet, but it will be shortly. I can give you details of the website.</p>
APVMA 01	18/02/2008	28	ADAMS	<p>Senator ADAMS—This person has been given a consultant. It was the only way that he was going to be able to proceed with his application. He was someone who was not going to get anywhere with his application unless he did that. I have not spoken to him for several months, but I am really curious as to how the department would nominate a consultant and where they came from: whether they were people from outside or within the department.</p> <p>Dr Bennett-Jenkins—They are not people within the department. They are independent consultants who set themselves up in their own businesses. Our process is that we do not recommend consultants.</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—This has happened, because he is now dealing with one of your consultants. I really want to know how that process worked and who these special consultants are.</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—Obviously, we are working here with a limited amount of information as to the particular case that you are talking about.</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—I think that Dr Bennett-Jenkins is fully aware of the case I am talking about.</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—I think we would need to look more closely at what precisely happened, in the event that you are saying that we as a department 'recommended a consultant', as opposed to 'recommended that the proponent engage a consultant'. But I would prefer that we took that on notice and gave you a clear answer as to precisely what happened.</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—I would certainly appreciate that. Thank you.</p>
APVMA 02	18/02/2008	29	SIEWERT	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Could you supply the committee with a copy of the 2004 recommendations?</p> <p>Dr Bennett-Jenkins—Certainly.</p>

APVMA 03	18/02/2008	32	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—..... I just ask, in your adverse impacts committee or whatever, how many complaints have you actually had from people about the use of Atrazine in Tasmania?</p> <p>Dr Bennett-Jenkins—I would have to take that question on notice. I am not aware of any specific complaints. We get those channelled through, and it is through our own intelligence that we hear of the community in Tasmania complaining.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—You said that those channels come from the state government or Forestry Tasmania. Could I ask you to give me on notice the number of admissions or complaints that they have forwarded to you for consideration. I will then match that against the number of complaints that they have paid out on for either appropriate use gone wrong or misuse, depending on which way they want to use it.</p> <p>Dr Bennett-Jenkins—Certainly.</p>
AQIS 01	18/02/2008	57	SCULLION	<p>Dr O’Connell—Can we come back to the time line on the checklist.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—I would appreciate that.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I will break that down into two parts because I do undertake to come back with a time line on the specifics that have been raised. But there are aspects of this that have occurred, and perhaps Jenni Gordon can give a bit of clarity about that.</p>
AQIS 02	18/02/2008	58-59	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—I am specifically asking: will you provide the report to the committee? I understand that it is a 279-page report and it was on the cost-effectiveness of AQIS. I think this committee has worked very hard on these issues and deserves to have a copy of it. I would like an undertaking that you will provide a copy of that report. Further to that, following on from what Senator Scullion said before, that report is extremely damning if what was in the media is true. So I would like to go through some of the allegations and I would like a yes/no answer as to whether it is true.</p> <p>In relation to what Senator Scullion raised about the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy, what is alleged is that there are no screening targets or effectiveness benchmarks for the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy, despite the threat posed by illegal fishermen, boat people, free movement from the Torres Strait islands et cetera. Is that true? Are there effectiveness benchmarks and screening targets for that strategy?</p> <p>Mr Hunter—Senator, to go to the first part of your question, we would be happy to provide a copy of the report to the committee.</p>

AQIS 03	18/02/2008	60	HEFFERNAN	<p>Ms Gordon—It is a combination of having resources available and also being able to identify where the risks are and which particular containers might have goods within them that will constitute a quarantine risk and being able to identify those largely on documentation. It goes to issues of us assessing, for instance, the likely effectiveness of fumigation on contents that are in a container.</p> <p>CHAIR—So you have to rely on the consignors telling the truth?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—We rely very much always on documentation. We have procedures in place when we identify that the documentation is not accurate to actually target specifically further containers that have been brought in by those brokers or by those importers. We have put them on lists. We will then target specifically to do physical inspections where we think the risks are until we are satisfied that those brokers and those importers have put in place procedures to address whatever concerns we found.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—What is the record of getting a surprise?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—I would have to come back with the specific details, but most of—</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—In other words, dodgy paperwork.</p> <p>Ms Gordon—Most of our physical interventions on containers are random audits. They are not ones where people are advised ahead of time that we are going to open and physically inspect.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—So, just roughly, is it one in a hundred? How many have a load of hoochiecoochie or whatever in it?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—Senator, I think it might be better if I come back with a specific figure on that one.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Okay</p>
AQIS 04	18/02/2008	61	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—What about Western Australia? Why is there a failure there on the mail?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—I think those figures—and I would have to go back and check myself—were largely about the time it was taking to clear mail through the mail centres. Particularly at Christmas, as you would appreciate, with high volumes of mail it is often difficult to clear the mail as quickly as one would hope. As Mr Hunter has indicated, we have recently been given additional resources which we hope will enable us to clear mail in all mail centres much more quickly. The other thing that we have done with that additional funding is to change the way we work in the mail centres so that we are separating out some roles that can be performed by contractors and then use our quarantine staff for the actual inspection of the mail itself, rather than having them opening and closing parcels or mail products. That in itself, we hope, will ensure that we are meeting our targets more effectively.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We will check for you, but I think there is a distinction being made between how quickly mail gets examined and whether or not it is examined. I think the mail is examined—</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Is it a mandatory process?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—It is 100 per cent for mail.</p>

AQIS 05	18/02/2008	62-63	STERLE	<p>CHAIR—I understand that. I should explain myself a bit better. Let us take the port of Fremantle in Western Australia. There are quarantine inspection stations where spraying et cetera is carried out. If the port is in Fremantle and if there is a privately owned quarantine facility in Kewdale, which is some 17 or 18 kilometres from the port, is that appropriate?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—We would put in place requirements for the transport of any material that had to be taken from the port to a quarantine treatment centre to contain the quarantine risks that might be attendant on that particular import if, in fact, they had to be taken off the port itself.</p> <p>CHAIR—Say they were full container loads, could they enter the port of Fremantle and then go by road on the back of trucks for 17 or 18 kilometres?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—The answer is yes, they could, if that was where the quarantine approved premises was where the goods were to be opened and inspected and further decisions made about treatments or clearance.</p> <p>Mr Hunter—By then the outside of the container would have been inspected so that any external quarantine risk material would have been subject to inspection.</p> <p>CHAIR—What if it were goods that are oversized tyres, say? I am not sure what it could be. It could be something that does not fit in a container. Could you just throw a tarp over it and head off up Leach Highway?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—No, we would be inspecting the goods at the port itself before they were released, to ensure that they did not have any quarantine risk. There are specific requirements in place for the transport of goods that might still have a residual quarantine risk. I would be happy to come back with further details on how that is managed.</p> <p>CHAIR—If you could do that that would be much appreciated, thank you.</p>
AQIS 06	18/02/2008	63	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—Is it a fact that your vessels would comply with the Queensland maritime board's requirements or is there a separate set of standards that you have applied to yourself?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—I might have to come back to you.</p>
AQIS 07	18/02/2008	64	FIELDING	<p>Senator FIELDING—How long have you had those standard operating procedures?</p> <p>Ms Gordon—Senator, I would have to confirm, but I think it was about August of last year—August 2007—but they were not finalised. We were still in the process of assessing the proposals and had not yet reached agreement.</p>

QIS 08	18/02/2008	67	FIELDING	<p>Mr Hunter—As I mentioned earlier, Senator, the Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis were asked to provide advice on certain aspects of the sampling methodology that had been proposed by New Zealand in their SOP and work plan. Broadly, they confirmed the statistical advice that had been provided to AQIS but recommended a simpler approach to field sampling than that proposed by New Zealand. Essentially, that would require 400 trees be sampled in all orchards except for those orchards which have 300 to 400 trees, in which case all trees would be sampled. Basically, they recommended a simpler approach to the sampling methodology.</p> <p>Senator FIELDING—Can their response be tabled?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I would have to take that on notice, but I do not see any significant reason why we could not provide that to the committee.</p>
QIS 09	18/02/2008	73	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—So there is no differential between the prawns in terms of their origin? But the ones that pass are not from New Caledonia, for example?</p> <p>Mr Liehne—I do not think there are any prawns from New Caledonia coming in at this stage. I would stand to be corrected on that. I will take that on notice.</p>
QIS 10	18/02/2008	73	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Is there anywhere where there is 100 per cent failure?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—No, that is what I am saying. Not to my knowledge. There is no—</p> <p>Mr Liehne—I would need to take that on notice.</p>
QIS 11	18/02/2008	75-76	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—To answer the logic that Senator Boswell was on about, if I am the bloke who is exporting them to Australia and you reject them, as the exporter to Australia do I then put them back on a ship and take them somewhere else or do I get them destroyed? You must know the answer.</p> <p>Mr Liehne—I will have to take that on notice. I cannot answer that.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Surely someone knows the answer.</p> <p>Mr Liehne—The rejection in Australia—</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Surely somebody knows what is going on down—</p> <p>Mr Liehne—The rejection in Australia is against the conditions that are applied to bring the product into Australia. Those conditions do not apply in other markets.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—But surely you would know what the practice is in the trade with rejected prawns. What do they do with them?</p> <p>CHAIR—Mr Liehne has taken it on notice. Does anyone have an answer to that?</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—For God’s sake, surely you must know what they are doing with them.</p> <p>CHAIR—I think we have established, Senator Heffernan, that we do not know.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—No, no; come on!</p> <p>Mr Liehne—We know what the requirements are. We enforce the requirements. I cannot give you an answer as to which proportion goes to where.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Well, who would know the answer to that?</p> <p>Mr Liehne—I would need to check with the inspectorate as to what decisions are made. We will take that on notice.</p>

AQIS 12		Written	Fielding	<p>During Senate Estimates on February 18, 2007 AQIS stated they had consulted with Australia's apple and pear industry about New Zealand's draft Work Plan (WP) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The WP and SOPs are the plans through which New Zealand proposes to reach Australia's standard of 95 per cent efficiency of discovering one tree infected with fire blight from that orchard or region. AQIS stated at the hearing that the key elements of the WP and SOPs were discussed during a workshop in August 2007, where an Apple and Pear Australia Ltd (APAL) representative was present.</p> <p>However, I have a copy of an email sent to AQIS on August 8, 2007 regarding the workshop, which states:</p> <p><i>"As stated in the meeting I was disappointed that you were unable to provide the details of what New Zealand are actually proposing in the SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and work plans. Without this critical detail, the ability to provide informed comment was limited.</i></p> <p><i>"Without the details being proposed by New Zealand on the SOP and WP, the discussions at the meeting were focused on the proposed audit framework ... I believe that the opportunity to engage the level of expertise present was limited to this area only."</i></p> <p>Clearly this workshop cannot be considered as consultation with the industry. APAL was unable to offer input about New Zealand's SOPs and WP because it has never seen any information on these proposals. Yet, the New Zealand Government has consulted with its growers on the WP and SOPs.</p> <p>Depending on the outcome of the current World Trade Organisation dispute, will AQIS commit to releasing this information to the industry and fully consulting with them on New Zealand's proposed Standard Operating Procedures and Work Plan before deciding whether or not to approve it?</p>
AQIS 13		Written	Fielding	<p>On the week commencing October 29, 2007, AQIS received a report from the Centre of Excellence on New Zealand's Standard Operating Procedures and Work Plan. What advice did AQIS receive from the Centre of Excellence on New Zealand's Standard Operating Procedures and Work Plan? Please provide a copy of the report.</p>

BA 01	18/02/2008	5	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—I know, but we are quite different. Could I raise a couple of matters, Mr Chairman? There is a letter from a very distressed—‘please note that DAFF has never corrected incorrect and misleading statements made by it in the <i>Australian Veterinary Journal</i>’ by Dr Robert Steele. Is anyone familiar with Robert Steele? He is making some quite serious allegations against the department.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—It relates to veterinary issues?</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—It does. It relates to the disgrace which is the Eastern Creek Quarantine Station, which I raised in the surrounds of the Olympics. At the time I raised concerns about the sloppy procedures out there, which obviously have cost the horse industry a lot of money. To see people wandering in and out of there at lunchtime, going over the road for a grog and just walking back in when, allegedly, it is the quarantine station, is just a joke. I wonder whether you have responded. If you have not, we might present you with this letter so that you can respond directly to it.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I would need to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Thank you, if you could.</p>
BA 02	18/02/2008	63-64	FIELDING	<p>Mr Roberts—The risk analysis that you are referring to estimated that up to—not all—four per cent of apples could carry fire blight bacteria if there was no risk management in place. That is in the total absence of any risk management measures. The level goes down very substantially when risk management is applied. It is known in the risk analysis as the unrestricted risk. The approach we take to these risk analyses is that we look at the risk. If there was no risk management in place, we then determine whether it is acceptable or not. If it is unacceptable, then we look at risk management measures to bring it down to an acceptable level. So the four per cent level does not reflect the level we estimate would be carried on apples from New Zealand with risk management in place. It is before risk management is applied. So that is just the first point. With regard to the additional research done in Spain, there was actually some published work available on that research by the same research group that was available to us before we finalised our risk analysis. So if you look into the report itself, you will find that that issue has been discussed and considered in reaching a final conclusion and recommendations on the risk analysis. I am quite happy to provide those specific references to the committee if they wish to see them.</p> <p>Senator FIELDING—If you could supply those, that would be great. Thank you. Very good.</p>
BA 03	18/02/2008	74	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—I understand, Mr Hunter, one of the reasons for that is that it was a very low risk that those particular products would be used as bait, for example, to throw in the sea and that was taken into consideration as the difference. Mr Cahill, perhaps on notice—sorry, Senator Heffernan—you could provide us with some formula about exactly what percentage of the batch is actually tested and what 100 per cent testing actually means. I know nobody tests every prawn—I understand that—but exactly what percentage of the batch is, particularly for those organisations that have failed previously? The normal thing would be for an auditing arrangement or noncompliance to go up—and the reverse would also occur. So if you could provide the committee on notice with those formulas, I would appreciate it.</p> <p>Mr Cahill—I would be happy to.</p>

BA 04		Written	Fielding	<p>During the hearing on February 18, 2007, Biosecurity Australia stated it had considered research which found that fire blight could change its form to be viable but non-culturable when calculating its final risk assessment. The conclusion of this risk assessment was that four per cent of apples imported from New Zealand could carry the fire blight bacteria.</p> <p>However, Biosecurity Australia's Import Risk Analysis document clearly dismisses, rather than considers, this evidence in its final risk calculation. Page 58 reads: <i>"... the significance of VBNC (viable but non-culturable) in relation to bacterial survival is not yet clearly established ... Furthermore, the ability of E. amylovora to enter into a VBNC state in or on any apple tissue is yet to be demonstrated."</i></p> <p>Does this important information indicate an increased risk of fire blight being introduced to Australia from imported New Zealand apples beyond Biosecurity Australia's original estimation of four per cent?</p>
BRS 01	18/02/2008	122	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—I would be very interested in knowing about how NAMS has settled down in terms of how many people are regularly using it, or some sort of reflection of its usefulness.</p> <p>Dr Grant—I might just ask Dr Ritman: do you know that answer?</p> <p>Dr Ritman—No. We produce monthly web statistics across all our online web services, which we can provide.</p> <p>Dr Grant—NAMS is in the tens of thousands though, but I would have to give you the exact figure.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Have you any way of breaking that down by state?</p> <p>Dr Ritman—Yes, we do it by—</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I would be interested to know how many Tasmanians or how many Northern Territorians are using and accessing that system.</p> <p>Dr Ritman—From memory, there is some geographical breakdown. There is also a breakdown of: is it a .com, .org, .gov; so we can tell whether it is a page download, so it is not just Google pinging the site and we know they are genuine users.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—What I would like is just an analysis by state of access to NAMS over a period of time, a few years, and that breakdown so that I can get a sense of who are the farmers or the community, more than the government access of it.</p> <p>Dr Grant—We will certainly do that. We will not be able to give you whether they are a farmer or not. What we can do is we can give—</p> <p>Senator MILNE—So long as they are non-government, yes.</p> <p>Dr Grant—Usually the responses or the requests coming in come from a .org or a .gov, and a .gov is one of the governments.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Yes, if we could have that split just to get the sense of non-government.</p> <p>Dr Grant—Yes, we can do that.</p>

CP 01	18/02/2008	18	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—Have any DLOs assigned to the office written policy advice, papers or opinion pieces, formally or formally, for Labor members or senators prior to last year’s federal election? I appreciate that you may not be able to provide all the answers to that broad-ranging question now, but if it is possible to take that on notice I would appreciate it.</p> <p>Mr Pahl—In answer to that last one: so far as we are aware, the answer would be no.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—I accept that. However, if other issues come to your attention, I would appreciate it if you could bring that to our attention.</p> <p>Mr Pahl—Certainly.</p>
CP 02	18/02/2008	18	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—I am pleased to hear that. Let us just hope it is the same with other departments. There were two DLOs with the minister’s staff. Could you tell me how many other staff the minister has?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We might have to bring the number back during the day, if that is okay. According to the government’s guidance on numbers of staff, it is very clear what the limits are. We will bring back the minister’s exact number.</p>
CP 03	18/02/2008	20-21	O’BRIEN	<p>Ms Hinder—In relation to some of the other questions that you were asking, interim answers had been provided for AQIS 01, 02 and 06, and those were from the February 2007 committee hearings. We also had fisheries and forestry 01 from the supplementary October 2006 hearings. Full responses to those questions were also provided to Minister Burke’s office on 4 February for approval, and they are in the current batch, which is coming back to the committee this morning.</p> <p>Senator O’BRIEN—Were they previously provided to the previous minister?</p> <p>Ms Hinder—I am sorry—I would have to take that on notice, unfortunately.</p> <p>Senator O’BRIEN—If you would. In relation to the answers to be provided today, do I understand from your response that they were available to be provided essentially in that form last September?</p> <p>Ms Hinder—I would need to double-check as to whether or not those particular responses were updated in light of current events but, as I said in my previous response, responses to the questions were provided to the previous minister throughout August and, I believe, September of last year and approval was not given for them to be provided to the committee because we went into the caretaker period.</p>

CP 04	18/02/2008	69	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—..... My second question in relation to that is that during the election campaign the growers say that they were contacted by Norm Blackman, Senior Adviser to Mr McGauran, who told them that DAFF had agreed that illegal taro had come into Australia and that growers would be compensated. The next thing is that when the growers put that out to their membership they were threatened with legal action from the department. Can you go through with me what actually happened and whether that legal action has now been dropped and what action you are currently taking?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—On the issue of the suggestion that one of the advisers to Minister McGauran had made some commitments to taro growers and that then there were some issues around the potential for legal action, I would have to take that on notice in terms of what occurred there, because we do not have the information right here.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Surely you have the information about the department threatening legal action.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—With regard to the legal action I do not want to say anything in case I get it wrong—</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Could you again take it on notice. Specifically, I want to know whether it is agreed that a phone call was made to the taro growers, what was promised to the taro growers in that phone call, whether there was legal action threatened and if that has now been dropped, and what is happening about this issue of compensation because of the taro coming into Australia. In particular, I want to know about the IRA and where it is up to.</p>
CP 05	18/02/2008	70	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—It does, but if you cannot answer then I will ask anybody on the panel. Is there a concession from AQIS that the growers were right and AQIS were wrong in terms of the import of the small taro in the first place and is there a process now for compensation?</p> <p>Mr Hunter—My understanding is that all imports of taro met the import conditions that existed at the time.</p> <p>I am not aware of any compensation claims or activities that are underway.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I am gobsmacked by the fact that you are not aware because the growers have argued in the first place that the conditions that were set were not adequate. They have been proven to be right and they have suffered accordingly, and the whole issue of compensation is one that they have been discussing at length. I cannot understand why you do not know about it.</p> <p>Mr Hunter—I will take the question on notice, but I am not aware of it. I am not aware of the requests for compensation.</p>
CP 06		Written	Minchin	All appointments which have been made by the Government (through Executive Council, Cabinet and Ministers) to Statutory Authorities, Executive Agencies and Advisory Boards, with a brief outline of the respective appointee's credentials.
CP 07		Written	Minchin	A list of all vacancies which remain to be filled by Ministerial (including Cabinet and Executive Council) appointments.
CP 08		Written	Minchin	All grants which have been approved by Ministers from within their portfolio.

FA 01	18/02/2008	99	McGAURAN	<p>Senator McGAURAN—Is this the death of the single desk?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—That is not a statement for me to respond to, Senator.</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I will take that on notice and get the minister to analyse your description and respond.</p>
FA 02		Written	Boswell	Please advise the date, number and duration of meetings held between the Minister and the Wheat Export Marketing Alliance on the future of the Australian wheat industry
FA 03		Written	Boswell	Please advise of any other meetings between the Minister and actual wheat growers for consultation on the future of the wheat industry
FA 04		Written	Boswell	Can the Department advise when the Minister will be in a position to inform Australian wheat growers how the new export wheat marketing arrangements will affect them?
FA 05		Written	Boswell	Has the Department provided advice to the Minister on how growers will be affected if the government-accredited exporter fails to pay growers?
FA 06		Written	Boswell	What safeguards or protections for growers has the department investigated, should government accredited exporters fail to pay or delay to pay their wheat suppliers?
FA 07		Written	Boswell	What measures are being considered to provide assistance for the comprehensive education of wheat growers in the world of international trading, hedging, futures contracts and associated financial dealings to prepare growers faced for the first time with these decisions under new marketing arrangements?
FA 08		Written	Boswell	Has the Department considered and provided advice to the Minister of the ramifications of growers not having a guaranteed buyer for the wheat crop for the first time in over 60 years?
FA 09		Written	Boswell	Has the Department taken steps to advise the Minister of the great uncertainty for, and market vulnerability of, growers as they sow the 2008 crop without any explanation about the proposed new marketing program that will apply for the sale of that crop?
FA 10		Written	Boswell	Has the Department evaluated the government's proposed wheat marketing policy in terms of its impact on working family growers?
FA 11		Written	Boswell	Can the Department advise what the government's proposed wheat marketing policy is?
FA 12		Written	Boswell	Has the Department investigated whether Australia's wheat growers will be forced into absorbing added biosecurity risk management costs with the introduction of multiple sellers likely to lead to a breakdown in current grain hygiene controls and established systems of grain handling and transport?

FA 13		Written	Boswell	Has the Department advised the Minister of the financial and morale impact on working family growers of the present 2 to 6 years of drought?
FA 14		Written	Boswell	Has the Department assessed the impact on farm family income in a deregulated wheat export market dominated by international corporations seeking to maximise returns to foreign shareholders rather than Australian working family growers?
FA 15		Written	Boswell	Has the Department assessed the advantages and disadvantages of removing the strict controls over the AWB group that are set out in the Wheat Marketing Act?
FA 16		Written	Boswell	Has the Minister been made aware by the Department of the history behind Glencore, a Swiss-based international trading company?
FA 17		Written	Boswell	Did the Department advise the Minister to direct the Export Wheat Commission to issue an export consent to Glencore - a company cited in the United Nations Oil for Food inquiry as being involved in highly dubious dealings in Iraq during the reign of Saddam Hussein?
FA 18		Written	Boswell	What steps have been taken to obtain "direct industry input" into progressing the Government's new wheat marketing arrangements, given that the Prime Minister when Opposition Leader committed his government to seeking such input in a letter to the Wheat Growers Association, a Member of the Wheat Export Marketing Alliance, in early November 2007 in which he stated " <i>Importantly, if Labor is successful at the next election we will seek direct industry input as to the best means of progressing these new marketing Arrangements</i> "?
FA 19		Written	Boswell	Has the Department sought to consult the Australian Bankers Association on the financial implications for Australian wheat growers under the Government's proposal to repeal the current Wheat Market Act? If so, what advice was received and conveyed to the Minister?
FA 20		Written	Boswell	Has the Department sought input from the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and/or his Department on wheat growers' concerns that under the Government's proposed wheat marketing arrangements there would be serious issues of road safety, more rail closures, greater port congestion and higher transport carbon emissions?
FA 21		Written	Boswell	Has the Department done any work to assess how a majority of export growers will receive cash flow when their grain is no longer taken up by the national pool? Is it true that traditionally some 30% of the export remains unsold on the international market twelve to eighteen months after harvest with the unsold wheat being rolled into the succeeding pool and growers always assured of receiving cash flow by way of pool distributions or by entering into harvest loans based on their tonnage delivery and the estimated pool return. How is this matter being addressed in the government's wheat policy?

FA 22		Written	Boswell	In reference to the department's assessment of the effects of deregulation of the Australian wheat industry single desk, please list any studies, models, reports, assessments or papers (reported separately) that the department, or external consultancies have carried out for the department, on the short term and long term effects of deregulation of the wheat industry to the economy, growers, exporters, other industries, transport, infrastructure or the effects on any other sectors (reported separately)
FA 23		Written	Siewert	<i>New Industries Development Program</i> Does the Government intend to continue to invest in the development of new small to medium sized agri-businesses?
FA 24		Written	Siewert	<i>New Industries Development Program</i> How will that investment be funded?
FA 25		Written	Siewert	<i>New Industries Development Program</i> Given the New Industries Development Program is currently under review, can the Government guarantee that projects currently funded under the program will not have funding removed and projects will be allowed to finish?
FF 01	19/02/2008	116	ABETZ	Senator ABETZ —Can I go back to the northern waters. Take this on notice, please. Have the hours of the coastal surveillance flights been maintained? If you could give me the month-by-month figure for the actual hours flown, that would be very helpful.
FF 02	19/02/2008	118	ABETZ	Senator ABETZ —The government tried to announce this as an election commitment that had already been delivered just a few days or weeks after having been elected to office. Can you confirm to me that, before the change of government, over 90 per cent—I think there were only two fin fishing licences outstanding that had not signed up to the previous government's offer of a buyout. Mr A Grant —I do not have the exact timing of when the final negotiations were done with all fishers but certainly they were started in the time of the previous government and were completed in the time of the current government. Senator ABETZ —Can I ask you to take on notice when the last fin fishing licence was signed up for the total buyout.
FF 03	19/02/2008	119	ABETZ	Senator ABETZ —Can you indicate, without identifying who, how many of those signed up on what particular dates in the months of November and December and what dates of those months? Are you with me on that? Mr A Grant —I understand, but I will have to take that on notice.

FF 04	19/02/2008	120	ABETZ	<p>Dr O'Connell—I think what Mr Grant is saying is that that money was not all in the contingency reserve.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—We know that. We have already got that well and truly established, but the money was made available. The total amount in the contingency and that which was allocated by the Prime Minister's Office allowed for the full buyout.</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—We would have to take on notice what was the nature of the approval from the Prime Minister, but I think what Mr Grant is suggesting is that we did not have that money allocated within the department.</p>
FF 05	19/02/2008	122-123	ABETZ	<p>Mr A Grant—Yes, I can, Senator. There was a commitment to provide, as you said, \$5 million to promote the seafood sector. That election commitment is being implemented by the department. Formal responsibility for that sits with our food and agriculture area, but the department is proceeding with it.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Because the \$5 million is now going to be used, as I understand it, not only for the promotion of seafood but for a whole host of others, and will be shared throughout the agriculture portfolio. Is that correct?</p> <p>Mr A Grant—I am not aware of the specific details. But we will be implementing the election commitment, as it was set out during the election.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—You see, everybody interpreted the promise as being \$5 million for the seafood sector. It now appears that it is \$5 million—</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—Senator, Mr A Grant did not agree that the money is spread around. What he did say was that it is operated by a different part of the department that has already been through this Senate estimates. I am quite happy to take it on notice and provide you with the information.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—That would be very kind. Thank you.</p>
FF 06	19/02/2008	125	IAN MACDONALD	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—I wonder, without imposing on you enormously, if you would not mind providing to the committee a two-page summary of the difficulties and where you are going, and Australia's position and where we want to head. Would that be asking too much?</p> <p>Dr Kalish—In relation to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission?</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes.</p> <p>Dr Kalish—I think we can do that.</p>
FF 07	19/02/2008	125-126	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Did the department inform the minister of his obligations under the financial management regulations in relation to the disbursement of the grants moneys?</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—I would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—It is a pretty important question.</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—It is, and because you want a specific answer, we will have to take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I would like to know when the department informed the minister of his obligations in relation to that.</p>

FF 08	19/02/2008	126	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—According to your report, up until June 2007, 40 grants totalling \$33.8 million were approved and 12 grant recipients were identified for research funding. Between June 2007 and 24 November 2007, how many grant applications were approved or recommended?</p> <p>Mr A Grant—I would have to check the exact number, but my understanding is that 88 grants have been approved by ministers up till that period of time.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Not an extra 88?</p> <p>Mr A Grant—No, 88 in total.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—So there were 40 between the commencement of the program in May 2005 to June 2007 and another 40 between June 2007—</p> <p>Mr A Grant—Another 48. It may be 88 or 89, I am not quite sure, but it is around 48.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Would you be able to provide the committee with details of those grants—who got them, what sum and whether the department recommended that they be approved—please.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—Yes, I can take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Thank you.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—Can I clarify that not all of those grants will have been paid in full. In fact, some of them may not have been paid at all, because once the approval process is made with these grants, negotiation has to take place with the successful applicant about the signing of a deed of funding and in some cases some of the applicants have taken a significant amount of time to sign and negotiate that deed of funding. So you should not assume that all of those grants have been paid.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I am interested in knowing which ones were recommended and/or approved between June and 24 November last year. Whether they eventually get paid is another question.</p>
FF 09	19/02/2008	126	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—As at 1 October last year, how much of the grants money that had been put forward had actually been allocated? How much was left over at 1 October last year in those three programs?</p> <p>Mr A Grant—I will have to take that on notice. I cannot tell you the exact number at 1 October.</p>
FF 10	19/02/2008	126	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Thank you. Can you indicate whether the minister sent a letter to anybody, or a number of people, in the forest industry asking them to apply for the grant money before the election?</p> <p>Mr A Grant—The minister at that time?</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Was Senator Abetz.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware that a letter was sent, but I will take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Can I ask not only whether a letter was sent but that you table a copy of the letter and a list of the people to whom it was sent.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—Presuming there was a letter.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—If there was a letter.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—Okay</p>

FF 11	19/02/2008	127	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Thank you. I would like the list of the people to whom it was sent, and we will see if that correlates with the people who got the grants. In relation to the particular grants, considerable sums of money were paid to Buffalo Valley Logging and CK Forest Management. Can you tell me about those grants, please, and where Buffalo Logging has its operational headquarters.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—I might defer to Mr Bartlett, who is a bit closer to the grants program than me. He may know that.</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—Buffalo Valley Logging Co. has operations in Tasmania. They also have operations in Victoria. In relation to the grant that they applied for under this program, it was for machinery and operations that were based in north-eastern Tasmania. I would have to look up the application to give you the exact location. I do not have that detail with me.</p>
FF 12	19/02/2008	127	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—What is the relationship between Buffalo Valley Logging and CK Forest Management?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—I will have to take that question on notice. That was an issue that we looked at at the time, because those two companies have some common shareholders, but I cannot recall the exact details.</p>
FF 13	19/02/2008	127	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Would you provide the committee with the business case analysis that was the basis for that grant being paid.</p> <p>Mr A Grant—It may be commercial-in-confidence. If we can provide that, we will, but we may not be able to. I will have to check that.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—That may be the case, but it is also the case that this is public money and there is an expectation that there will be an adequate analysis of the business case behind the grant, and it seems extraordinary that they should have gone into liquidation so quickly. In fact, it would be good to know the date of the business case analysis, the date of going into liquidation and the date of the grant being paid.</p>
FF 14	19/02/2008	127	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—What analysis was made, in looking at these grant applications, between adjustment to a changed resource and business as usual plant and equipment? For example, can you explain to me why money was made available to Britton Bros for a new forklift?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—I would have to check that. I do not believe we have provided any money to any applicant for forklifts. When those applications have come before the advisory committee that oversees this, that is one of the items that we have taken out. The information you have might be from the original application, not all of which might be funded. I can double-check, but I am not aware of any instance where we have paid money for a forklift.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Would you mind checking to see if that is the case.</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—Certainly.</p>

FF 15	19/02/2008	128	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—I am very interested in these particular grant applications for a range of things that, in my view, do not constitute adjustment to the particular programs. In relation to the audits, how many of the people who have actually got the grants have provided audit reports and how many have provided them on time?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—We will have to take that on notice, Senator, but it is fair to say that we have not received 100 per cent compliance with people providing audited statements throughout the process, and it is an area that we do need to follow up in improving the program.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I do not understand why you cannot tell me that, because it is on the public record that 17 should have provided audit reports by now and only three have done so on time. Seven have not provided any at all, four were due in 2006 and a further seven were late. That is what is on the public record, so I am asking you to tell me what you are doing about compliance with those audits.</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—We are proposing to write to applicants to remind them of their obligations under the funding deeds to provide audited statements.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—When did you decide to write to them about that?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—It has been in consideration for a little while now. I cannot remember the exact date that we made a decision to do that.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—And the letter has not yet been written?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—I do not think so. Mr Bartlett?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—We have got a letter that is about ready to go out. It is written.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Could you provide me at this time specifically the level of compliance with regard to these particular grants?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—It is the compliance with the need to provide an audited statement?</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Yes—the compliance with the need to provide an audit report on these particular grants. A copy of the letter would be useful as well.</p>
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FF 16	19/02/2008	129	BOB BROWN	<p>Senator BOB BROWN—Did you or people in your department investigate the current logging in the Styx River Valley with a view to seeing if it were in accordance with the regional forest agreement?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—We did not particularly go to Tasmania to investigate that—no.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Did anybody, that you know of, do that?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—It may have been looked at by the environment department.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—No. It says here the department of the minister, the Hon. Tony Burke MP.</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—Senator, could you just read out the actual text in the letter.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Yes, sure.</p> <p>The minister with responsibility for regional forest agreements is the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP. I am advised—</p> <p>that is, David Epstein, the chief of staff for the office of the Prime Minister, and this letter is dated 11 January this year—</p> <p>that investigations by his department indicate that current logging in the Styx River Valley is in accordance with the regional forest agreement.</p> <p>Who undertook that investigation?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We will have to take that on notice, Senator. It is clear that we do not have that information, and I will take it on notice to be sure we get the right answer.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—But this is the Prime Minister’s office advising me that you have undertaken an investigation, and you do not know about it?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I am saying I will take it—</p> <p>Senator McLucas—We will take that question on notice, Senator Brown.</p>
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FF 17	19/02/2008	131-132	BOB BROWN	<p>Senator BOB BROWN—And how many are involved in the woodchip industry per se, Mr Bartlett?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—I do not think data that specific is available from ABS.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—But that is the majority of the export logging operations from Australia. You do not have figures on that?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—We do not collect them—no.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Does anybody that you know of?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—No, not to my knowledge; not to that specific level of detail. As I said, the categories that ABS collect are processing industries and broader forest industry.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—How many of those jobs are in Tasmania?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—I would have to take that on notice, but that would be broken down state by state.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—How many of those are in the direct logging industry itself, including processing, within Australia?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I might suggest, for the efficiency for the committee, that we clearly do not have a breakdown of these numbers here. It may be more productive if you are able to provide the questions to us-</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—You have heard the questions so I will ask you to provide the answers, if you would, Mr O’Connell.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—That is fine.</p>
FF 18	19/02/2008	132	BOB BROWN	<p>Senator BOB BROWN—I have got just a couple more questions. Firstly, the minister visited Tasmania at the end of last year in his capacity as minister for forests. Who did he meet there and what was the purpose of that visit?</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan—The purpose of the visit was to familiarise himself with the forest industry in Tasmania and he met with a range of people from the industry and the Tasmanian government—quite a number. As to the precise people, I think we would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Would you, please.</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan—And ask the minister about the full range of people that he met with.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Did he meet with members of the tourism industry or the environment community who are very much involved with forestry in Tasmania?</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan—I am not aware of that. We would have to check with him on that.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Would you and let me know about that.</p>

FF 19	19/02/2008	133-134	BOB BROWN	<p>Senator BOB BROWN—Would you do an inventory of that and see if there have been any officers involved, and if there have been outputs from the department over the last 12 years, and report back to the committee on that.</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan—Any output in the area of greenhouse gas accounting for forest operations?</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Yes.</p> <p>Mr Quinlivan—That is your specific question?</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Yes.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—And also for standing forests.</p> <p>CHAIR—Senator Brown if you do have—</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—It is a bit—</p> <p>CHAIR—We have 15 minutes, if you can come straight to the point.</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—No—I am not sure I understand what we are being asked to do.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—That sounds like an extremely large project and I would want to assess the resources that would be used for it, because over a 12-year period is a long time.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—This is the estimates for 2007-08. Just very quickly, because there is not much time left for me.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—I would like to clarify this so we finish it off. Senator Brown, I wonder if you could rethink that request?</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Yes—I will put the question off or narrow it right down.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—Because it is a very large piece of work.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—Could the department furnish the committee with any information about any output it has had at all in the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the logging industry in Australia?</p> <p>CHAIR—Senator Brown, I think the department and the parliamentary secretary have guaranteed that they will come back to you and take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—I really do want to clarify what that question is, Senator Brown.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—Is there a time limit? That would be helpful.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—I said for the previous 12 months.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—I am sorry. I thought you said 12 years.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—No, I did not. I changed it to 12 months.</p> <p>CHAIR—Madam Parliamentary Secretary, are you comfortable with that?</p> <p>Senator McLucas—Thank you, we are happy to take that question on notice.</p>
FF 20	19/02/2008	135	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—That is correct? Thank you very much. In relation to the natural gas conversion at Devonport, if I recall, are you able to say—if you do not know, take on notice—how much greenhouse gas emission—as I understand it, literally thousands of tonnes per annum—was being saved as a result of that conversion?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—I will have to take that on notice.</p>

FF 21	19/02/2008	135	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—That is what I was talking about. That was a conversion that made the business more viable, but of course it had all the greenhouse benefits attached to it. I would have thought the Greens would celebrate. Moving on to the Community Forest Agreement and the amount of old growth forest put into reserves, are you able to—if you have the figures—remind us as to the exact number of hectares that were promised to be locked up as opposed to the actual number that were locked up? Is it not a factor that the actual number that were locked up was greater than the number promised?</p> <p>Mr Bartlett—Certainly the answer to the last part of the question is: yes, it was greater. I did not bring the exact numbers with me, but I can provide them on notice.</p>
FF 22	19/02/2008	136	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—Then the Greens, I think as a first, expressed some interest in how many jobs were in downstream processing or how many jobs were being exported. How many jobs do you know will be kept onshore as a result of the pulp mill being developed at Bell Bay? Are you able to give us a figure on that or not?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—It depends on whether you are asking about how many jobs will be created through that establishment or how many jobs will be, in your words, ‘kept on’. I am not quite sure of the context.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—All right, ‘created’. Thank you for correcting me. Do you have that figure?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—I do not have that figure.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—If you can try and take that on notice, that would be helpful.</p>
FF 23	19/02/2008	136-137	ABETZ	<p>Senator ABETZ—How much in costs has this department incurred in defending Senator Brown’s personal court action?</p> <p>Mr A. Grant—I would have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator McLucas—I understand that it is not normal practice to enumerate costs in legal matters. I was in the legal and constitutional committee yesterday and we had that question, and that was the response from the department.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Take it on notice, because I would imagine a fair degree of departmental resources may have been involved. Has the department incurred any cost in relation to that? Is the environment department or the Attorney-General’s funding it? Do you know who?</p> <p>Senator McLucas—We will take the question on notice.</p>
FF 24	19/02/2008	137	BOSWELL	<p>Senator BOSWELL—Senator Abetz put in \$130,000 to study the impact of recreational and commercial fishing on the Queensland government’s proposed rezoning of Moreton Bay, and I would like to know what the study shows and how it impacts on recreational and commercial fishermen in Moreton Bay.</p> <p>CHAIR—Senator Boswell, I have been informed by the department that the first page of questions was to the wrong committee. Your other questions have been taken on notice.</p>

FF 25		Written	Boswell	<p><i>Rezoning of Moreton Bay Marine park</i></p> <p>In relation to the FRDC study on the impact of Moreton Bay rezoning, the federal government funded through FRDC a \$130,000 study to look at the impacts on recreational and commercial fishers of the Queensland government's proposed rezoning of the Moreton Bay Marine Park. Will the Department outline</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Has the study been completed, and if not, when is it due for completion? b. What does the study show are the impacts on recreational fisherman in Moreton Bay?
ID 01	18/02/2008	82	McGAURAN	<p>Senator McGAURAN—Can I get from the minister the government's policy in regard to defending the industry all the way to the WTO?</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I will take that an notice.</p>
ID 02	18/02/2008	92	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have some questions in regard to some of the discussions we are having with Taiwan about stone fruit exports. Could you indicate the value of this market in the past?</p> <p>Mr Morris—I do not have the figures in front of me but, from memory, we had horticultural trade worth something like \$30 million. That was affected by the change in the quarantine requirements at the beginning of 2007, I think it was. A portion of that was the stone fruit trade—around half or a little less than that. If you want the exact figures, we can take it on notice and get that to you.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—That would be good.</p>
MS 01	18/02/2008	8-9	McGAURAN	<p>Senator McGAURAN—Do these increases in estimates come from the new government or were they already in train?</p> <p>Mr Pahl—It would be a mix of both.</p> <p>Senator NASH—Which are which?</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—Can you single out the new government's increases?</p> <p>Mr Pahl—We cannot do that right now but we can certainly come back to you on that. If we can get it to you later today, we will.</p>
MS 02	18/02/2008	10	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—For the committee, can you extrapolate the efficiency dividend within the department?</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—We could give the committee an account of what it does and does not apply to, if that helps you. We could take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator NASH—That would be good. We hear the term 'efficiency dividend' a lot, but there is not a lot of detail surrounding what it actually is.</p>
MS 03	18/02/2008	17	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—I would like to ask some questions as to generic baseline figures as to staff numbers. Would you be able to provide, and I would understand it, Dr O'Connell, if you could get these only at some other stage, the numbers as to staffing of your department, being the full-time, part-time, casual and contract staff within the department?</p> <p>Mr Pahl—Yes, we could do that for you, Senator.</p>

MS 04	18/02/2008	17	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—Thank you; I would appreciate that. Could you tell me the number of consultants that are currently employed by the department and what they are employed for. This might be a significant list. I accept that perhaps we could get that at some stage today if possible. If that is not so, perhaps you could indicate to me now how many consultants you have currently.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I would need to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—Certainly. Whilst you are taking that on notice, Dr O’Connell, I would appreciate it if you could give me—perhaps even now you could do this—an idea of any future consultancies you will be taking on and an appreciation of jobs that are coming up at the moment for which you know you will have a need for some sorts of consultancies.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—That would be a little bit harder in the sense there is always a range of things that people are thinking about that then do not come to fruition. It is probably best to sit with the things where we have got a clear agreement that we will have a consultant rather than something speculative.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—I would expect, Dr O’Connell, given your long history of good leadership and stewardship and governance arrangements, that you would have a very good handle on anticipating extra costs and changes in that regard. I am not saying for a moment that you are avoiding the question, but I wonder if you would be able to have another think about that as to particular areas. If you are unable to at the moment— and it is a very wide-ranging question—I wonder if you would be able to take that on notice and try to get back to me on it. We would expect it to be speculative in some ways, but you can appreciate that it does have a bearing on future budget costs.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We will certainly take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Pahl—Senator Scullion, I can help with that. If you look at the annual report, at page 283, you will see there is an appendix that sets out the list of consultancies up to and including 30 June last year. That will give you a good starting point at least in terms of consultants that the department had on its books up to and including the annual report date of 30 June.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—Thank you, Mr Pahl. That would be a benchline. I guess my real interest is in the changes since then—</p> <p>Mr Pahl—Yes, I understand that.</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—and the projected employment of consultants.</p> <p>Mr Pahl—Can I clarify it so that we do not go and do work that has already been done. So you would be happy if we updated from there to where we are now?</p> <p>Senator SCULLION—Yes, as to the current set of arrangements as to who is on the books now and what is projected would be something of interest.</p>
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MS 05	18/02/2008	22-23	SCULLION	<p>Senator SCULLION—For the committee’s edification, the issues I spoke of this morning were about the efficiency dividend. I am really referring to the budget cuts. I know some of the portfolios indicated quite clearly that there was a cut or change. Are any of these simply rephasings? Have they been put in somewhere else? You have to accept that there are fundamental elements of previous policies which would have been transferred over. I just wondered if there was any way, in your determinations on that matter, you would be able to identify what was a rephasing and what was actually a cut.</p> <p>Mr Pahl—I am almost certain that there are no rephasings in those decreases in estimates in 1.2. I will have a good look over the course of the morning and, if there is any change to that and there is something that has been rephased, I will come back to the table and advise you of that.</p>
MS 06		Written	Minchin	Requests to the Department of Finance to move funds within each portfolio
PIAPH 01	18/02/2008	34-35	NASH	<p>Dr Carroll—Thank you. We did have a study team go across to the United States following the last Senate estimates, particularly Denis Anderson from CSIRO, Dr Iain East from our own area, and Paula Dewar, a queen bee breeder. They met with various US scientists, attended a symposium, produced a report and in particular answered a claim which had been made associating Australian bee exports with colony collapse disorder in the United States.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Senator NASH—Could we have a copy of that report for the committee?</p> <p>Dr Carroll—Yes.</p> <p>Senator NASH—That would be quite helpful.</p>
PIAPH 02	18/02/2008	35	SIEWERT	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Is the bee decline in America continuing? You were talking about the 2006 year when they had the massive decline of 45 per cent. Were there similar declines in 2007 or did it improve?</p> <p>Dr Carroll—My understanding was it was not as bad in 2007, but I would have to get more information on that. The big mortality event, so as to speak, was 2006.</p>
PIAPH 03	18/02/2008	35	SIEWERT	<p>Senator SIEWERT—The point we were at, if I recall it—and it was very late last time we were discussing it—was that there was some concern expressed I think by committee members about the large numbers exported from Australia considering we were obviously interested in the health of our industry and maintaining its vigour.</p> <p>Mr Aldred—I am not sure that we have got recent figures to hand on exports, but we will certainly chase them up and provide them to the committee.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—That would be appreciated, thank you.</p>

PIAPH 04	18/02/2008	36	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—Does the department have a list of those people who have been prosecuted for noncompliance?</p> <p>Mr Aldred—I doubt that we have.</p> <p>Mr Magee—I do not believe that we maintain such a list but, certainly, the states and territories may have that.</p> <p>Senator NASH—It would be interesting to see how many instances there have been.</p> <p>Mr Aldred—We could take that on notice</p> <p>Senator NASH—If you could take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Aldred—We could try to get a report on the numbers of prosecutions.</p> <p>Senator NASH—It would be quite interesting, thanks.</p>
PIAPH 05	18/02/2008	37	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Have you been asked to facilitate the transport or transfer of tissue samples to overseas universities, laboratories et cetera?</p> <p>Dr Carroll—Not that I am aware of, no.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—You have not been involved in any way?</p> <p>Dr Carroll—I am not aware. I have only been in the position since last December.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Could I ask you to take that on notice, then. If you could indicate to me whether the Commonwealth has been asked to facilitate tissue sample, research, exchange and that type of thing with international research agencies, laboratories et cetera and, if so, when and what and that sort of thing.</p> <p>Dr Carroll—Certainly we will do that. I should stress as well that Tasmanians on their own behalf can certainly make contact with those organisations too, so they would not necessarily need to use us. If they did want to use us we would be there to help facilitate and do anything we could to assist, but they also have their own networks that they could use themselves. They would not have to come through us for that.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Thank you.</p>
PIAPH 06	18/02/2008	37-38	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Can you give this committee any advice on where we are up to with the injectable mulesing? Has it failed? I am told it has failed its animal efficiency test, with the result showing it is more painful than mulesing. Is that true or false?</p> <p>Ms Standen—The issue of phasing out the practice of mulesing by 2010 is an industry commitment, and Australian Wool Innovation as the R&D body for the industry has been undertaking a great deal of research in recent years to come up with a viable alternative to mulesing. One of the possibilities was the injection method to ease the pain. I am unable to give you any details on how that research may have unfolded, but I can certainly take that on notice and get some more information to you.</p>

PIAPH 07	18/02/2008	39	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—How long ago did they get the money for these trials?</p> <p>Ms Standen—I will have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—A year or two years? Ten years? Fifty years? How long ago, roughly?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We can take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes, you can. But you must have some idea. Was it a year ago? Surely to God there is someone in the back room there who knows the answer. When did we give them the money for these trials?</p> <p>Ms Standen—We do not give them money.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—Well how long have the trials been going on?</p> <p>Ms Standen—As I said to an answer previously, I am not precisely sure how long these trials have been going on.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—But, if you don’t know, who does know?</p> <p>Ms Standen—Within the last three or four years.</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—But who does know? If you don’t know—Dr O’Connell, who does know?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We will find that before the day is done, if that is okay.</p>
PIAPH 08	18/02/2008	40	MILNE	<p>Senator MILNE—Could we have the original agreement with this company about the trial and the date by which the evaluation was to be finalised. Clearly any kind of trial must have had an end date when they had to report back. Could we have the original arrangements for the trial, including the date by which it was to be concluded and an evaluation and report back was to be finalised. Could I have that in addition to what has been said.</p>
PIAPH 09	18/02/2008	39, 43, 124	HEFFERNAN	<p>Dr O’Connell—If it would be helpful to the committee we could approach AWI and see if they will provide us with an assessment of progress that could be shared with the committee.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—While you are at it, could you also ask AWI their view on Better Choices, which is a Bayer program for pain relief, as opposed to these other things? One of the things that is going wrong with the pegs is that they fall off because they are not put on properly.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Mr Murnane—Perhaps the best way of dealing with that could be to make sure that AWI includes issues of how they are going on pain relief measures in the previous package of information that was spoken about earlier today. We could make sure that they include it.</p>
RPI 01	18/02/2008	46	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—I have a couple of quick ones on canola, probably to the minister actually. I am genuinely interested in the federal government’s position on GM canola. Could you outline that to the committee?</p> <p>Senator Sherry—If you want that position, I can take it on notice and Mr Bourke can come back to you with a response.</p> <p>Senator NASH—If you could.</p>

RPI 02	18/02/2008	49	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—If industry is saying, ‘We think we can do it’—Dr O’Connell, you might be able to help here if Mr Perrett and Mr Reading cannot, and this may be something you have to take on notice—and if the overarching information is the same why is it that the different state governments have different approaches to this issue? Given that they are all state Labor governments, one would think they may have all agreed. But it would be interesting to have some feedback and information on why the different states have taken the different positions.</p> <p>Mr Perrett—I think that is something the individual states would have to answer. We do not have the answers to that.</p> <p>Senator NASH—Do we have any way of accessing that through the department?</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—I would be happy enough to see if we can find the relevant statements from the different states as to their position and pass that on to you. I think that would be fairly straightforward to do.</p> <p>Senator NASH—Thanks, Dr O’Connell.</p>
RPI 03	18/02/2008	50	HEFFERNAN	<p>Senator HEFFERNAN—We are a colourful bunch, we bushies. I am sure there will be blokes growing GM that you do not know about. What is the set-up if there is a grain shortage on one side of the country or the other? If there is a moratorium on GM over there are we allowed to take GM canola there if they run short?</p> <p>Mr Perrett—I could not give you a solid answer on that.</p> <p>CHAIR—Do you want to take that on notice, Mr Perrett?</p> <p>Mr Perrett—Thank you.</p>
RPI 04	18/02/2008	55	McGAURAN	<p>Senator McGAURAN—Minister, Mr Reading explained to Senator Adams the formula used in regard to raising funds for a research levy and a government contribution with a ceiling. Can the minister commit that that formula will stay in place for research and development corporations in the rural sector for the year 2008-09?</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I will take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—Is that a no?</p> <p>CHAIR—It is taken on notice, Senator McGauran, and the minister cannot tell you any more than that. He will take it on notice and bring it back to the committee. On that, Mr Perrett, on behalf of the committee, I wish you well for this afternoon. I hope it all goes well and I hope that we have been of some assistance to you.</p>

RPI 05	18/02/2008	124	McGAURAN	<p>Senator McGAURAN—Within those figures, what are the number of women that have taken up the program?</p> <p>Mr Dalton—I cannot tell the gender balance from these figures.</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—On notice?</p> <p>Mr Dalton—We could take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—And in particular, in my state of Victoria, can you tell me how many people from July 2007 to now have been on FarmBis and how many women?</p> <p>Mr Dalton—I will have to take that on notice. The program changed in 2007-08 to be run nationally, but we can get some data for that.</p>
RPI 06	18/02/2008	124	McGAURAN	<p>Mr Dalton—FarmBis provides assistance for primary producers and rural land managers to undertake approved training activities to build business and natural resource management skills.</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—Perhaps the minister at the table can tell me, how does that not fit into the government's education revolution?</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I am not briefed on the education revolution, so I cannot say one way or the other, but I am happy to take it on notice.</p>
RPI 07	19/02/2008	125	O'BRIEN	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—And the government is not satisfied that any other progress has been made.</p> <p>Dr O'Connell—I would have to take on notice precisely what the status is, but my understanding is the milestones have not been met. My understanding is that the further milestones have not been met, but I would take that on notice to clarify it.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Thank you for that.</p>

RPI 08	18/02/2008	127	SIEWERT	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Before the current drought, how many people were accessing FarmHelp? As I understand it, what you are saying is the people are going through exceptional circumstances. They are not accessing FarmHelp because they are going through exceptional circumstances. What was the uptake of FarmHelp before the current drought?</p> <p>Mr Thompson—Mr Dalton may have the detailed numbers. Before the current drought, the numbers were higher than 54, but they were not great. The numbers tended to be in the hundreds, not the thousands.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—Did you do any survey work of why there was not a big uptake with that program, because if I am reading what you are saying correctly, you are saying there are not many people accessing this program. I would then think that maybe it is not meeting their needs.</p> <p>Senator McGAURAN—But it is not necessarily a bad thing if they are not accessing the program.</p> <p>Senator Sherry—What has been indicated by the officers is that the forward estimates of the budget could then be adjusted because the take-up of those programs was lower than otherwise projected. It is a responsible position to come to a conclusion, after a reasonable period of time, that the original calculations and projections did need adjusting, and that has happened.</p> <p>Mr Dalton—By way of illustration, at 30 June in the periods 2005-06, 2007-08, the numbers are 563 income support recipients; in June 2006, 421; 30 June, 223; and, as has been noted before by Mr Thompson, 31 January this year, 54. So you can see a rundown of people on income support under FarmHelp during the period of the drought. If you wish to go back beyond 2005, we can provide some information about that.</p>
RPI 09	19/02/2008	99-100	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—I appreciate you might have to take this on notice, but would you mind having a look at those programs and coming back to the committee with the times elapsed between reviews of estimated forecasts for those programs which are also demand driven.</p> <p>Dr Samson—What you will probably find, depending when the program started, is that the time that elapsed between the original announcement and a revision may vary. What would be consistent throughout all of it, I think, is that the revision would occur at the appropriate point in a budget cycle. So the revision that has just occurred in this program really reflects that we are moving into that part of a budget cycle.</p> <p>Senator NASH—So that normally happens in January? Did you do the revision for this in January?</p> <p>Mr Thompson—In January, yes. It would normally happen at any opportunity where a budget estimate is revised, so it would be for additional estimates in the budget process and a period midway through the year.</p> <p>We can come back on notice, but for many of the drought ones it is roughly every three months.</p>

RPI 10	19/02/2008	105	ADAMS	<p>Senator ADAMS—I was a little late coming, so I apologise for that. Having spent quite a lot of time up in the Morawa and the mid-west area of Western Australia, which has had three, four and five years of drought, I have some comments here from Chairman Warren Carslake of the Dry Season Focus Group. Their biggest problem was that, when they really had a very poor season or no crop last year, by the time they got together and tried to work out whether or not they could make the grade—a lot of them having problems because of the escalation of fertiliser and chemicals and not being able to obtain any seed grain—they were making decisions or trying to make decisions that perhaps they should try and take up the drought assistance grant and move away. But, because they were in the middle of harvest and trying to scratch out whatever they could, the deadline of 31 January was a huge problem. Why was that deadline set so early? That was the deadline for the drought assistance package, and they just did not have the time. By the time they sorted out their business plan as to whether they could or could not stay—what they could do—they felt it was absolutely unfair to force this upon them. 31 January is a very difficult time because, for any of them that wanted to have a break if they had the opportunity, that was it and the cut-off was 31 January. So why was that decision made?</p> <p>Mr Thompson—Ms Cupit might have some more information on that. That area was given full exceptional circumstances assistance last year. It is an ongoing program and they can apply for income support from Centrelink on a regular basis. They can apply for an interest rate subsidy on two occasions per year. All I can think is that what they are talking about is that 31 January could well be the date for the first application set by the Western Australian department running the interest rate subsidy program over there for applying for the first interest rate subsidy. We would have to take that on notice and check the detail.</p> <p>Dr Samson—If you could give us the—</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—I could read the quote, yes. It is from the <i>Farm Weekly</i> of 14 February 2008.</p> <p>CHAIR—Do you wish to table that?</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—Yes, I will table it. It reports a comment from Mr Warren Carslake: DRY Season Focus Chairman Warren Carslake said he was surprised the Government had made the decision to cut funding to drought assistance before farmers had even had the chance to apply. “Last year they opened up qualifications for more farmers to come on board,” Mr Carslake said. “So all these applications would have barely even arrived yet with the deadline of 31 January. “Yet the minister is saying the demand for the funding has dropped now the drought has broken.” I can assure you that, being a farmer, no way was the drought breaking with the little amount of rain that this area has had. The drought has not broken, and these people are in dire straits. While I am speaking about this, a lot of them rely upon the FarmBis program to try to make decisions as to whether they are going to stay or go. With fertiliser going up the way it has, chemicals going up and no seed grain available, they are having a terrible time. They are very disappointed with what has happened.</p> <p>Dr O’Connell—We would like to take that on notice, because that appears to be a misapprehension, as far as I am aware, of the state of play. If that is right, we are more than happy to get in touch with the person and explain the circumstances, but it is not the case that that is closed.</p>
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RPI 11	19/02/2008	110-111	NASH	<p>Senator NASH—One of the priorities under rural research and development is, ‘Improving competitiveness through a whole of industry approach.’ Can you just explain to the committee what that means and what is entailed in that? Would you like to take it on notice?</p> <p>Dr Robinson—Can I refer that to a departmental—</p> <p>Senator HEFFERNAN—That is bureaucratic jargon. Can anyone decipher it?</p> <p>Senator NASH—I am sure it is a very good thing, but I just wondered exactly what it was. Would you mind taking it on notice and just coming back to the committee about what exactly that ‘improving competitiveness through a whole of industry approach’ might be. Thank you.</p> <p>Dr Robinson—I will take it on notice, if I am the appropriate one.</p> <p>Senator NASH—I am sure it is far too important for you to take a stab at. We would like a full and detailed briefing to the committee.</p>
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