



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Senator the Hon. Glenn Sterle  
Chairman  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Sterle

Having reviewed the transcript of the Additional Estimates hearing conducted by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 13 February 2012, I would like to make the following corrections.

The first correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Back which can be found on page 28 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator BACK:** But can you advise me if that commencement date of 1 March will be pushed out until such time as those legislative amendments are through the parliament?

**Ms Langford:** They take effect the day after registration.

Ms Langford mistakenly stated the incorrect commencement date for the legislative instruments, the correct response should read:

**Ms Langford:** They are currently drafted to take effect on 1 March 2012.

The second correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Rhiannon which can be found on page 33 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator RHIANNON:** Thank you, Minister. Minister, how many abattoirs did you visit and in what locations?

**Senator Ludwig:** There were two abattoirs and three feedlots. The two were in Qatar and Bahrain. We can correct that if we are wrong.

Mr Ludwig stated the incorrect number of abattoirs that were visited, the correct response should read:

**Senator Ludwig:** There were three abattoirs visited in Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. Two feedlots were visited; in Qatar and Bahrain.

The third correction relates to an answer to a question by the Acting Chair on page 53 of the proof Hansard:

**ACTING CHAIR:** With great respect, the day you discovered it, not six months later, is the day you should have had the courtesy to tell the industry, given that there is foot-and-mouth over there.

**Mr Chapman:** The day that we discovered it was when we started our investigations to determine what had been imported and what the particular importers had done. I have just been advised it was not 4 April, it was 4 March, so that was—

Mr Chapman mistakenly quoted that the day of the media release was 4 March 2011, the correct response should read:

**Mr Chapman:** The day that we discovered it was when we started our investigations to determine what had been imported and what the particular importers had done. I have just been advised it was 4 April, so that was—

The fourth correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Colbeck on page 73 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator COLBECK:** I would like to ask some questions about work that was done around a dedicated survey of fish stocks and an amount of \$200,000 that has not been recredited to the levy base. Can you give us some information on that? .....

**Dr Findlay:** In early June. In effective terms we have their money for a month too long. I will also remind you that where we have overcollected in a fishery they get that money back. That is a normal practice. Where AFMA has paid money out in advance—where we are paying AFMA's bill—we do not charge industry interest on that. We think we are doing the best we can within the system. On this occasion, though, we did make a mistake and we are trying to fix it.

Dr Findlay incorrectly stated AFMA when he was referring to industry, the correct response should read:

**Dr Findlay:** In early June. In effective terms we have their money for a month too long. I will also remind you that where we have overcollected in a fishery they get that money back. That is a normal practice. Where AFMA has paid money out in advance—where we are paying industry's bill—we do not charge industry interest on that. We think we are doing the best we can within the system. On this occasion, though, we did make a mistake and we are trying to fix it.

The fifth correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Siewert which can be found on page 87 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator SIEWERT:** You are taking on notice the value of them. How much do we have to spend on each of those?

**Mr McNamara:** For the Action on the Ground program – this is round 1 of Action on the Ground – we have up to \$25 million over three financial years.

Mr McNamara incorrectly stated the number of years that funding for Round 1 is available for, the correct response should read:

**Mr McNamara:** For the Action on the Ground program – this is round 1 of Action on the Ground – we have up to \$25 million over four financial years.

The sixth correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Williams which can be found on page 94 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator WILLIAMS:** How many were granted?

**Mr McDonald:** For the exceptional circumstances relief payment, which is the income support, there were 39 recipients up until 31 December 2011, and there were 19 recipients of the exceptional circumstances interest rate subsidy. The respective expenditure on both of those measures was just over \$1 million for the income support and \$2.67 million for the interest rate subsidy.

Mr McDonald provided incorrect expenditure figures for the 2011–12 year, the correct response should read:

**Mr McDonald:** For the exceptional circumstances relief payment for farmers and small businesses, which is the income support, there were 39 recipients up until 31 December 2011, and there were 19 recipients of the exceptional circumstances interest rate subsidy for farmers. The respective expenditure on both of those measures in 2011–12 through to 31 December 2011 was approximately \$335 000 for the income support and approximately \$745 000 for the interest rate subsidy.

The seventh correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Colbeck which can be found on page 109 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator COLBECK:** What was the total allocation to the program, though—not how much was spent, how much was allocated to it to start with? I am trying to get a sense of how much was put in this pot in the first place. My understanding was that it was a fair bit of money. I accept that it might be phased over a number of cycles; I understand all that. But I want to know how much was put in the pot in the first place. There was a significant allocation, as I understand it, towards assisting these—.....

**Mr Talbot:** I will check this, but my understanding is that phase 1 was not part of the IFCI. It was given to our department and then when IFCI came in, our program was rolled into the IFCI and from phase 2 on it was part of IFCI.

Mr Talbot incorrectly advised of the circumstances of the Asia Pacific Forestry Skills and Capacity Building Program, the correct response should read:

**Mr Talbot:** In 2007 the Asia Pacific Forestry Skills and Capacity Building Program was announced as a standalone initiative. However, in early 2008 the government decided to fund the program through the International Forest Carbon Initiative.

The eighth correction relates to an answer to a question by Senator Milne on page 123 of the proof Hansard:

**Senator MILNE:** Yes, sure. There has been a call by a number of groups across Australia for the release of any draft text and also for confirmation that the US has been trying to restrict access to the negotiating documents to a four-year period after any agreement is completed. Is that true, and are we resisting it? Are we opposing that?

**Ms Evans:** In regard to the second part—this idea that there would be restricted access for four years—that is not a proposal that we have heard about at all, so we are not aware that that is under debate within the negotiations. In terms of access to the text as it stands now, it is a draft negotiating text and, because of that, it has been agreed between the parties to the negotiation

that it will remain as a government-to-government text, but there are opportunities for stakeholders to gain an insight into what is going on in the negotiations.

Ms Evans misunderstood the second part of the question, thinking the Senator was referring to the final text of the agreement after the agreement had been completed, the correct response should read:

**Ms Evans:** In regard to the second part—the TPP negotiating parties have exchanged a letter that sets out an understanding among TPP countries for the handling of negotiating text and other TPP documents. As is normal practice in trade negotiations the Parties have agreed to keep the negotiating documents confidential, while allowing government consultation processes. A model copy of the letter exchanged between Parties specifying a four year period of confidentiality of negotiating documents is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s website. Once the negotiations are finalised and the text is agreed between parties it will be made public and subject to public and parliamentary scrutiny through a review by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. In terms of access to the text as it stands now, it is a draft negotiating text and, because of that, it has been agreed between the parties to the negotiation that it will remain as a government-to-government text, but there are opportunities for stakeholders to gain an insight into what is going on in the negotiations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide clarification on the above points.

Yours sincerely

Cathrine Stephenson

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Parliamentary Business Branch

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