

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD01

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Sugar Industry

**Hansard Page:** 10 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Mr Williamson**—The sugar program was a five-year program that was announced by the previous government in mid-2004 from recollection. It had about seven or eight different elements and the last one, I think, is the one that finishes as of 30 June this year.

**Senator**—So there is no need for any further programs to assist or work with the sugar industry?

**Mr Williamson**—That would be a matter for the government.

**Senator Sherry**—It is a policy issue.

**Senator COLBECK**—There is no required need as far as the government is concerned for continuation to work with the sugar industry.

**Senator Sherry**—It is a policy matter for the minister. I will take it on notice and raise it with him.

**Answer:**

The Sugar Industry Reform Program 2004 concluded on 30 June 2009. Weather delays have prevented one project being finalised and the Department is working closely with the proponents to make sure it is completed in the near future.

The Government will continue to monitor the outcome of the program.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD02

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** 26 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Milne asked:**

Can you tell me whether the minister took any advice—perhaps the department can help me here—in relation to what would be the waste associated with jettisoning Land and Water Australia before it completed its strategic plan?

**Answer:**

The department provided policy briefing to the Minister on all savings measures for the 2009-10 Budget.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD03

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** 34 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

With great respect—and thank you for those remarks—would you, Minister, be able to provide to the estimates committee here the brief from the department that led to the winding up of Land and Water Australia?

**Answer:**

No.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD04

**Division/Agency:** Land & Water Australia

**Topic:** Value of research projects

**Hansard Page:** 37 (25/05/2009)

**Dr Robinson**—You are right, there are different lengths of commitment on those projects, although the majority are due for completion in roughly the next 12 months under the current strategic research and development plan. There certainly are some exceptions, for example, particularly in our innovations program where three- or four-year projects were signed in the last 12 months, and in a couple of instances elsewhere where projects have already been extended into the following financial year, but the majority will be finishing in the next 12 to 14 months.

**Senator SIEWERT**—What value overall are those projects?

**Dr Robinson**—I would have to take that question on notice.

**Senator SIEWERT**—If you could. Could you also let us know—I am presuming if you cannot answer that question, you cannot answer the next one—the value of the commitments for the projects that are ongoing over the next three or four years, the innovation projects you mentioned.

**Dr Robinson**—Yes and, if I may, would you like me to value LWA's commitment or total partners' commitment, because we separate the two?

**Senator SIEWERT**—That is a good point. I would like both because what I am trying to find out obviously is what partnerships you have with organisations where the funding that LWA provides will be critical to the ongoing project.

**Answer:**

The total value of research projects under Land & Water Australia management at the end of May 2009 was approximately \$56million. An additional \$4million worth of projects were at various stages of contract negotiation.

At the end of May 2009 undelivered, contracted milestones on research projects totalled \$18.7million. Of this, milestones totalling \$5.82million are scheduled for delivery prior to 1 July 2009, \$9.51million are scheduled for delivery prior to 1 July 2010 with the remaining \$3.37million scheduled for delivery between 1 July 2010 and 1 July 2012.

Research projects are funded from a combination of government funding and third party funding with the mix varying from program to program and project to project.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD05

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** 38 (25/05/2009)

**Senator McGauran asked:**

**Senator McGAURAN**—Can we get a copy of those 146 projects?

**Dr Robinson**—Yes.

**Senator McGAURAN**—Today?

**Dr Robinson**—I would be hesitant to give you a copy of the 26 uncontracted because they are not—

**Senator McGAURAN**—Fair enough—120?

**Dr Robinson**—Yes, 120. We certainly should be able to give you a listing.

**Answer:**

The list of projects currently contracted by Land and Water Australia was provided to the Committee on 1 June 2009.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD06

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** R&D Funding

**Hansard Page:** 39 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

Dr O'Connell, has the government considered the Productivity Commission report that recommended that more funding rather than less be spent on agricultural R&D?

**Answer:**

The government has considered the report.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD07

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** R&D and the Productivity Commission report

**Hansard Page:** 39 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

So the only formal response is to cut R&D, in contradiction of the Productivity Commission report?

**Senator Sherry**—I will take it on notice and find out where the response to the PC report is. I would also point out to you, Senator Colbeck, that there are a very significant number of reports that come to the government and the ministers of the day—and to all governments and all ministers of the day—recommending increased funding for a whole range of things. It is then government policy that determines whether that funding that is recommended to government by a particular inquiry will be followed through and at what level. No government, including yours when you were in government, automatically picks up the recommendations of a report on a particular funding matter. It is a matter for the minister and for cabinet to determine in accordance with budget priorities.

**Answer:**

Please refer to the answer provided to APD06.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD08

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** 42 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Back asked:**

Minister, was there any consultation over the decision with those parties who made contributions beyond the government sector?

**Answer:**

Decisions relating to the Commonwealth Budget remain Cabinet-in-Confidence until they are announced.



Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2009

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Question:** APD09

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** 45 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

*Funding for R&D*

**Senator COLBECK**—That is the annual investment, so effectively what we are losing is not \$45.9 million over four years; we are potentially losing \$140 million over five years in investment in R&D through the government withdrawing from this space and making that cut of \$45.9 million.

**Dr O’Connell**—Can I suggest, Senator, that that is a leap of logic. Quite a few of those partners will clearly continue in this area, especially in the work we are looking at. The intention is that those priority areas will continue on with new managers. You would not expect to see that drop in that nature. There may well be some drop-off, but I do not think it could be said that—

**Senator COLBECK**—I did say ‘potential’. I said up to \$140 million.

**Senator Sherry**—Yes, exactly. We now how ‘up to’ is used by everyone.

**Senator COLBECK**—But it is quite clear—

**Senator Sherry**—It is speculation at this point.

**Senator COLBECK**—It is a bit like ‘temporary’, Senator Sherry—

**Senator Sherry**—Your words are speculation. We will take it on notice and if we are—

**Senator COLBECK**—or putting ‘billion dollars in deficit’ after 300.

**CHAIR**—Senator Colbeck, the minister is answering your question. At least give him the decency to answer and then you can ask your question.

**Senator Sherry**—If we are able to provide you with any assessment of the figures that will put aside your speculation and assertion, if we are able to calculate any figures in the area you have indicated—we do not have that now—we will provide that, but we will take the question on notice.

**Senator COLBECK**—But it is quite clear though, isn’t it, Senator, that the direct government funding last year of \$13 million was able to be leveraged up to \$39 million. This year it was slightly less; it was still in the 30 millions. So as a direct result of government being in this space, providing funding for R&D, it has been able to attract other funding. The government is now moving out of that space; it is not going to be there in this direct work. There is no funding anywhere else in the budget to take up these programs, it is disappearing, so the leverage disappears with it.

**Senator Sherry**—There are other variables that have been indicated, so I do not accept your conclusion.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD09 (continued)

**Senator COLBECK**—I would not expect you to. You do not want to admit the fact that you are taking a huge chunk out of funding.

**Senator Sherry**—We will take on notice to see if, taking into account the other variables that have been mentioned, a figure can be calculated.

**Answer:**

Most projects which are currently overseen by Land and Water Australia (LWA) will continue under the management of partner research organisations or other appropriate agencies. The exact number and quantum of funding will not be known until the 2009-10 financial year progresses.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD10

**Division/Agency:** Land & Water Australia

**Topic:** LWA Projects

**Hansard Page:** 45 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—I want to go back to a question you were discussing with Senator Siewert with respect to which projects would be transferred, which ones would have to come to an end, and you said that you are still in the decision-making process so you could not answer that now. I know you probably do not need any additional work right now, but could you take on notice to report back to the committee which projects you are going to have to abandon, even though they are uncompleted, and which projects might be reported back to transfer to other agencies and which agencies they may be.

**Dr Robinson**—I will take that on notice

**Answer:**

Land and Water Australia has reviewed the projects it is currently managing. The information requested remains commercial-in-confidence.

The negotiations to transfer projects are still in progress.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD11

**Division/Agency:** Land & Water Australia

**Topic:** LWA Operational Plan

**Hansard Page:** 47 (25/05/2009)

**Senator McGauran asked:**

**Senator McGAURAN**—One clarifying question. It was clear that we were seeking today 120 projects. It is not a question on notice; it is a request that we receive 120 projects in progress today.

**Senator Sherry**—It is a question on notice, Senator McGauran.

**Senator McGAURAN**—I do not want it in a month or in three months time.

**Senator Sherry**—You can take it from me: I will personally try to ensure that we get a list of projects to you by the end of the day, Senator.

**Senator McGAURAN**—My question is this—

**Dr Robinson**—Would it be useful to give you a copy of the draft annual operational plan which was in place for next year and lists the projects planned for next year?

**Senator SIEWERT**—That would be good.

**Dr Robinson**—I do not know whether that would be acceptable.

**Senator Sherry**—The process is it is taken on notice. If we have the material—I will obviously have to check with the minister, but I do not see any reason as to why it cannot be provided. The formality, as it has been on all occasions, is that it is taken on notice. We will try to get it to you by the end of the day, Senator McGauran.

**Answer:**

The list of projects currently contracted by Land and Water Australia was provided to the Committee on 1 June 2009.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD12

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** On-farm wheat stocks

**Hansard Page:** 58 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Williams asked:**

**Senator WILLIAMS**—Just on another issue: there was obviously a lot of on-farm storage after harvest last year. Have you any idea what stocks are held on farm?

**Mr Grant**—The ABS data collection should show that. I do not have the latest figure, but I can take that on notice and provide that to you.

**Answer:**

The *Australian Wheat Supply and Exports Monthly* report released by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) provides estimates of wheat that is committed and available for purchase.

It does not include a specific estimate on the volume of on-farm stocks. However, the difference between the volume of wheat held in stocks at the end of a month and the wheat 'available' at the start of the next month is likely to be mostly a combination of wheat held on-farm (including dairy farms) and wheat already consumed by the dairy industry as the dairy industry is not currently covered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics wheat usage surveys.

It is estimated that at the start of May 2009 around 1.4 million tonnes of wheat was held on-farm or used by the dairy industry.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD13

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** 63 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH**—Is it possible to get the information on each of those grants, on where that funding is actually going to for that proponent?

**Mr Grant**—To the particular companies?

**Senator NASH**—Yes.

**Mr Grant**—Yes, we can take that on notice and provide that. We will be putting it on our website. We are currently negotiating funding agreements with those successful applicants and

**Answer:**

Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants have been approved for the following companies:

1. Walgett Special One Co-operative Ltd - Grower cooperative, NSW, \$66,000
2. Greentree Farming - Grain grower, NSW, \$35,200
3. OzEpulse Pty Ltd - Grain exporter, NSW, \$24,750
4. Global Grain Australia Pty Ltd - Grain exporter, VIC, \$21,450
5. GRAINassist - Agricultural broker, VIC, \$19,250
6. Boongalla Organics Australia - Grain grower, QLD, \$13,200
7. PentAg Commodities Ltd - Grain marketer, QLD, \$9,735
8. Agfarm Pty Ltd - Grain exporter, NSW, \$9,460
9. T. H. Cooper and Co. - Grain grower, NSW, \$3,795

Projects will target niche marketing opportunities in new and existing markets, using strategies including quality assurance, paddock-to-plate traceability and organic grain certification. They will help to build long-term export relationships with customers across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD14

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** 64 (25/05/2009)

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH**—What criteria did you use to measure up? I guess it was going to be value for money giving these—

**Mr Grant**—There was a set of criteria set out in the guidelines. Again, I can provide you with that as well. In general, the program is about encouraging new exporters to open up new markets, so we were looking for, perhaps, smaller companies who had not had that market experience before, who had not exported a lot before and who had some new initiatives and ideas. A lot of the successful applicants were smaller companies who had not done a lot of exporting in the past, but there was a set of other criteria in the guidelines and I am happy to provide that to you on notice as well.

**Senator NASH**—That would be good. Are they all new markets or are they just new players in the market, exporting and who might need a bit of a hand.

**Mr Grant**—A little bit of both, I think, Senator. Of the nine, there were five who had not previously exported who received grants.

**Senator NASH**—Were there existing Australian exporters already going into those markets that they are obviously trying to get into?

**Mr Grant**—I cannot tell you that off the top of my head.

**Senator NASH**—Could you take that on notice?

**Mr Grant**—I can try to do that.

**Senator NASH**—It would be interesting to know if we already have Australian exporters going into a market and the government is assisting others to compete.

**Mr Grant**—It depends. If you already have bulk exports going in you might have container or bagged exports that might be complementary to that process, but I will take that on notice and come back to you.

**Answer:**

*Merit Criteria*

Applications under the Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program were evaluated against the following merit criteria by reference to the extent:

*Criterion 1:* the project is likely to lead to the development of new exporters of wheat or new market opportunities for wheat;

*Criterion 2:* the project will lead to growth opportunities in the targeted market;

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD14 (continued)

*Criterion 3:* the project is likely to bring together domestic and international industry participants to encourage the establishment of long term sales relationships with international wheat customers;

*Criterion 4:* the applicant has comparatively less experience or less financial capacity to deliver effective technical market support;

*Criterion 5:* the project involves the new export of a particular category of wheat to a particular category of market or involves export to a niche market;

*Criterion 6:* the applicant has the resources and capability to carry the project through to finality; and

*Criterion 7:* the applicant is able to demonstrate that the project meets their business'/ organisation's strategic goals.

A requirement also exists under the program guidelines to give preference to new or smaller exporters with less experience and/or less financial capacity to deliver effective technical market support, and proposals that are less likely to occur without funding assistance.

*Export Markets*

All successful grantees under the first round of the Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program are either new or smaller scale exporters. While the approved companies will be exporting to markets that already receive Australian wheat, the projects to be funded under the grants program are focused on securing sales of Australian wheat to niche sections of these markets that otherwise may not have been possible.



**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD15

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** 107 (26/05/2009)

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH**—Can you provide to the committee—and I am happy for you to do it on notice—a list of the people on actual committee? When did it start?

**Dr Ottesen**—When did it start its work here?

**Senator NASH**—No, when did the code come in?

**Dr Ottesen**—It was in May 2007.

**Senator NASH**—Thank you very much.

**Mr Grant**—And I have got the names of the committee members here.

**Senator NASH**—No, you can just provide them on notice. That is fine.

**Mr Grant**—Yes.

**Answer:**

Members of the Horticulture code of Conduct Committee are:

Ms Christine Hawkins (Chair)

Mr Gerard Richmond (Processor)

Ms Felicity Robson (Exporter)

Mr Mark Chown (Grower)

Ms Ros Smerdon (Packer)

Ms Trish Skinner (Wholesaler)

Mr Brad Latham (Market Owner)

Ms Margy Osmond (Retailer Representative)

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD16

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Australian Grown Labelling

**Hansard Page:** 109 (26/05/2009)

**Question:**

**Senator COLBECK**—Okay. You have mentioned the two majors, Coles and Woolies. Do we go through you to get a list of those that have signed up? Can you give us that information or do we have to go to Australian Made?

**Mr Grant**—We understand that by March there were 66 businesses registered to use the Australian Grown logo.

**Senator COLBECK**—Do we have details of who they are?

**Mr Grant**—We do. We can probably provide those to you.

**Answer:**

Australian Made Campaign Ltd, which owns and manages the Australian Grown campaign and its intellectual property, advised the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that the 66 businesses registered to use the Australian Grown logo on 31 March 2009 were those listed at Attachment A.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD16 (continued)

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Australian Grown Licensees at 31 March 2009**

A Musumeci Pty Ltd	JMB Beverages Pty Ltd
A Taste Of The Bush	Joto Fresh Fish Exports Pty Ltd
Adamat Pty Ltd	Lloyd's Vineyard Pty Ltd
ALDI Stores	Loddon Olives Pty Ltd
Apposite Holdings Pty Ltd	M. P. Stephen Pty Ltd
Australia ZHF Pty Ltd	MFCT Pty Ltd
Australian Equine Exporting Services Pty	Mount Zero Olives
Australian Estate Coffee	Olive Leaf Health
Australian Old Vine Wine Pty Ltd	Paradise Fruits Enterprises Pty Ltd
Australian Olive Oil Brokerage Pty Ltd	Peter Bentivoglio
Australian United Retailers Ltd	Portland Bay Lavender Farm
Australis Foods Pty Ltd	Potato Magic Australia Pty Ltd
Bamboo International Pty Ltd	Pukara Estate Pty Ltd
Ben Burn Organic Packers Pty Ltd	Queensland Hats
Brooklet Northern Rivers Nursery	R & J Aay Nominees Pty Ltd
ByronBop	Ribarits Estate Wines
Cameron Court Qld Pty Ltd	Sandy Creek Orchard Pty Ltd
Chilik Agencies Pty Ltd	Simplot Australia Pty Ltd
Clyne Farms Pty Ltd	Simply Fresh Produce
Coastal Avocados	Suncity Air Charter Pty
Cobram Estate Pty Ltd	Tassal Operations Pty Ltd
Coffee Union Pty Ltd	Three Bridges Farm Pty
Coles Supermarkets	Tichum Creek Coffee Farm
Coonalpyn Olives Management Pty Ltd	TMMD Pty Ltd
Dry-It Pty Ltd	Tropic Isle Retail Stores
EFF Timbers Pty Ltd	Unigrain Pty Ltd
Forth Farm Produce Pty	Upper Murray Seeds Pty Ltd
Frais Farms Pty Ltd	Vicseeds Production Pty
From Nature Pastoral Company Pty Ltd	Wild Devil Pty Ltd
G & E Garreffa	Willabrand Australia
Garreffa Family Trust	Woolworths Limited
Gorge Creek Orchards	Wyalla Gardens
Infinity Fisheries Pty Ltd	Zoom Coffee

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD17

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program

**Advisory Panel**

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

What was the process for appointing members to the Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program advisory panel?

If there was an application process, were nominations received from any Tasmanian applicant? Any South Australian, Victorian or NT nominations received?

**Answer:**

Candidates were selected from lists of people compiled by the department who had indicated a willingness to work in this capacity, including those that applied to sit on the Rural Research and Development Council. A selection was presented to the Minister for consideration.

The Advisory Panel was selected to ensure a mix of skills considered necessary for deliberations on the types of projects submitted to the program. These skills were: food technology; finance; research, development and extension; marketing; and supply chain management.

Experience in the seafood industry was considered necessary for at least one of the panel members.

Geographical location and gender were other factors taken into account. Candidates from all states were considered.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD18

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Productivity Commission Report

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Does the Government agree with the Productivity Commission that *'Fixed water rates and municipal rates are legitimate and known business costs that should be budgeted for, yet some states also provide rebates and waivers on these.'*?

**Answer:**

Please refer to answers to questions CC13.1 and CC14.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD19

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Fees and charges for water delivery to irrigators

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Isn't it a fact that in NSW irrigators are being taxed and forced to pay for water which has never been delivered?

**Answer:**

Fees and charges levied by irrigation infrastructure operators on irrigators across the Murray-Darling Basin generally reflect a two-part tariff structure - a fixed fee and a volumetric fee. Fixed fees ensure the recovery of the fixed costs of the service provider which are incurred irrespective of how much water is delivered through the system. Volumetric fees recover the variable costs associated with water delivery to customers.

The Commonwealth *Water Act 2007* (the Water Act) creates new institutional and governance arrangements to address the sustainability and management of water resources in the Murray–Darling Basin. Among other things, the Water Act permits the Minister for Climate Change and Water to make water charge rules. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has the role of advising the Minister on the rules and monitoring and enforcing the rules.

The ACCC is in the process of developing its advice to the Minister on the water charge rules. More information on the rules is available on the ACCC website at [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au).

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD20

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Murray-Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Isn't it a fact that the Drought Package 2007 – support for irrigators in the Murray Darling Basin worth \$87.931 million in 2008-09 and terminating in 2009-10 was allowed to be used by irrigators to pay state government water charges and fees?

**Answer:**

The irrigation management grants program provided assistance to a range of activities that respond to temporarily reduced water allocations and improve on-farm practices to maximise production from the water that is available. The eligible activities are:

- i. piping, troughs and associated activities for stock and domestic water;
- ii. fixed water charges;
- iii. sinking/extending/refurbishment of bores (and pumps);
- iv. pruning activities to minimise the impact of low water allocations;
- v. reconfiguring irrigation systems;
- vi. equipment replacement to maintain irrigation systems (including computer software, piping and pumps);
- vii. costs associated with implementing water efficient crop options; and
- viii. laser levelling.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Budget Estimates May 2009**

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD21

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Murray-Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How many irrigators used their \$20,000 grant to pay for state based water charges and fees?

**Answer:**

As at 30 April 2009, there were 3444 approvals to use the irrigation management grants to pay for fixed water charges from a total of 10 618 grants approved.

Approximately three-quarters of claims for fixed water charges also claimed for other eligible activities.



**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD22

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What was the rationale behind terminating funding for Land and Water Australia?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government was faced with significant challenges arising from a loss of revenue due to the global financial crisis in forming the 2009-10 Budget. This challenging economic environment has caused the government to reprioritise its investment in research and development (R&D) with an increased focus on boosting productivity, addressing climate change and global food security. The termination of funding for Land and Water Australia (LWA) was a savings measure in the 2009-10 Budget.

Since it was established in 1990, Land and Water Australia (LWA) has performed a lead role in improving the management of Australia's land, water and vegetation resources through its continued investment in research, development and extension. However, the public interest focus of LWA's investments are no longer unique to that agency and natural resource management now attracts increased public and private investment in research, and on-the-ground activity and adoption.

The broad network and funding programs of the research and development corporations, other government agencies (including the new CSIRO Sustainable Agriculture Flagship), tertiary institutions and non-government agencies, all contribute to the body of research into land, water and vegetation resources.

The government has a responsibility to ensure it uses public funds to achieve priority outcomes including boosting productivity, addressing climate change and global food security in the most effective and efficient manner. Given changed circumstances for natural resource management research and development and taking account of the challenges arising from a loss of revenue due to the global financial crisis the government has decided to terminate funding for LWA.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD23

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land & Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How many jobs will be lost as a result of the termination of funding for Land and Water Australia and where are these position currently located?

**Answer:**

There will be 41 jobs lost from Land & Water Australia (LWA), all located in Canberra. LWA is providing career advice and support to assist those affected employees in their transition to alternative arrangements.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD24

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Budget Paper No.2, Budget Measures, page 85 states; *'Priority research activities currently being undertaken by Land and Water Australia will be transferred to other agencies.'* Which 'other agencies' will take over the priority research activities currently being undertaken by Land and Water Australia? Has additional funding been made available to these agencies to undertake these 'priority research activities'?

**Answer:**

Potential host agencies for current Land and Water Australia projects that will be transferred include Commonwealth and state government departments and agencies, other rural research and development corporations, tertiary education institutions and other research providers.

No additional funding has been made available to potential host agencies.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD25

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Which projects currently undertaken by Land and Water Australia will be completed and will any projects be abandoned? How much has been spent to date of projects which are to be terminated?

**Answer:**

Please refer to the answer provided to APD09.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD26

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the Department satisfied that the Horticultural Code of Conduct is achieving its aim?

**Answer:**

The Horticulture Code of Conduct aims to improve the clarity and transparency of transactions between growers and wholesalers of fresh fruit and vegetables and provide a fair and equitable dispute resolution procedure. As part of its inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) assessed the effectiveness of the code. The ACCC considered that it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the code, given it has only been in place for a short period of time. The ACCC made recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the code.

The government asked the Horticulture Code Committee to consider the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's recommendations to enhance the operation of the Horticulture Code of Conduct. The committee will report to government in due course.

The government will then consider the ACCC recommendations and the committee's advice.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD27

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the Department aware of any reviews in the Horticultural Code of Conduct by the ACCC?

**Answer:**

The department is aware of the review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct conducted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). On 22 January 2008 the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs requested that the ACCC hold a public inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries pursuant to Part VIIA of the *Trade Practices Act 1974*. The ACCC provided its report on 31 July 2008 and made 13 recommendations to improve the code's effectiveness as part of this review. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry re-established the Horticulture Code Committee in October 2008 to advise the Australian Government on its response to the recommendations. The committee will report to government in due course.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD28

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Has or will the Department be contributing to this review?

**Answer:**

The department did not make a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Inquiry. The department provides a secretariat to the Horticulture Code Committee and is involved in providing a service to that committee to ensure that it does its work effectively and efficiently.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD29

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Has the Department undertaken any independent inspections of the markets to ensure the code is operating effectively?

**Answer:**

The department, as the secretariat for the Horticulture Code Committee, performs broad and independent consultation with all industry sectors, including growers, and departmental officers visit markets for general discussion about the operation and effectiveness of the Horticulture Code of Conduct. As Horticulture Code Committee secretariat, departmental officers have most recently visited the Sydney markets on 27 February 2009 and the Melbourne markets on 16 December 2008. Departmental officers have visited the Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne markets on previous occasions. It is not the department's role to inspect or audit specific businesses in the market with a view to gauge compliance with the code. Currently, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission independently investigates markets regarding specific complaints and, where necessary, takes enforcement action against anyone who fails to comply with the Horticulture Code.



**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD30

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Horticulture Code of Conduct

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the Department aware of any industry concerns that the Government is attempting to water down the code?

**Answer:**

The department responded to this question as per Hansard page reference 108.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD31

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

1. With axing of LWA, how and where will government/department fund and research our current environmental problems, in particular, water and vegetation issues.
2. Where will farmers turn to for advice and support, there have been some very important projects run by LWA, tackling of weeds, irrigation practices, native vegetation, etc?
3. For instance, LWA's work on seasonal forecasting and agricultural productivity – this information is absolutely crucial for our regional towns and communities, where to from here for farmers and other stakeholders?
4. With the slashing of the budget of RIRDC and the closure of Land and Water (LWA), how does Department intend to fund future research?
5. Which agency within the Department/Government will now provide feedback, knowledge into these important agricultural issues?
6. Could you supply name and contact details of officer who will be responsible for research in the Department?
7. With impact of climate change & future climate policies, where will farmers turn to for innovative and practical information? How can Government /Department formulate workable and practical policies without this important knowledge and resource?

**Answer:**

1. The government remains committed to rural research and development (R&D) and will continue to provide matched funds in the order of \$200 million annually to the rural research and development corporations. Programs such as Caring for our Country and Australia's Farming Future will continue to provide funding to research providers, tertiary institutions, non-government agencies and individuals to ensure work in the natural resource management field remains a priority. Other government agencies including the Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, National Water Commission, Murray Darling Basin Authority and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) will continue to deliver research on important agricultural issues.
2. See answer to Question 1.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD31 (continued)

3. Land and Water Australia's work on seasonal forecasting is conducted under the Managing Climate Variability Program, which will continue under the management of the Grains Research and Development Corporation.
4. See answer to Question 1.
5. See answer to Question 1.
6. All enquiries should be directed through the office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
7. See answer to Question 1.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD32

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** RIRDC Funding

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What will be the practical affect of the \$12 million funding cut to the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation be on the work it in undertaking? Ie how many projects will be scrapped or curtailed?

**Answer:**

Research spending by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) will be reprioritised to implement the required \$3 million savings decision. Details on how RIRDC will implement the required savings measures are not available in advance of formal approval of the Corporation's 2009-10 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) by the Minister.

This information can be provided following approval of the AOP.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD33

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** RIRDC Funding

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

How many jobs will be abolished as a result of the funding cuts to RIRDC, what are these positions and where are these jobs currently located?

**Answer:**

The implications of the savings measures on staff at the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation depends on the organisation's reprioritisation of projects. Details of these changes are not available in advance of formal approval of the Corporation's 2009-10 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) by the Minister.

This information can be provided following approval of the AOP.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD34

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Land and Water Australia

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Which of the projects affected by the funding cuts to RIRDC will be absorbed by the Department or other agencies? Has additional funding been made available to the department or these other agencies to undertake these additional responsibilities?

**Answer:**

Details on how RIRDC will implement the required savings measures are not available in advance of formal approval of the Corporation's 2009-10 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) by the Minister. This information can be provided following approval of the AOP.

No additional funding has been provided to the department or other agencies to undertake tasks previously performed by RIRDC.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD35

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Budget Paper no.2, Budget Measures, page 86 states: 'The Government has identified further efficiencies in the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. This measure will save \$12 million over four years through identifying organisational efficiencies and reducing research duplication, while maintaining funding in priority areas.' Please give specific examples of where there was 'research duplication?'

**Answer:**

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) funds research, development and extension activities for a range of new and emerging rural industries, established small rural industries, and on national rural issues. RIRDC are rarely the only funding body investing in cross-sectoral rural R&D.

Examples of projects proposed by RIRDC which would be undertaken by other agencies include several projects in the Food Integrity and Biosecurity program, including *Enhanced Biosecurity Planning Tools* which is being undertaken by the Australian Government funded Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity.

Another example of potential overlap is the RIRDC-funded report by the Centre for International Economics on the *On-Farm Impacts of an Australian Emissions Trading Scheme* (May 2009, RIRDC Publication No 09/064, RIRDC Project PRJ-003383), and the very similar (in scope and objectives) ABARE report *Effects of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme on the economic value of farm production* (June 2009, ABARE issues insights 09.6, ABARE project 2272).

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD36

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** RIRDC Funding

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What are 'organisational efficiencies' and who will be identifying them, will it be through an internal review or will it be outsourced to a consultant to identify 'organisational efficiencies'?

**Answer:**

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has an ongoing focus on its operational efficiency. RIRDC has commenced a business process review, assisted by a consultant to identify means to improve their processes and are working with other research & development corporations to increase efficiency by harmonising their approach to research management and support services.



**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD37

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** RIRDC Funding

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What are the priority areas which will have funding maintained?

**Answer:**

RIRDC will continue to support emerging and established industries funded by industry levies and support continued investment in rural people and learning systems, rural leadership, farm health and safety and emerging rural issues.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD38

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

With the slashing of the budget of RIRDC and the closure of Land and Water (LWA), how will future research be carried out?

Which agency in the Department/Government will fund research?

How can the Government direct RIRDC to ensure savings and funding cutbacks on one hand and then on the other expect research to continue?

**Answer:**

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) will continue to engage research providers as appropriate within their budget. Research previously overseen by Land and Water Australia will largely continue under the management of research partners or other appropriate agencies.

Various government departments will continue to provide funding for rural research and development. For example, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will continue to provide funding expected to exceed \$200 million annually to the research and development corporations. Since November 2007, the government has also announced \$130 million in new spending on rural science and innovation including \$46.2 million for research projects to help primary producers manage climate change. This has generated an additional \$59.6 million in industry partner research dollars to date and will deliver research projects and on-farm demonstration projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas pollution, improving soil management, and adapting to the changing climate.

The majority of savings required of RIRDC will be made in areas of the agency that are not directly responsible for funding research, or can attract additional external sponsorship.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD39

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Selling issues of wheat harvest

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What were the major issues with selling this year's harvest?

**Answer:**

The sale of this year's harvest for both domestic use and for export has gone smoothly although there were some problems with shipping because of congestion at ports during peak exporting periods. These issues were resolved to the satisfaction of the customers involved.

This year was the second-largest wheat harvest on record in Western Australia (WA) and record export shipments placed significant pressure on the supply chain. The WA harvest was also delayed by rain events, creating additional pressure on the supply chain.

These factors and the reduction in shipping costs because of the global recession (which caused intense competition within the shipping freight sector) contributed to some congestion problems at ports.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD40

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Benchmark price for export grain

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What is the benchmark price being paid for export grain? How does this compare to world parity prices?

**Answer:**

The price for export Australian Premium White on 26 May 2009 was \$A305.35 per tonne delivered Fremantle and \$A295 per tonne delivered Newcastle.

The Chicago Board of Trade nearby swap price on 26 May 2009 was \$A287.75 per tonne.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD41

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Major wheat export markets

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH** —What countries are our major markets in both tonnage and dollar terms?

**Answer:**

Australia's major wheat export markets by volume for the year to date 2008-09 (October to May) were Indonesia (1,457 kilotonnes), Iran (1,412 kt), Japan (589 kt), Vietnam (587 kt), Yemen (544 kt), Korea Republic (554 kt) and Malaysia (524 kt).

Value details are not available for individual countries because the Australian Bureau of Statistics applied confidentiality restrictions to the value of bulk wheat exports by destination.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD42

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Market share in wheat export markets

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH** — Have we lost market share in any export markets this year?

**Answer:**

The determination of Australia's market share requires knowledge of each countries' total wheat imports. This data is not available for 2008-09.

Exports of all wheat, including bags and containers, for 2008-09 (October to May) have reached 9.3 million tonnes compared with 7.2 million tonnes in 2007-08 (October to September). We continue to service our major customers, with exports to Indonesia, which is our major export market, already at 1.5 million tonnes compared with 1.6 million tonnes in 2007-08. In addition, 1.4 million tonnes have been shipped to Iran which did not attract sales in 2007-08.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD43

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** On-farm wheat stocks

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator NASH asked:**

How much grain is currently stored on farm?

**Answer:**

Please refer to answer provided on APD12.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD44

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

The Wheat Export Accreditation Scheme provides grants to help wheat exporters deliver effective technical market support to overseas customers. The Government has allocated \$200,000 pa for three years - how much has been spent in the 2008-09 financial year to help wheat exporters 'build long-term relationships' with customers overseas?

**Answer:**

\$184,400 (GST exclusive) has been allocated for projects under the first round of the Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program. The majority of this is expected to be spent this year.



**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD45

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division

**Topic:** Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What about the exporters and the long term relationships already established by wheat exporters prior to the deregulation of the wheat export market. Do they receive any funding or can they apply for this funding?

**Answer:**

All wheat exporters are welcome to apply for funding under the Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants Program.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD46

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Wheat Information Sessions

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

To assist with the transition of new marketing arrangements following the deregulation of the wheat export market, \$1.15M/3 years was allocated by the government for information sessions for growers and customers. How much of this allocation was spent in 2008/09? How many sessions were held and where? Who held these sessions?

**Answer:**

Up to \$1.15 million was made available in 2008-09 for grower information sessions in Australia and briefings for major international customers. 52 grower information sessions were conducted in conjunction with the state farming organisations including the New South Farmers' Association, the Victorian Farmers Federation, the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the South Australian Farmers Federation and AgForce in Queensland.

The department took advice from the relevant state farming organisation on the locations for these sessions which included: Moree; Coonamble; Trangie; Parkes; Lake Cargelligo; West Wyalong; Cowra; Griffith; Finley; Lockhart; Cootamundra; Boggabri; Dunedoo; Young; Geraldton; Three Springs; Dalwallinu; Dowerin; Mookinbudin; Esperance; Ravensthorpe; Katanning; Williams; Kalannie; Beverly; Merredin; Hyden; Lake Grace; Corrigin; Capella; Gindie; Biloela; Talwood; Meandarra; Roma; Dalby; Ceduna; Wudinna; Cummins; Jamestown; Kadina; Karoodna; Donald; Underbool; Swan Hill; Mildura; Tungamah; Bendigo; Nhill; Horsham and Geelong. The briefings commenced in August and were completed in September 2008.

International briefing sessions were also conducted with key industry stakeholders and Government officials in major Australian wheat markets including Japan, South-East Asia, Middle East and New Zealand. These were conducted during July 2008 and early September 2008.

Total expenditure in 2008-09 (to 16 June 2009) was \$523,032.68.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD47

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Market Data

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator NASH:**

**Senator NASH**—\$2.52M/3 years was allocated by the government for the collection and publication of market data. What type of data was collected and where can this be found? Who has access to this data and for what purpose? How much of this allocation was spent in 2008/09?

**Answer:**

Data on stocks of wheat grain stored by bulk grain handlers, stocks of wheat grain stored by users, wheat grain used and wheat grain committed in Australia are collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on a monthly basis. The data are provided on a monthly basis and are available in the *Wheat Use and Stocks, Australia* report at:

[ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/895A1FF4F4BFA62ACA2575CB001845BD/\\$File/73070\\_april%202009.pdf](http://ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/895A1FF4F4BFA62ACA2575CB001845BD/$File/73070_april%202009.pdf)

The Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) uses this information, combined with its own data to produce monthly reports on Australian wheat supply and monthly exports. The report *Australian wheat supply and exports monthly* is available at [abare.gov.au/interactive/AusWheat/](http://abare.gov.au/interactive/AusWheat/).

All these reports are freely available for the use by interested parties.

Total expenditure in 2008-09 was \$1.401 million.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD48

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Transport issues related to wheat export markets

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What impact are issues surrounding rail lines having on overseas markets?

**Answer:**

The government is not aware of any impacts that issues surrounding rail lines are having on overseas markets.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2009

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** APD49

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity

**Topic:** Transport issues related to wheat export markets

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is anything being done to improve logistics, particularly grain railway lines in time for next year's harvest?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has established independent reviews of the Western Australian and New South Wales (NSW) grain freight networks to investigate ways of stimulating investment.

The NSW review taskforce has completed its consultations and expects to finalise its report in the near future. The consultants conducting the Western Australian review provided their report on 26 May 2009. It is currently being considered by the Government.