

Appendix 3

List of topics discussed with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio

Division or Agency/Topic/Hansard page reference

Corporate Services/Corporate Finance/Corporate Policy

- rationale for removing drought-related payments to the states from the department to Treasury (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, pp 9–10);
- reduction in the number of Exceptional Circumstances regions from 74 to 58 (p. 10);
- basis for termination of a number of programs scheduled to conclude (pp 10–11);
- change to funding basis of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) since it became an FMA Act agency (pp 12–13);
- staff turnover rates; movement between departments (pp 14–16);
- explanation of the application of the efficiency dividend and specific savings measures (pp 16–20);
- graduate program intake (pp 17 and 52);
- Gershon review and cuts to IT spending; contract with new IT service provider (pp 20–22);
- new spending on rural science and innovation programs (pp 26–29);
- removal of the 40 percent quarantine export subsidy paid to exporters (pp 29–30);
- expenditure on staff travel (p. 30); and
- administrative support for Minister's video on the departmental website (pp 31–33).

Land and Water Australia

- future of the Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) initiative; public release of TRaCK research reports (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, pp 35 and 44–45);
- rationale for abolishing LWA and cutting research funding for agriculture (pp 34 and 35–36);
- analysis of economic benefit gained from every dollar invested in LWA (pp 38 and 40);

- estimated number of job losses and loss of research capacity if current projects do not go ahead (pp 38, 39–40, 41–42 and 44);
- government consultation with LWA before the decision was made to abolish LWA (pp 38–39);
- government's view on the Productivity Commission report recommending more funding to be spent on agricultural R&D (p. 39);
- future priority of projects relating to environmental flows in agricultural landscapes (pp 40–41);
- government undertaking in relation to the future of the Managing Variability in Climate Change program (p. 41);
- timeframe for the process to determine the future of programs and projects currently managed by LWA (p. 42);
- leveraging of direct government funding through investment by the industry sector (pp 42 and 45–46);
- inconsistency with Prime Minister's support for the Chinese stimulus package providing direct assistance for agriculture (pp 42–43);
- cost of termination of building lease (pp 43–44);
- breakdown of funding allocation for winding-up LWA (pp 47–49);
- future of the Environmental Water Allocation Forum (p. 50);
- status of the draft operational plan (p. 51); and
- projects related to the sustainability of Australia's groundwater (p. 52).

Wheat Exports Australia (WEA)

- issues in relation to current access arrangements for port terminals (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, p. 53);
- reasons for the significant basis difference between west and east grain prices (pp 54 and 61);
- complaints process; requests for reconsideration of a decision (pp 54–55);
- whether licensed exporters have had difficulty in accessing finance (pp 56 and 62);
- potential takeover of ABB by Viterra (p. 56);
- current exemption of Melbourne Port Terminal from access arrangements (p. 56);
- survey of overseas vessels by marine survey underwriters and AQIS before Australian grain can be loaded (pp 56–57);
- reviews of the grain freight rail networks in NSW and WA (pp 57 and 61);
- update on delays with unloading of road freight at Newcastle terminal

(pp 57–58);

- initiatives implemented by the Wheat Industry Expert Group (p. 58);
- factors taken into account during assessment of applications for accreditation (pp 58–59);
- auditing of accredited exporters (p. 59);
- discussions with Japanese flour millers about the new deregulated system (p. 59);
- concerns from overseas markets about delays in loading grain at four ports in WA (p. 60);
- freight costs for growers (pp 60–61);
- quality control issues: chemical residues and wheat substitution (p. 61);
- statistics on market tonnage and exports to new markets (pp 63 and 64–65); and
- update on the Wheat Export Technical Market Support Grants program (pp 63–64).

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)

- consultation with the government on AQIS fees (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, p. 66);
- assumptions behind research into the impact of CPRS conducted by the Centre for International Economics (CIE) and modelling by ABARE (pp 67–68 and 71–73).
- increased costs associated with the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) (p. 67);
- steps to be taken before a decision is made in 2013 about the inclusion of the agricultural sector in the CPRS (pp 68–69);
- whether any work is being done by MLA regarding adaptation to changes in climate and rainfall (pp 69–70);
- ABARE modelling on the cost of an ETS to the beef industry at a domestic and export level (p. 70);
- percentage of greenhouse gases in Australia that come from livestock (pp 70–71);
- concerns that Australia will lose its competitive edge in a global market following the introduction of the CPRS (pp 71 and 73);
- international trends in relation to inclusion of agriculture in CPRS-type schemes (p. 74);
- extent to which meat processors will qualify for assistance as emissions-intensive and trade-exposed (EITEs) (pp 75–76);

- assistance available to farmers from the date of introduction of the CPRS to mitigate increased costs (pp 76–77);
- NSW proposal to introduce a meat labelling program; Primary Industries Ministerial Council working group examination of consumer labelling for meat (pp 77–78);
- legal pricing mechanisms for meat (p. 79);
- MLA's views on a national standards system for meat labelling (p. 80);
- lamb dentition testing (p. 80);
- alignment of Australian and New Zealand ETS (p. 80);
- projections for growth in the national herd levels (p. 81);
- review of current beef levy (pp 81–82);
- research into methane emissions from sheep and cattle (pp 82–84); and
- waiver of \$5 transaction levy in areas affected by bushfires in Victoria (pp 84–86).

Climate Change; and Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE)

- government expenditure on drought programs (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, p. 86);
- clarification of wording in the PBS regarding reduction in expenses 'due to cessation of drought programs' (p. 86);
- drought policy review process (pp 86–87);
- drought programs, including Exceptional Circumstances assistance; Transitional Income Support (pp 87–88);
- cost and government consideration of three reports into drought: climate report by the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO; Expert Social Panel process and report; and Productivity Commission independent report on government drought support programs (pp 88–90);
- level of carbon emissions due to logging compared to carbon emissions from bushfires (pp 90–91);
- funding for research into climate change impacts on the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector, including the Climate Change Research program (pp 91–93 and 103–104);
- reconsiderations of areas that are no longer Exceptional Circumstances declared (pp 93–94);
- classification of the processing sector of agriculture as manufacturing under the CPRS (pp 96–97);
- cost of impact of the CPRS on the dairy industry (pp 96, 97–100 and 101);

- farm financial sector modelling (pp 100–101);
- National Carbon Accounting Toolbox – development of a standard methodology for measuring and modelling the impact of soil carbon under different farm practices (pp 102–103);
- Climate Change Action Fund (p. 103);
- funding for the biochar project (p. 104);
- department's public relations budget (p. 104);
- Mr Glyde's comments about the difficulty of getting a new international agreement on climate change, quoted in the *Rural Press* (p. 105);
- ABARE's updated modelling released in March 2009 (p. 106);
- extent to which the manufacturing sector of agriculture will qualify for assistance as emissions-intensive and trade-exposed (EITEs) (pp 106–107);
- environmental protection of the superb parrot under the EPBC Act and impact on forestry in the Riverina area (pp 107–109);
- ABARE estimates in relation to on-farm stocks of wheat (pp 109–110);
- economic impact of swine flu on consumption of pork (p. 110);
- impact of changes to the Youth Allowance on rural and regional areas (pp 110–111);
- ABARE's projections on potential land that can be converted into afforestation; interception of water by plantations; research on the relationship between forestry and rainfall generation (pp 111–114);
- update on the government's election commitments in relation to forestry, including: addressing forestry skills shortages; boosting the export of forest products; forestry industry database; development of regulatory framework to restrict illegally logged timber; preparing forest industries for climate change (pp 114–118 and 122);
- payments made under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (p. 118);
- lessons for carbon sink forests legislation (p. 120); and
- review of non-forestry MIS (p. 120).

Sustainable Resource Management

Details on the Caring for Country program:

- breakdown of funding for the Caring for Country program – regional base funding and competitive grants (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, pp 122–123);
- proportion of funding for administration (pp 123–124);

- methodology for determining regional allocations (pp 123–127 and 135);
- assessment of applications for competitive grants by multijurisdictional community panels; assessment framework; standard assessment tool (pp 127 and 131–133);
- grant application process (pp 127 and 129);
- probity audit of the application and assessment process (p. 128);
- limits on the size of the grants (p. 128);
- review of the grant and application process (p. 129);
- impact of budget cuts on the Caring for Country program (pp 129–130);
- annual review of projects funded and outcomes achieved under the Caring for Country program (pp 130 and 136);
- consultation process with NRM groups (pp 130–131);
- potential funding gap for NRM groups between 1 July and September (p. 131);
- steps taken to improve transparency in decision making to achieve expected project outcomes (p 133);
- whether applications for Landcare funding are part of the Caring for Country process (pp 133–134);
- level of funding requests under the Caring for Country program; notional funding allocation for future years for projects extending over several years (pp 134–135 and 136–137); and
- funding for the Ghost Nets project run by the Northern Gulf Natural Resource Management Region (p 137).

Other matters raised:

- replacement for Defeating the Weed Menace program; funding for the National Weeds and Productivity Research program; cost of weeds to Australia (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 25 May 2009, pp 138–140);
- work of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee; progress on the recreational fishing industry development strategy; funding allocated under the Recreational Fishing Community Grants program; funding options for Recfish Australia (pp 140–142);
- funding for the establishment of a new peak industry body, following the demise of the Australian Seafood Industry Council in 2006 (pp 142–143);
- funding for the Fisheries Research program and the Reef Rescue program (pp 143–144);
- consultation with the department before the announcement of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone (p 144); and

- impact of the Coral Sea conservation zone on commercial and recreational fishing; statistics in relation to the Eastern Tuna and Billfish fishery and Coral Sea fishery; bioregional marine planning processes (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 4–13).
- update on patrols of the *Oceanic Viking* to the Southern Ocean (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 14–15);
- management of the Southern Bluefin Tuna fishery (p 15);
- incursions in the north-west fishing zone; discussions with the East Timorese government about illegal fishing in East Timorese waters (p. 16);
- update on the amalgamation of management advisory committees (MACs) (p. 17);
- change to AFMA's funding basis when it became an FMA Act agency (p. 17);
- new appointments to board of directors (pp 17–18);
- management and monitoring of fish species classified as overfished, including Pink Ling (p. 18); and
- proposed boat burning facility on Cape York (p. 19).

Trade and Market Access

- funding for the Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership, replacing the Live Animal Trade Program; proportion of industry to government funding; operation of the new program (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 19–20);
- funding for DAFF position in Dubai involved in government-to-government negotiations on agricultural issues (pp 20–21);
- progress towards the resumption of the live cattle and sheep trade into Egypt (pp 21–22);
- ABARE database of trade with our agricultural trading partners (p. 22);
- trading of livestock into the Middle East and North Africa by competing countries (p. 22);
- international funding contributions to improve animal welfare standards (p. 22);
- operation of Australia's existing Live Animal Trade Program; improvements since the program began in 2004-05 (pp 22–23);
- export trade in southern bluefin tuna; quotas for Australia and Japan; review of quotas (pp 23–24);
- update on the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC); resolution to address deficiencies identified in its performance review; meeting of coastal states convened by Australia (pp 25–27);

- role of agricultural attachés; plans to reduce the number of staff in Brussels and Washington and combine the positions in Paris and Rome (pp 27–28);
- update on negotiations for a free trade agreement with Chile (pp 28–29); and
- evaluation of the US free trade agreement in terms of benefits to primary industries in Australia (pp 29–30).

Quarantine and Biosecurity Policy Unit; Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS); and Biosecurity Australia

Issues in relation to AQIS fees and charges:

- comparison with New Zealand cost recovery practices (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 35 and 36);
- AQIS efficiencies and reforms; engagement with industry sectors on reforms and forward work plans (pp 35–37 and 57–58);
- scope for phasing in full cost recovery (pp 38, 47 and 55);
- whether the previous government had taken the decision to cease the subsidy; whether there was provision for a further four year's funding in the forward budget estimates (pp 38–39);
- cost-recovery impact statements (pp 39–40 and 55);
- revenue shortfalls (pp 41–44);
- Minister's involvement in the consultation process with industry; department's schedule of meetings with industry groups; timing of recommendations arising from consultative process (pp 45 and 47–48);
- timetable for presentation of regulations to parliament (pp 45–46);
- subsidies provided by competing countries (pp 46–47);
- whether there is expected to be a decline in demand for services as a result of the downturn in economic activity (p. 47);
- cost increase of electronic and manual certification for the wool industry (p. 49);
- other non-food industries facing fee increases arising from the budget (p. 49);
- comparison of Australia's level of support and funding for inspection services in the meat industry with international competitors such as Brazil and the US (p. 50);
- AQIS review of fees and charges to fully cost-recover activities performed on behalf of importers; cost recovery impact statement (pp 50–54);
- modelling on the impact of removal of the subsidy; whether any modelling has been done at an enterprise level (pp 55 and 58–59);

- potential impact of the subsidy removal on jobs, particularly in regional areas (p. 60);
- consultation with industry (pp 60–61); and
- timing of implementation of new fees and charges (pp 61–62).

Other matters raised:

- importation of uncooked dry marinated green prawns into Australia; concerns that the regulations are inadequate to protect against marinade being rinsed off then used for fish bait or by restaurants as a cheap source of raw prawns instead of more expensive local product; justification for the dry marinade being adequate to protect the Australian prawn industry (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 30–34);
- whether live animal exports are still a high-risk enterprise (p. 48);
- protocol for the importation of animals into Australia (p. 48);
- issues relating to the export of bananas from the Philippines to Australia (p. 50);
- establishment of a ministerial task force to work with the agriculture export industry (p. 57);
- importation requirements for Australian sausage casings sent offshore for processing; (pp 63–64);
- update on equine influenza and preparation for the coming breeding season; changes implemented as a result of the previous outbreak (pp 64–65);
- development of an Australian standard for organic production; AQIS' ongoing involvement in certification (pp 65–70);
- provision of fresh fruit on incoming international flights and measures to mitigate the risk of bringing such items into Australia (p. 71);
- impact of budget cuts on staffing levels (pp 71–72);
- progress towards resumption of red meat and wild game exports to the Russian Federation following suspension of 19 processing plants due to microbial contamination in meat (pp 72–73); and
- removal of irradiation as an option for treating imported dried cat food due to its harmful effect on the health of cats; irradiation of other products including some types of dog food and dried pigs' ears (pp 73–74).

Australian Wool Innovation

- actions taken in the last three months since new Chief Executive Officer, Ms Brenda McGahan, joined AWI (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, p. 76);
- AWI marketing and branding strategy using the Woolmark; marketing of Australian wool products, including Australian Merino (pp 76–77 and 80–

82);

- management of conflicts of interest on AWI board, including Dr Meredith Shiel's connection with the drug Tri-Solfen; governance procedures (pp 77–79);
- misleading reports in the media about AWI funding Bayer's registration of the mulesing pain relief treatment Tri-Solfen (pp 79–80);
- update on corporate social responsibility program (p. 82);
- commercial release of clips (pp 82 and 85);
- sales of non-mulesed wool (pp 82–83);
- progress towards the phasing out of mulesing by the end of 2010 (pp 83–84);
- whether AWI has a marketing program in Thailand (p. 85);
- percentage of wool being processed by China (p. 85);
- whether shearer numbers are adequate; training of shearers (p. 85);
- feedback from national wool grower day (pp 85–86);
- advertising to promote the sale of woollen products within Australia (p. 86);
- presentation of the draft annual operating plan to wool growers (p. 86);
- relationship between AWI and Bayer (pp 86–87); and
- whether Zegna is still buying Australian wool (p. 87).

Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health

- role of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in swine flu diagnostic surveillance (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, p. 99);
- changes in AAHL's diagnostic workload over the past few years (pp 99–100);
- PIAPH's budget (pp 100–101);
- progress toward eradication of the red imported fire ant (p. 101);
- update on the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) (pp 101–102); and
- Australian export of alpacas to the UK based on mutual recognition of alpaca 'bluetongue-free zones' (p. 102).

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

- review of APVMA's cost recovery arrangements (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 87–88);
- request from AWI for APVMA to review its current species-specific guidelines on setting maximum residue limits (p. 88);

- application from Bayer for registration of Tri-Solfen (pp 88–89);
- budget and staffing issues, including: impact of departmental budget cuts on APVMA; APVMA workload (pp 89–90);
- agency's jurisdiction (p. 90);
- update on work being done in relation to permits issued for minor use, including stakeholder liaison (pp 90–91);
- safety threshold for the presence of Atrazine in waterways; drinking water standards; extent of APVMA's role and responsibility in relation to drinking water (pp 92–95);
- investigation into the link between fish deaths, abnormalities and chemical run-off in Queensland (p. 93);
- studies into the correlation between Atrazine and obesity (pp 94 and 95);
- use of the precautionary principle (pp 95–96);
- pesticides and herbicides registered for use by the forestry industry in Tasmania; work done to assess the toxicology of the mixture of those chemicals (pp 96–97);
- use of chemicals by Tasmanian forestry industry that are not registered for general use by APVMA; use of chemicals under research permits (pp 97–98); and
- British High Court ruling in relation to spray drift from pesticides; European Union decisions (p. 98).

Agricultural Productivity

- impact of amendments to Division 7A of the tax laws on farms owned by family companies; extent to which the department was consulted by Treasury in the development of this measure (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 102–105);
- impact of the budget cuts on the division's programs (p. 105);
- value of Australia's total farm and fisheries production; level of food imports and exports (pp 105–106);
- work on soil condition and fertility (p. 106);
- review of the Horticultural Code of Conduct (pp 107–108);
- Agricultural Finance Forum (p. 108);
- 'Grown in Australia' label operated by the Australian Made Campaign Ltd (pp 108–109);
- Food Regulation Ministerial Council's review of food labelling across Australia (pp 109–110);
- research into the long-term impact of non-forestry managed investment

schemes on agricultural production (pp 110–112); and

- Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity program (pp 112–115).

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

- invitations to the RIRDC's rural women's award; continuation of RIRDC's sponsorship (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 115 and 121–122);
- impact of budget cuts on RIRDC's work with new and emerging industries (pp 116 and 118–119);
- other possible sources of funding for the RIRDC (pp 117 and 120–121);
- provision of managing agent services to the Council of Chairs (p. 117);
- leveraging of funds from the government (pp 117–118);
- R&D budget; five-year R&D plan; R&D program (pp 118, 121 and 122);
- funding levies from industry (p. 120); and
- RIRDC's commercialisation policy (p. 122).

Grains Research and Development Corporation

- new wheat classification panel (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 123–124);
- research into the effectiveness and suitability of GM canola (p. 124);
- level of anti-GM sentiment amongst farmers (p. 124);
- obligation on the non-GM grower to avoid contamination with GM crops (pp 124–125);
- research into other potential GM traits in crops such as wheat and barley (p. 125);
- additional costs associated with segregation of non-GM canola; feedback from growers (pp 126–127);
- ongoing GM trials across Australia (p. 127);
- evaluation of seeding of last year's GM canola crop outside the paddock (pp 127–128); and
- other GM crops grown commercially in Australia and overseas (p. 128).

Bureau of Rural Sciences

- modelling of drivers for land use change; clarification of the definition of 'marginal land' (*Proof Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2009, pp 129–131);
- modelling in relation to fish species considered at risk; production of the Fisheries Status Report (p. 131);

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- whether the BRS has been commissioned to do any work on structural change in regional communities with respect to the CPRS (pp 131–132);
 - BRS report on the estimation of seabird bycatch rates in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (p. 132);
 - trends for plantation development over the next three to five years in Australia (p. 132);
 - research into the relationship between forestry and rainfall generation (p. 133); and
 - monitoring of soil health and assessment of the impact of the drought on soil health (pp 133–134).