

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Questions taken on notice for the Supplementary Estimates hearings 31 October 2006

Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

Hansard page no	Division/ Agency	Question no	Senator	Subject & Question on Notice	Date reply received	Date to Senators	Tabling date	No.
TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2006								
4	Food and Agriculture	F&A01	Sterle	<p><i>(Corish report recommendations - National Food Industry Strategy)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Thank you. The response to the Corish recommendations 6(a), 6(c), and 6(d) states that food regulation arrangements are currently being reviewed through the food regulation intergovernmental agreement and that the results of the review will go to COAG. Can you tell us where this process is up to and when something will go to COAG?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—Yes, I think the results of that review will go to COAG at its first meeting next year. I am happy to come back on that later. I do not have the exact information in front of me. It will work through a Commonwealth-state process whereby officials from the Commonwealth and the states will look at the outcome—I think they have settled that—and then it goes to Commonwealth and state ministers responsible for food safety regulation matters. Then it will be put on the agenda for COAG. As I said, I think it is early next year.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—You will come back to us with that?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—Yes.</p>				1
10	Wheat Export Authority	WEA01	Sterle	<p><i>(annual report)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—When will the report be presented to Minister McGauran?</p> <p>Mr Taylor—The report is due to be presented to the minister on, I think, 14 January. If I could take that on notice and give you an exact date, I would appreciate that.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—If you could—thank you. While you are at it, could you take on notice when the report will be tabled.</p>				2

10-11		WEA02	Sterle	<p><i>(adjustment to remuneration package)</i></p> <p>Mr Taylor—If I could just add to that: there is a small adjustment to the remuneration package. It is an AWOTE—average weekly overtime earnings—adjustment that is due in February each year.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—And that figure is?</p> <p>Mr Taylor—I could not tell you off the top of my head. I can take that on notice.</p>				3
13		WEA03	Sterle	<p><i>(permit for wheat export to Iraq)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Since our May hearing, the WEA has granted a permit to the Wheat Australia consortium for the export of a shipment of wheat to Iraq. Can you outline the details of the permit, please.</p> <p>Mr Besley—Perhaps I should quickly go through the process first, and then if you want a detailed account of the dates we can give you that. Under the act, we are required to consult with AWBI on any export, whether it be bulk or non-bulk, from non-AWBI people. If it is a bulk export, under the Wheat Marketing Act AWBI has the power of veto and if it vetoes a shipment then that is the end of it. If it chooses not to exercise its veto, which was the case in the Wheat Australia export, the matter then comes back to the WEA, which looks at it in terms of its published guidelines. We did that. We then issued a permit to Wheat Australia to export that quantity of wheat—380,000-odd tonnes, as I recall. That is just the way the process works. If you would like the dates and times, we can give you those.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—So do we know how many shipments were required for this load?</p> <p>Mr Taylor—No, I do not have those details of how many shipments were required.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—Could you take that on notice?</p> <p>Mr Taylor—Certainly.</p>				4

14		WEA04	Sterle	<p><i>(loss of Iraq wheat market – cost to Australian growers)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Australia has been a major supplier of wheat to Iraq for half a century. How much has the loss of the market cost Australian wheat growers?</p> <p>Mr Besley—I do not think that is a question we can properly answer. There are all sorts of variables there. It seems pretty clear that our market share has come down significantly. What does that mean? Does that mean the wheat was not being sold? I think the answer to that is no, it does not mean that. It has been sold to other places. Was there a difference in price? There probably was. I do not think we can give you an answer to that without doing a lot more work than we have attempted at this stage.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—Maybe you could take that on notice for us.</p> <p>Mr Besley—We will endeavour to get an answer. It is a very difficult question.</p>				5
15		WEA05	Sterle	<p><i>(export applications)</i></p> <p>Mr Taylor—I do not have the specific numbers, Senator. There are 12 applications on hand at the moment for bulk export consent. The number of applications for containing bag export consent would be in the hundreds, but I can give you some specific details if I can take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—If you could, Mr Taylor; thank you.</p>				6
23	Food and Agriculture	F&A02	O'Brien	<p><i>(Australian HomeGrown Ltd)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I wonder whether you would, on notice, let us know exactly when the department became aware that the directors of the company had decided to appoint an administrator on 3 April. So: when did the department know that? When did the department know about the meetings of creditors, which were held on 10 April and 5 May? If the department was aware prior to estimates, let us have an explanation as to why that was not drawn to the attention of the committee in answer to my questions.</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—I am certainly happy to take that on notice.</p>				7

23		F&A03	O'Brien	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—Can you get me the dates and amounts of payments, a chronology of payments, or do you have them there?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—I do not have a schedule. What I can say is that there was an initial contract—I think it was in January 2005—for \$500,000 and then there was another contract signed later in 2005 for \$265,000, but I do not have the date of the contract.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—So they would have been lump sum payments commensurate with the signing of the contracts, would they?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—I do not have that detail with me. They may have been staged payments set against milestones that the company was required to achieve. I would have to come back—</p>				8
24		F&A04	O'Brien	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—What detailed assessments were made of this project before the government decided to support it and commit what was initially claimed to be up to \$4 million of taxpayers' money?</p> <p>Mr Mortimer—I would have to take that on notice and see whether there is anything available. I would emphasise that it was an election commitment of the government at the time. Essentially, the government thought it was an idea that had merit and it was prepared to put some money in to see if it could be made successful.</p>				9

36	Corporate Policy	CPD 01	O'Brien	<p><i>(CDDA guidelines – legal advice to Mr Dalton)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—No, the claimant's own advice and the Commonwealth's own advice is one thing. Advice which is provided to the supposedly independent adjudicator, which is available to one side and not the other, would be concerning. I am sure Marnic's lawyers will be concerned about that. I am. I think the matter should be before the committee. If it is advice as to the meaning of the guidelines, surely that can only assist the process.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—I will certainly reflect further on that. I will advise you and the committee if we think it would be appropriate. But I feel that we need to reflect carefully on this matter and think about its implications for the scheme generally and perhaps consult the department of finance, because I agree with Mr Grant that it is really the department of finance that is responsible.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—The department of finance are on today. I cannot be in two places at once and ask the same questions.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—I cannot resolve that for you either, Senator—</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I know you cannot.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—but it is possible for us to convey a request on behalf of the committee to the department. We could do that, and we could seek the views of our own legal advisers on whether it is appropriate for that information to be shared. I am happy to do that and get back to you in a timely way.</p>				10
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37-38	Grains Research and Development Corporation	GRDC01	Nash	<p><i>(Plant Breeders Rights Scheme)</i></p> <p>Senator NASH—I have some concerns, obviously as many people do, surrounding the drought and sowing again next year. Hopefully it will rain between now and then. I would like you, if you could, to put on record how the Plant Breeders Rights Scheme operates, which grains come under the umbrella of PBR, the costs involved to growers, which grains do not come under the banner of PBR and roughly, if you have the numbers—I am happy for you to take this on notice—how many of the crops going in at the moment have gone in on PBR seed and how many have not.</p> <p>Mr Enright—Thank you for the question. Plant breeders rights is a fairly complex issue. It is essentially a piece of legislation which allows the collection of royalties in a number of ways.</p> <p>Senator NASH—I am happy for you to give us a broad outline and then to come back with whatever you need to on notice as well.</p> <p>Mr Enright—I think, to be fair and to give an accurate answer with the correct information, we should take that on notice and provide you with the information.</p> <p>Senator NASH—All right, but perhaps you could give us a general overview now.</p> <p>Mr Enright—Generally we can but, as to specific details, we will follow that up.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Mr Enright—We could certainly take it on notice to give you the information on the companies with whom we invest. We have no information or, indeed, ability to talk about companies with whom we do not invest.</p> <p>Mr Reading—Obviously, in the last Senate estimates we gave quite a bit of information, and we certainly have done that in follow-up questions on that. Could I get the specific question again?</p> <p>Senator NASH—It will be in <i>Hansard</i>. Could you also provide a list of companies you do not invest with but are aware of. I do not expect any information, just the names.</p>				11
39		GRDC02	O'Brien	<p><i>(Board remuneration)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I am asking whether the level of remuneration for the board has increased at more than or less than the rate of inflation.</p> <p>Mr Reading—I would have to take that question on notice.</p>				12

40		GRDC03	O'Brien	<p><i>(meals provided at board meetings)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—What does it cost to sustain the board on an annual basis in that context?</p> <p>Mr Enright—We do not have that number here, but we can provide it.</p>					13
40		GRDC04	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia – establishment under the act)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Could you give the committee the detail of how the provisions of the act operate to allow that?</p> <p>Mr Enright—Yes, I can. The project comes under GRDC's powers under sections 11 and 12 of the PIERD Act.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Is there no other explanation that you can give the committee? So I should look at the act and it will be self-evidence, will it?</p> <p>Mr Enright—I do not have the act in front of me.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—That is fine. I am happy for you to take it on notice if you are able to do that and give us a more detailed answer.</p> <p>Mr Enright—I can certainly do that. To be clear about what you require there, is it the section of the act under which we established Single Vision?</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Yes, and the rationale for how that section of the act applies to the action of purchasing the company on behalf of the interim board of the company rather than on behalf of GRDC.</p>					14
42		GRDC05	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia – lease on premises)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—That is why I cannot rattle off a number. I am trying to add \$2,660 to \$26,600. Close to \$30,000 is near enough. What about later years—is it an ongoing lease and is that the rental component on an ongoing basis, or are they unknowns at this stage?</p> <p>Mr Reading—It is a three-year lease. I would have to take that on notice—if there was an increased valuation clause in it for each year. The key thing we were driving at the time in terms of a GRDC input was to make sure that after two years if Single Vision did not continue, if the industry said they did not want it, we could sublease that, which we did have agreement for. But if there are escalation clauses in there, I will take that on notice, if that is okay.</p>					15

42		GRDC06	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia – advisory fees)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Yes. The answer to question on notice 1847 lists some of the other single vision costs incurred by GRDC. What are the advisory fees costed at \$6,750 in November last year?</p> <p>Mr Reading—I will just get that figure for you.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—It just says 'advisory fees'. What does that mean? The number is \$6,750; the date is 7 October 2005.</p> <p>Mr Reading—Oh, I see. I will take it on notice, but my feeling would be that that would probably be the consultant's fees for one of the interim directors. That is what I believe that would be.</p> <p>Mr Enright—We will take that on notice and make sure you get the correct answer.</p> <p>Mr Reading—I will confirm that, but I think that is what it would be, just going by that code.</p>					16
42		GRDC07	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia – cost of logo development)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Did GRDC pay almost \$5,000 for the development of Single Vision's logo?</p> <p>Mr Reading—It says it there in the statement that we provided to the estimates last time and, if that is what it is, I guess they did—correct. If you wanted more specific detail on that, again I would need to take that on notice. Certainly the reply we gave to the question on notice gave all the expenditure that had been spent up to that date, and, if I recall correctly, there was an amount there for the development of the logo taking it forward.</p>					17
42		GRDC08	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia – quarterly fees)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—What are the Single Vision quarterly fees costed at \$7,363 in January 2006? It is near the top of page 3, on 6 January 2006. The code is YOUN04.</p> <p>Mr Reading—I will take that on notice, but I would imagine that would also be a payment to an interim director. I think we supplied the director's fees in the last <i>Hansard</i>, and they would be paid on a regular basis. I believe that would represent one of those payments.</p>					18
43		GRDC09	O'Brien	<p><i>(Single Vision Grains Australia –body corporate fees)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—And body corporate fees, I take it, are payable in addition to the rent?</p> <p>Mr Reading—I will take that on notice, but I presume that would be the case.</p>					19

47	Food and Agriculture	F&A05	O'Brien	<p><i>(Australian grown labelling scheme working party)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Who is on it?</p> <p>Mr Souness—There are three representatives of the primary producers from the horticulture sector. There are representatives of the food processing sector. There is also a representative from a major retailer, and there are senior officials from relevant Commonwealth departments as well.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Are their names on the website or can you provide them to me on notice?</p> <p>Mr Souness—I would have to provide those.</p>				20
59	Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics	ABARE01	Siewert	<p><i>(native vegetation - publications)</i></p> <p>Ms Hewitt—What I was thinking more of, although when I mentioned native vegetation that was in the back of my mind, was some of the more innovative work that ABARE has been doing in the water area, on trading in options, options for water purchase and that type of thing. There is a very significant stream of work in the natural resources area that has capabilities and skills that are relevant to—</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—Would you mind providing me with a list? I have been doing quite a bit of research in this area. I may have missed some of the reports that you are talking about.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—Certainly; I would be happy to let you see what has been published over recent times.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—That would be useful. I do have the one that was released in September.</p>				21
64	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service	AQIS01	O'Brien	<p><i>(serious personal injuries)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Can you give us on notice a list of the so-called serious personal injuries and the dangerous occurrences? I note that 2005-06 was a particularly bad one for injuries within AQIS.</p> <p>Mr Yuile—We can certainly answer your question, yes.</p>				22
68		BA01	O'Brien	<p><i>(IRA process)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Can we get an idea of the resources that have been applied to these sorts of import risk assessments in the past in terms of personnel and dollars so that we can assess that over time? Can you take that on notice and give us that information?</p>				23

74		BA02	O'Brien	<p><i>(chicken meat IRA)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I am going to ask about the chicken meat import risk assessment process. Which countries are seeking to export fresh chicken meat to Australia and which countries have expressed an interest in sending product here?</p> <p>Dr Martin—I would have to take on notice which countries have sought access for uncooked versus cooked meat. Some of the applications would just be for chicken meat and would not actually specify that, but we can look at that. We have had access requests from the United States, Thailand, Denmark and New Zealand—they are quite longstanding access requests—and more recently from Brazil, China and Malaysia.</p>				24
75		F&A06	O'Brien	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—There are those who suggest that the import of product would take 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the Australian market. I assume that, if that were the case, there would be some consideration given to an adjustment package for Australian growers and processors and their workers.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—I suggest that that would not be a matter at all for Biosecurity Australia. If some adjustment pressures arose in the industry, that would be a matter that would be looked at and advised about from elsewhere in the department. But I think we are back to the point where we want to distinguish very clearly between the scientific assessment work—</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I understand that. Can you tell me where those questions should be asked?</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—The Food and Agriculture Division would be the primary area in the department. Its meat and dairy branch is the part of the department that would monitor and assess whether there was a need to prepare advice for ministers or, indeed, it would be asked perhaps on occasion by government to produce advice around questions of industry adjustment.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Perhaps you could take it on notice for them to answer.</p>				25

76		AQIS02	O'Brien	<p><i>(IRA - quarantine requirements)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—In section 2.1, in the last sentence in that paragraph it states: AQIS may take into account existing approvals granted by the relevant overseas veterinary authorities. Does that mean that construction standards, hygiene standards and transportation standards other than those applying in Australia might be acceptable?</p> <p>Dr Martin—I am sorry. I do not have a copy in front of me.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Perhaps you could take that on notice.</p> <p>Dr Martin—Yes. It may be that AQIS need to respond to that.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I am happy for whoever can respond to respond.</p> <p>Mr Cahill—We will take it on notice.</p>					26
78		BA03	O'Brien	<p><i>(avian influenza)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—So there are proper studies into the inactivation of AI virus by heat treatment. Is that what you are saying?</p> <p>Dr Martin—There are limited experimental studies.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—It seems a little uncertain.</p> <p>Dr Martin—We could provide you with the research.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—The references would be fine, thank you.</p>					27
78		PIAPH01	O'Brien	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—There are a number of avian influenzas, not just the notifiable one, are there not?</p> <p>Dr Martin—There are.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I am told that all Australian poultry is free of all of them. Is that right? If you do not know, you might want to take that on notice.</p> <p>Dr Martin—Product integrity may be able to answer that. I understand there has been a small serological survey that has not detected any avian influenza. I do not know that Australia would claim freedom from all avian influenza viruses. But all those comments will be looked at by Biosecurity Australia and the IRA team.</p>					28

82		BA04	I.Macdonald	<p><i>(consequence assessment)</i></p> <p>Mr Cahill—We do operate under a slightly different legislative framework as well and the Quarantine Act does acknowledge the prospect of some risk. I was wondering whether it would be helpful to the committee if we provided some further written information about issues to do with consequence assessment. We have encountered difficulties with stakeholders in their perception of how we approach that issue with the reality. If it helps, we would be happy to provide some further information about that.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—You can convince me, because I obviously do not fully understand the technicalities. But people such as prawners and salmon growers engage what seem to me to be reputable and very able scientists and you are not able to convince them. That is the concern that I have in both instances, and there may be others.</p> <p>Ms Hewitt—I will just add to John’s suggestion that we do try to provide some written material for the committee. It is often difficult to convey this complex scientific material orally across the table and it might be the basis for perhaps a further discussion on a separate occasion. I would also like, with your agreement, to have colleagues consult the Department of Environment and Heritage. I know from my work in international environment negotiations that there is quite a lot of definitional rigour around the way in which we apply a precautionary principle as well in our environment legislation, as well as in other areas. It might be useful to go back to the comparison that you have asked us to make and try to put together some quite considered information for you and then, if the committee wishes, we could have a full follow-up discussion.</p>				29
86		BA05	Heffernan	<p><i>(importation of chicken meat – protocols)</i></p> <p>Dr Martin—New Zealand is very strict. I understand that they do not import chicken meat into New Zealand.</p> <p>CHAIR—Could you provide the committee with their protocols for importing chicken meat? I always reckon what is good for the goose is good for the gander. If they do not allow chicken imports, that will be useful for me to know.</p> <p>Dr Martin—Certainly, we can provide that.</p> <p>CHAIR—And if they do, under what circumstances?</p>				30

97	Bureau of Rural Sciences	BRS01	O'Brien	<p><i>(national agricultural monitoring system)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Last time you told us that there was a work plan underway and you would report to PIMC this month.</p> <p>Dr Ritman—The Primary Industries Ministerial Council. There will be a work plan report from the irrigated industries. As you would appreciate, it covers quite a deal of different sorts of information that we have to get together for the NAMS—a lot of the water information that would help in irrigated industries. There is an ongoing work plan for the whole of this year and there will be a report as to the progress of the project.</p> <p>Dr Samson—The work plan was looked at at the ministerial council meeting earlier this month and agreed to. We can check and get back to you, but my recollection of the work plan is that substantial progress will be made on bringing irrigated industries into the NAMS system by the end of the current financial year.</p>				31
98		BRS02	O'Brien	<p>Senator O'BRIEN—I just draw to your attention a couple of things that are also notable—cattle numbers, for example. I could not get data on that specifically for the Latrobe region and was provided data for the whole Mersey-Lyall region, about a third of the state. I was not able to focus in as closely as some other sets enable you to. In the case of annual vegetation greenness time series, no data was available for the Latrobe region at all. Is it envisaged that there will be a time when that material will be available, or will you always be limited by the availability of data in relation to some of these things?</p> <p>Dr Samson—I think your latter point is the realistic one, that there will always be some limitations imposed on the system. For example, I think it is fair to say that in the NAMS we use some of the ABS census data. As we know, the census only occurs every five years.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Five years, yes.</p> <p>Dr Samson—Yes. I am not sure there is a lot we can really do about that. In terms of some of the other data, though, and some of the examples you have given, we are certainly happy to look into those specifics and get back to you with the basis of those datasets and the frequency of the data collection. With some of those smaller, more local datasets there may be the opportunity to improve the situation. As I say, it is conceivable that down the track, if all jurisdictions agree and we identify some data where we believe it would be a good investment to enhance the quality, the quantity or the timeliness of it, then it would be possible to do that.</p>				32

99		BRS03	O'Brien	<p><i>(Marine matters: an atlas of Australian marine fishing and coastal Communities)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—What did this project cost?</p> <p>Dr Bygrave—I think it was in the order of \$500,000 to \$600,000, and it was funded through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Department of Environment and Heritage.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Fifty-fifty?</p> <p>Dr Bygrave—I cannot recall. I can take that on notice, if you wish.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Yes, if you would, please.</p>				33
105	Rural Policy and Innovation	RPI01	O'Brien	<p><i>(drought assistance)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Yes, that would be of interest. In answer to a question on notice on 10 October, the Deputy Prime Minister stated: Since 2001, the government has spent \$1.2 billion in assisting 53,000 families through the drought. The agriculture minister used the same figures in answer to a question on 12 October. Is that actual expenditure or funds committed?</p> <p>Mr Koval—The \$1.2 billion is actual expenditure.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—How does that break down by year and by program?</p> <p>Mr Koval—Would you like me to read them out or provide a table on notice at a later date?</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—I would be interested to hear them. If we can have the table, that would make it easier.</p>				34
106		RPI02	O'Brien	<p><i>(drought assistance - \$350m and \$560m announcements)</i></p> <p>Mr Thompson—The states do contribute to rural financial counselling at the base level. This additional drought funding is a Commonwealth contribution to enhance the service.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—You can give us those figures with the assumptions for the breakdown of expected take-up, can you?</p> <p>Mr Koval—We can certainly do that. On an area-by-area basis or just the total?</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Area by area.</p> <p>Mr Koval—Certainly.</p>				35

110		RPI03	Ferris	<p><i>(apprenticeships)</i></p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—Do you have any figures that would indicate the number of people who could be affected by that? Does your department keep figures on rural apprentices?</p> <p>Mr Thompson—No, our department does not keep those figures.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—Would it be possible for you to have a look and see whether they could be supplied to us so that we can see the breadth of the numbers of people who are at risk? Clearly when the drought ends a number of these young people may no longer be in these places. One of the difficulties is that when you lose that infrastructure it is often difficult to get it back.</p> <p>Mr Thompson—I appreciate that. We would have to approach other government departments to obtain that information, but some information would no doubt be available about the number of apprentices in rural areas, perhaps by sector or something like that.</p>				36
112		RPI04	Ferris	<p><i>(Exceptional Circumstances – appeals)</i></p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—Could you give me any indication of the number of appeals that might be lodged and the rate of success of those appeals?</p> <p>Mr Koval—I do not have the number of appeals.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—You might need to take that on notice.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—I would appreciate it if you were able to tell me what rate of appeal there is and what percentage of those appeals are successful. I realise that you may need to take it on notice.</p> <p>Mr Koval—I will also need to contact the states to get the latest information.</p> <p>ACTING CHAIR—That would be useful.</p>				37
114	Natural Resource Management	NRM01	O'Brien	<p><i>(Living Murray Initiative – Murray-Darling Basin)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Getting back to the \$500 million into the Murray-Darling Basin: the budget papers told us that the funding would go to accelerating their capital works program, funding additional measures under the Living Murray environment works and measures program and allowing the Murray-Darling Basin Commission to participate in the Living Murray agreement to deliver 500 gigalitres for environmental water flows. How big is the MDBC capital works program annually?</p> <p>Mr Aldred—I might have to take that one on notice. I have not got the specific split here. The annual budget for 2006-07 for the commission this year is a total of \$156,424,000. The capital works is part of that.</p>				38

115		NRM02	O'Brien	<p><i>(Living Murray Initiative)</i></p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Given this Living Murray Initiative commenced in mid-2002, being formally signed off by all members of the council in June 2004, what actual progress has been made in restoring environmental flows to the river system to date?</p> <p>Mr Aldred—There have been a range of environmental flows that have been implemented in the river. A particular example would be last spring when, from recollection, about 510 gegalitres was put into the Barmah-Millewa forest to facilitate breeding of waterbirds, to water-stress red gum and so on. There have been a range of activities that have been undertaken. Some of the examples that I gave you just a moment ago in the environmental works and measures program are similarly planned for this year.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—Can you give us full details of those on notice?</p> <p>Mr Aldred—Yes, I can.</p> <p>Senator O'BRIEN—And details of the water flow additions, how they will be achieved and what the timetable is proposed to achieve that?</p>				39
118	Forestry and Fisheries	F&F01	Sterle	<p><i>(harvest strategy policy)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Would it be possible to provide a copy of the draft policy to the committee?</p> <p>Mr Sisson—At the moment it is very much a work in progress, so it is full of edits. I imagine it would be—</p> <p>Senator STERLE—That is all right, but would it be possible to provide a draft copy?</p> <p>Mr Sisson—Yes, I imagine it would.</p> <p>Senator Abetz—We will take that on notice.</p>				40

119		F&F02	Sterle	<p><i>(Commonwealth fisheries buyout)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Is information on the number of boats that were taken out of each fishery on there?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—No, but I can give you that. Of the actual boats that were surrendered, there were only four vessels that have taken advantage of the buyback scheme. That is not to say that a lot of those vessels whose owners have surrendered their licence will continue to fish. I mean, they may sell their vessel or they may use it for recreational purposes or whatever. But there will be more vessels than that that actually exit the fisheries.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—They were all in the same fishery, were they?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—I would need to check. Those four are the ones that took advantage of the \$25,000 offer to scrap their boat.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—Can you provide us with the details of what fisheries they came out of?</p>				41
120		F&F03	Sterle	<p>Senator STERLE—Were any concessions bought back from fishers who were not actively fishing?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—That is possible, because we bought a raft of different concessions from people that were out there, and the idea was to reduce the overall pool, to stop them becoming active in the fisheries. Some may have been active and some may have been inactive.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—So they may have had a quota, a little quota or no quota at all?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—Yes, that is right.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—We are not sure of that?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—They would have had an entitlement to fish and would have had statutory fishing rights in the fishery. Some of them may have held their quota or sold their quota, but they were selling their rights to fish in the fishery.</p> <p>Senator STERLE—Would you be able to provide the details to the committee?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—I am not sure whether we could determine which ones were active or inactive. I am happy to take it on notice, but I am not sure that we can provide you with that information.</p>				42

123	Australian Fisheries Management Authority	AFMA01	Sterle	<p><i>(illegal fishing)</i></p> <p>Senator STERLE—Do we have a figure for the southern oceans?</p> <p>Mr Hurry—We can get one. I have a feeling that, on the last patrol we did down there, we saw four or five of them that were vessels that are flagged to non-member countries of CCAMLR. So they are not illegal but they are unregulated in as much as they are fishing there under the wrong flags in the commission areas. But AFMA would have some of those figures, no doubt.</p>				43
WRITTEN QUESTIONS								
n/a	Natural Resource Management	NRM03	Stephens	<p><i>(Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council)</i></p> <p>What is the current status of the four projects approved in November 2004? (A project to recover 145 gigalitres of water in the Goulburn Murray; a project to recover 24 gigalitres from decommissioning a structure called Lake Makoan, in Victoria; a project to recover 9 gigalitres of water in NSW from innovative market based approaches; a project to recover 62 gigalitres of water in NSW from a range of infrastructure type measures improving the efficiency of a range of irrigation areas and wetland structures).</p>				44
n/a		NRM04	Stephens	At Budget Estimates you advised only Victoria has come forward with an investment plan and a contract the government could sign onto and start making payments on. What is the status of this contract?				45
n/a		NRM05	Stephens	What projects have come forward since November 2004? What is the current status of these projects?				46
n/a		NRM06	Stephens	At Budget Estimates the Department said it was looking to find new ways of finding water within the systems? Can you provide an update on progress?				47
n/a		NRM07	Stephens	At Budget Estimates the Department said no water has been returned to the Murray yet out of the 500 gigalitre commitment, but the first proposal will return 120 gigalitres by 1 July 2007 – the Goulburn Murray water recovery proposal. Does this project remain on target for the 1 July date? Are there updates on other projects?				48
n/a		NRM08	Stephens	At Budget Estimates the Department said "of the \$500 million agreed under that intergovernmental agreement for the Living Murray Initiative, the Commonwealth has not expended any funds, although we do expect to expend those funds that are outlined in the budget document, which is the \$2.484 million. We expect to expend that this financial year." Please provide an update on the Living Murray Initiative expenditure.				49

n/a		NRM09	Stephens	Are existing water management practices in the Murray-Darling Basin compliant with the NWI? They don't give priority to achieving environmental sustainability and protecting resource security, fail to manage surface and groundwater resources conjunctively, are not based on a whole-of-system approach to defining management goals and will not be able to adapt effectively to the predicted impacts of climate change?				50
n/a		NRM10	Siewert	<p><i>(National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality)</i></p> <p>Follow up to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry answer of a question to the ECITA Committee QN 53</p> <p>Have the Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group been allocated further funding for drainage works in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Investment Plan?</p> <p>a. If so, how much and for what specific work?</p> <p>b. Were these projects approved by the Regional NRM Group?</p> <p>c. Were these projects supported by the State Investment Committee?</p> <p>Were these projects supported the WA State Government?</p>				51
n/a		NRM11	Siewert	<p>Has the WA Channel Management Group been allocated any funding for drainage work?</p> <p>a. If so, how much and for what specific work?</p> <p>b. Were these projects approved by the Regional NRM Group?</p> <p>c. Were these projects supported by the State Investment Committee?</p> <p>Were these projects supported the WA State Government?</p>				52
n/a		NRM15	Siewert	Has the WA Engineering Evaluation Initiative been completed and assessed?				53
n/a	Fisheries and Forestry	F&F04	Siewert	Before the buyout announced in 2005 how many licences were there in Australian Commonwealth fisheries?				54
n/a		F&F05	Siewert	In what categories were they?				55
n/a		F&F06	Siewert	How many licences were bought out, and what portion of the announced funds have been spent to date?				56
n/a		F&F07	Siewert	How are the licences being valued?				57
n/a		F&F08	Siewert	How much quota was bought out?				58

n/a		F&F09	Siewert	Is the Department/Authority concerned that the buyout is simply concentrating ownership of fishing assets in a smaller number of hands, and not actually reducing pressure on fisheries?					59
n/a	Australian Fisheries Management Authority	AFMA02	Siewert	Is it the case that on AFMA's guidelines, when a species is reduced to less than 20% of its unfished biomass all quotas should be set to zero?					60
n/a		AFMA03	Siewert	If so, can you explain why there is still orange roughy being fished?					61
n/a		AFMA04	Siewert	Similarly, why is there still quota available for School Shark and Eastern Gemfish, both of them fished to well below 20% of their unfished biomass?					62
n/a		AFMA05	Siewert	SBT is down to only 10% of its pre-fishing biomass, but the quota remains unchanged since 1989. In view of the fact that the population has plummeted to its current low level why is the same quota still being allocated?					63

Whole of Department Questions

n/a	Whole Department and all Agencies	WoD 1	Ludwig	<p><i>(Annual Reports)</i></p> <p>With regard to each agencies (and the department itself) that fall inside the department's portfolio, could the department indicate</p> <p>What date the agency's 2005-06 Annual Report was tabled before parliament?</p>					64
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n/a		WoD 2	Ludwig	<p>If the annual report was not tabled by 31 October 2006, could the department indicate:</p> <p>a. When the report was tabled, or if it remains untabled what date the report is expected to be tabled by.</p> <p>b. Whether the agency's own legislation provides an alternative timeframe for its annual report. If so, could the department provide:</p> <p>i. A description and reference to the relevant provision and legislation.</p> <p>ii. An explanation of why the agency cannot meet the general timeframe set out in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Requirements for Annual Reports, and so requires an alternative timeframe?</p> <p>c. Whether the agency was granted an extension under section subsections 34C(4) - (7) of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901? If so, could the department provide:</p> <p>i. The date for finalizing the report as set out in the extension.</p> <p>ii. The reason given for granting the extension.</p> <p>iii. The date that the Minister tabled in Parliament a statement explaining why an extension was granted.</p> <p>iv. A copy of the Minister's statement.</p> <p>d. Where the agency's legislation doesn't provide for an alternative timeframe (as per question b) nor was the agency granted an extension (as per question c) could the department provide:</p> <p>i. Explanation for why the Annual Report was tabled outside the timeframe set by DPM&C despite there being no provision alternative timeframe set out in the agency's legislation nor there being any formal extension granted.</p> <p>ii. Details of any other arrangement in place for the tabling of the agency's Annual Report</p>				65
n/a		WoD3	Ludwig	<p><i>(Possible Parliamentary Questions)</i></p> <p>With regard to the preparation of Possible Parliament Questions briefs or other such documents intended to brief Minister's on an issue specifically for Question Time, could the department/agency provide:</p> <p>a. The number of such briefs prepared in each of the last three financial years (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06).</p> <p>b. The number of staff who are responsible for coordinating such briefs and the salary level they are engaged at.</p> <p>c. The name of internal unit/team that those staff belong to and a description of its other responsibilities.</p> <p>d. 4. The total budget associated with the unit/team referred to in response to part 3</p>				66

n/a		WoD 4	Ludwig	<i>(legal services expenditure)</i> (What sum did the department spend during 2005-2006 on external (a) barristers and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).					67
n/a		WoD 5	Ludwig	What sum did the department spend on internal legal services.					68
n/a		WoD6	Ludwig	What is the department's projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-2007.					69
31		WoD7	O'Brien	<i>(internal audits)</i> Senator O'BRIEN —How many particularly significant matters would have been drawn to the attention of the minister in the last year? Ms Hewitt —We will probably have to take that on notice, if you will allow us to do that, and come back to you.					70