

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 1**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Is it a fact that other states in their recently gazetted thresholds for GE contamination in canola reflected the intention of the Primary Industries Ministerial Council decision to reduce the contamination levels for stock from 0.5% back down to 0.1% by 2008?

**ANSWER**

No other State has specified an intent to lower the threshold to 0.1% in their gazetted notices. South Australia has indicated a review of the threshold may be undertaken.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 2**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Why is there no reference to this in your exemption order for thresholds? Is it your intention to follow the decision of the PIMC to also reduce legalized contamination levels in seed stock to 0.1% by 2008, or do you intend allowing the contamination level to remain at 0.5% in seeds?

**ANSWER**

PIMC has expressed an intention to reduce the threshold for seed to 0.1% in 2008.. Thresholds were introduced to manage an urgent issue. Any subsequent revisions will be in consultation with industry.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 3**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Is it a fact that threshold levels you have proposed would not extend to cover the situation of GE canola contaminating other grains such as wheat, where there is a zero tolerance for the presence of GE canola according to the NSW Moratorium legislation?

**ANSWER**

I do not believe this to be the case. The events to which the thresholds are to be applied are described in the relevant moratorium orders issued under the Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium ) Act and are specific to canola regardless of whether it is mixed with other grains not.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 4**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

What action do you intend to take if GE canola is found to be contaminating NSW wheat and other grains, even at so-called low levels?

**ANSWER**

The action taken would depend on the circumstances surrounding a detection if it occurred.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 5**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

What impacts do you think GE contamination of wheat would have on NSW farmers and our international and domestic markets that currently demand 100% GE-free supply?

**ANSWER**

This remains a hypothetical situation. However, Canada does not appear to have suffered any major setbacks in its ability to market wheat despite the large adoption of GM canola in that country.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 6**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Is it a fact that there are currently no tests available in Australia that can rapidly and accurately measure the level of GE contamination in canola, during delivery by the farmer to the bulk handler?

**ANSWER**

A number of tests are available to identify GM canola.. This situation has been considered by the Advisory Council.  
The NSW DPI will continue to consult with industry stakeholders regarding speed, accuracy and cost-effectiveness of testing.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 7**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

How will levels of GE be measured to ensure they comply with the thresholds you are establishing?

**ANSWER**

NSW DPI is working with other States and industry to finalise the appropriate protocols and testing methodologies.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 8**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

How will farmers comply with the thresholds and how will they know if they are over the limit?

**ANSWER**

Once the testing procedures are finalised, farmers will be informed of testing availability. I am informed that GrainCorp will not require farmers to declare the GM status of their crop this season.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 9**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Is the introduction of threshold levels without an available test to measure them and without any compliance program akin to introducing a speed limit without providing people with a speedometer and a set of road rules?

**ANSWER**

NSW DPI is working with other States and industry to finalise the appropriate protocols and testing methodologies.. They will continue to be monitored and refined in consultation with industry.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 10**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Why haven't you undertaken an independent investigation of the economic and agricultural impacts of the introduction of GE crops in NSW, despite repeated advice from your Advisory Council to do so?

**ANSWER**

It is premature to undertake such a study, given that the Gene Technology Act 2000 is currently being reviewed, and the outcomes of that review and the possible impact on State legislation are not yet known.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 11**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Are you aware that this year's canola exports to Europe may need to be labeled GE because the standard the EU applies is not a blanket 0.9%, as you have claimed, but in fact 0.1%?

**ANSWER**

Refer to answer for Question on Notice No. 51.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 12**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Do you agree that GE contamination levels between 0.1% - 0.9% can trigger EU labeling requirements because they are contingent on whether the presence of the GE is adventitious or accidental or technically unavoidable?

**ANSWER**

The current challenge by the US and others through the WTO raises considerable doubt about the EU position. The situation is dynamic and uncertain and NSW DPI is watching closely as it unfolds to assess any possible effect on the Australian industry.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 13**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Would you agree that there are no current segregation measures in the NSW canola supply chain?

**ANSWER**

Canola is already checked for certain quality parameters prior to receipt. The canola industry and marketers clearly support the introduction of thresholds for GM traits in conventional canola.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 14**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

What measures have been taken by you or your Department to avoid the presence of GM material, particularly in relation to this year's harvest of ATR Grace canola which has confirmed contamination levels of up to 0.5%?

**ANSWER**

Refer to answer for Question on Notice No. 52.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 15**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

How many displaced workers were offered positions with Forests NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service?

**ANSWER**

All displaced timber workers in the Brigalow and Nandewar regions and nearby areas who are eligible for assistance under the Brigalow Timber Workers Assistance Fund Guidelines are offered employment with NSW DPI and Department of Environment and Conservation (National Parks and Wildlife Service).

As at 11 January 2006, eleven workers have taken up positions with NSW DPI and Department of Environment and Conservation (National Parks and Wildlife Service); and a further two are being processed.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 16**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Are these jobs permanent?

**ANSWER**

The jobs are permanent. Currently, the workers are being trained and assessed for permanent appointment to appropriate jobs. This will be dependent on health checks and other Occupational Health & Safety Issues.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 17**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Were some former mill workers turned away from position with Forests NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service because they were illiterate?

**ANSWER**

No worker has been turned away from positions with either Forests NSW or the Department of Environment and Conservation. Some health checks remain to be completed. Employment will be dependent on a satisfactory result for those checks.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 18**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

How much of the \$14 million Business Exit Fund has been spent to date?

**ANSWER**

As at 31 December 2005 under the Brigalow Timber Industry Exit Assistance Fund: \$11,825,400.96 has been committed of which \$8,566,643.16 has actually been paid.

Brigalow Timber Industry Hardwood (Small Operators) Exit Assistance Fund: \$1,238,741.60 committed of which \$816,148.80 has actually been paid.

That is a total of \$9,382,791.96 actually paid for business exit, with a further \$3,681,350.60 soon to be paid.

Brigalow Timber Workers Assistance Fund: \$5,979,039.98 committed of which \$4,180,353.54 has actually been paid.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 19**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Have negotiations on the MOU to re-establish the tri-state fruit committee concluded? When will you finally sign off on this outstanding MOU?

**ANSWER**

There is no outstanding MOU related to a tri-state fruit fly committee. However there are a number of agreements being finalised to improve interstate coordination of Queensland fruit fly management programs. The agreement between the governments of NSW, Victoria and South Australia to share the operational costs of the NSW DPI sterile Queensland fruit fly production facility at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute at Menangle has been renewed annually.

Two agreements are being finalised with the Victorian government to share the responsibilities and costs of managing the pest along the Victorian NSW border.

NSW DPI has prepared a detailed submission to Horticulture Australia for significant funding for further research and development into managing fruit fly. This has been done with the cooperation and support of other jurisdictions.

A committee of experts and operational officers from NSW, Victoria and South Australia as well as industry representatives meets regularly to coordinate a range of Queensland fruit fly operations including public relations programs, roadblock activities, monitoring options and eradication strategies when needed.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 20**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

When will the review of the ban on tail docking be completed? How many submissions have you received in regards to this review?

**ANSWER**

The submissions are still being assessed and as stated in the invitation for submissions, follow-up information may be sought. With the possibility of obtaining clarifying information a completion date has not been determined.

The NSW DPI has received 160 submissions.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

## **QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 21**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

### **QUESTION**

What action has your department taken to counter the problem of increased illegal fishing over the last 4 – 5 years?

### **ANSWER**

These actions include:

- ⇒ An increase in the penalty for unlicensed commercial fishing from \$11,000 to \$220,000;
- ⇒ Additional training in investigation and prosecution techniques for all fisheries and marine parks law enforcement officers to enhance their capability in these areas;
- ⇒ An increase in the penalties for other serious fisheries crime, such as taking protected fish and commercial fishing in recreational fishing havens, from \$55,000 to \$220,000;
- ⇒ A tenfold increase in the fine for taking abalone commercially when not licensed to do so; and
- ⇒ A reduction in the bag limit for abalone from 10 to 2 to help protect the NSW abalone resource.
- ⇒ A high-speed patrol has been launched to help NSW DPI target illegal fishing on the South Coast. This will improve DPI's enforcement capacity, with a particular emphasis on targeting illegal fishing in isolated sections of the South Coast. The 43-foot boat comes equipped with two fast, rigid-hull inflatable vessels, which will be used to carry out rapid, random inspections of inshore abalone and lobster diving locations.

The vessel will also be used to conduct compliance operations to ensure recreational and commercial fishers comply with bag and catch limits.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 22**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Do you have any plans to increase the number of fisheries inspectors to counter this problem?

**ANSWER**

A number of measures have been put in place after careful consideration of the recommendations of Mr Palmer's review. The NSW Government may look to implement further measures after fully considering the submissions from the community and the wider implications of the report for Government.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 23**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

The Treasurer's budget speech indicates "This budget an initial allocation of \$16.2 million to support on-going drought assistance measures – with extra funding to be provided if the drought continues", however the 2005-2006 budget for the Drought Regional Initiatives Program is only \$8.7 million – why is there a discrepancy between the two figures?

**ANSWER**

\$8.7 million was allocated to NSW DPI for drought assistance measures. The remainder of the \$16.2 million was allocated for drought assistance measures administered by other agencies including the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Community Services.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 24**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

- a) Can you provide the committee with details as to where the additional \$7.5 million for drought assistance measures is coming from?
- b) Can you provide a list of NSW Government programs that constitute drought assistance measures?

**ANSWER**

- a) The total \$16.2 million was allocated from Treasury, including the \$8.7 million to NSW DPI and \$7.5 million to the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Community Services.
- b) The NSW Government programs that constitute drought assistance measures for this drought are:
  - Transport subsidies
  - Exceptional Circumstances interest subsidies
  - Drought support programs, including household payments, counselling, Drought Support Workers and Farm Family Gatherings
  - Low interest loans to farmers
  - Waiving of fees
  - Small business assistance
  - Pest management
  - Training and animal welfare
  - Town water

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 25**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Of the \$8.7 million provision toward continued drought assistance programs for the 2005-2006 year – what proportion of this funding has already been spent?

**ANSWER**

All of the \$8.7 million has already been spent. This was an initial allocation.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 26**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Has the Department undertaken any analysis of the adequacy, success or the appropriateness of the Government's current drought policies?

**ANSWER**

The Department is continually reviewing the appropriateness of its drought policies and assistance measures.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 27**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Can the committee be provided with any reports of this nature?

**ANSWER**

There are no reports currently available for release.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 28**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

- a) Is any research work on the Government's response to the drought currently underway?
- b) What is the nature of this research?

**ANSWER**

- a) Yes.
- b) Primary Industries Ministerial Council and Standing Committee are currently reviewing Exceptional Circumstances drought policy. While both drought preparedness and within-drought support measures are being examined, a key objective is to see whether a stronger focus on preparedness can be achieved.

Standing Committee is currently consulting with industry on this matter and is scheduled to report to Ministerial Council in April.

An important and exciting new initiative that has emerged from this work is the development of the National Agricultural Monitoring System (NAMS). The aim of NAMS is to assist in streamlining the Exceptional Circumstance submission and declaration process.

The system which is being constructed by the Bureau of Rural Science under the guidance of a cross jurisdictional committee, consists of a database of relevant meteorological and agronomic data. The system is therefore expected to provide

- a single source of standardised data for EC submissions;
- a common reference point for state and Commonwealth declaration processes; and
- may also assist in the early targeting of preparedness programs.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 29**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Can the committee be provided with a breakdown of what assistance has been provided to farmers by region?

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No. 70.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 30**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Can the committee be provided with a breakdown of assistance that has been provided based on Departmental expenses/costs (bureaucrats salaries/consultancies) versus payments made directly to farmers and small businesses affected by this drought?

**ANSWER**

Direct assistance to farmers and small businesses includes transport subsidies, waiving of various fees, exceptional circumstances interest subsidies, low interest loans to farmers, drought household payments and small business assistance.

Assistance delivered to farmers as services includes Drought Support Workers, Rural Financial Counsellors, farm family gatherings, TAFE training of farm workers, various counselling services and assistance to help alleviate town water supply problems. Administration and salaries form a component of these assistance measures.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 31**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Can the committee be provided with a list of those consultancies or agencies that have been commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the Department assessing the drought or the Government's drought policies?

**ANSWER**

No consultants have been commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the department to assess the drought or drought policies.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 32**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

The Committee requested responses to a number of additional questions on notice which were not asked during the Supplementary hearing.

**QUESTION**

Can the Committee also be provided with a table outlining the costs involved with any consultancies or other work contracted to outside agencies?

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No 31.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 33**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Minister, did you undertake any overseas travel last year?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** When did you travel, how many staff accompanied you and what was the cost of that overseas travel?

**ANSWER**

I did not undertake any overseas travel in the Financial year 1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 34**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Did you provide overseas travel to any other government or local government people in the past 12 months?

**ANSWER**

No

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 35**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Will you provide the details?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will determine whether it is our responsibility to provide details. It was an arrangement between the Chinese authorities and the mayors, not the State Government.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Will you provide a list of the mayors?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes, I have no problem with that.

**ANSWER**

As I advised this was an arrangement between China and the mayors, not the State Government.

I have been advised that the following people were involved:

Cr Peter Laird  
Cr Chris Manchester  
Cr Maurice Simpson  
Cr John Farr  
Cr George Martin  
Cr Rob Gledhill

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 36**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

What will be the costs of establishing and operating the ministerial agricultural advisory council, including resources, salaries, reimbursement for travel expenses, et cetera.

**ANSWER**

With the establishment of NSW DPI I took the opportunity to consider how best to consult stakeholders. This has resulted in the establishment of peak advisory bodies for the sectors represented in the primary industries portfolio. These are in the area of Science, Seafood, Forestry, Minerals, Agriculture and Wine.

The formation of the new advisory bodies combined with the consolidation of some of the existing committees is expected to be cost neutral.

In accordance with Premier's Memorandum 2004-10, guidelines for NSW Board and Committee Members: Appointments and Remuneration, members of these committee's are able to claim sitting fees and the reimbursement of travel expenses. These advisory bodies will be supported through NSW DPI within existing budget arrangements.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 37**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Will you take on notice the question regarding the other advisory groups that you indicated earlier including wine, science, and other that you did not detail?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes.

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No 36

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 38**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

You indicate also in your press release that you are going to axe a number of advisory councils. Can you give us a list of the advisory councils that will be axed?

**ANSWER**

As I indicated in Question on Notice No 36 the formation of these new bodies is being balanced by the consolidation of a number of existing committees. This process will take some time and in many cases requires amendments to legislation.

The committees that have or are being considered for consolidation include:-

Seafood Industry Advisory Forum;  
Advisory Council on Commercial Fishing;  
Advisory Council on Aquaculture;  
Oyster Research Advisory Committee;  
NSW Horticulture Market Chain Committee;  
Murray Valley (NSW) Wine Grape Industry Development Committee;  
State Minerals Advisory Council.

NSW DPI will consult with industry and each of the existing committees during this process.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 39**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Can you provide the Committee with the terms of reference for the new agricultural advisory committee?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes, we will do so.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And the other advisory council?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** We will do so. Nothing has been secret about these. Every one of them has been announced over the last 2½ years by public announcement.

**ANSWER**

**MINISTERIAL SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGRICULTURE,  
FISHERIES AND FOOD**

1. Review the research and development requirements, strategies, activities and outcomes of the three organisations and advise on their relevance to state and national priorities.
2. Review and recommend strategies to ensure the optimal communication of research and development outcomes to stakeholder groups and the community generally.
3. Advise the Minister on the quality of the science being carried out through his agencies.
4. Examine the research and development portfolios to ensure that they will give a good economic, social and environmental return on investment for the State Government, and that pathways for utilisation of the research outputs are well defined.
5. Provide advice on research and development delivery mechanisms within and at the interface between the different agencies to optimise efficiencies.



### **WINE INDUSTRY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

1. Provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries on development opportunities for the NSW wine industry and how NSW Agriculture and Government can contribute to this development.
2. Provide advice to the Minister on export opportunities for the NSW wine industry and how NSW Agriculture, through its research and development units, can enhance export development.
3. Report back to the Minister on industry management of endemic and exotic pests and diseases that pose significant threats to the NSW wine industry.
4. Identify and advise the Minister of potential research and development, education and industry training opportunities that can be delivered through the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre, Wagga Wagga.

### **AGRICULTURE MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

1. Provide to the Minister a single, consolidated, high level source of advice on agricultural issues in relation to government policies, legislation, services and fees that impact on the industry.
2. Explore, develop and resolve issues within the agriculture industry through communication with stakeholders.
3. Assist in attracting funding from the relevant industry for extension and research and development.

### **MINERALS MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

1. Provide the Minister with a high level source of advice across all sectors of the minerals and petroleum industries in relation to Government policies, legislation, regulation and services.
2. Identify key areas which may require a strategic policy response for the Minister's consideration and assist in developing strategies to address these issues. Issues might include:
  - Clean coal technologies, and greenhouse
  - Gas exploration and production
  - Minerals Exploration Action Agenda issues relating to NSW
  - Exploration and mining in the context of sustainable natural resource management
  - Infrastructure needs.
  - Advise on attracting exploration and development investment to NSW.

## **FOREST AND FOREST PRODUCTS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

1. Provide to the Minister high level source of advice across all segments of the forest and forest products industry in relation to Government policies, legislation and services;
2. Explore, develop and resolve issues within the industry through communication with stakeholders, issues will include:
  - Regional industry development and value adding options;
  - Certification;
  - Forestry's contribution to sustainable natural resource management;
  - Priority areas for research.
3. Advise on attracting funding for research and development, including:
  - Plantation management and innovation issues;
  - Innovation and research directions for the forest industry;
  - Carbon and salinity issues.

## **SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Seafood Industry Advisory Council will advise the Minister for Primary Industries on the current and future development and sustainable management of the wild harvest and aquaculture industries, particularly in relation to Government policy relating to:

1. The development of a seafood industry strategy that will build on the significant initiatives outlined in the Minister for Primary Industries', *Vision for the NSW Seafood Industry*.
2. The conservation and sustainable management of commercial fishery and aquaculture resources, including the implementation of the fishery management strategies for the major commercial fisheries.
3. The commercial and social viability of those industries, including advice on issues associated with the share management of fisheries, structural adjustment, the implementation of appropriate pricing and charging arrangements, and alternative fishery management arrangements.
4. Export and domestic marketing opportunities, including industry branding, the positioning of seafood products on the domestic market and promoting our clean, green seafood based on the required environmental approvals.
5. Potential research and development, education and industry training opportunities, including technological transfer and capacity building.

6. Initiatives to support seafood industry development, particularly in planning, natural resource management, industry-based tourism and inter-sectoral co-operation.
7. Other matters that may be referred by the Minister.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 40**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Who did you liaise with representing New South Wales farmers?

**ANSWER**

I consulted with a wide range of people in relation to the formation of each of the committees.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 41**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Colless to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Have the hardwood contract covers from the Goonoo been compensated?

**ANSWER**

I assume the question is intended to refer to “loggers” and not “covers”.

Under the Brigalow Timber Industry Hardwood (Small Operators) Exit Assistance Fund, 8 applications have been received, and 8 applicants have been approved for first phase payments.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 42**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Colless to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Have they been paid?

**ANSWER**

All except one of the eight was paid at least a partial payment. The business that did not receive a payment, will shortly be paid, once Australian Business Number and Goods & Services Tax details are clarified.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

## **QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 43**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

### **BACKGROUND**

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes, I certainly can. The Government's decision on the Brigalow and Nandewar bioregions is being implemented in a co-operative and positive climate. The estate transfers of zones 1, 2 and 3 occurred on 1 December 2005. Continued progress is being made on wood supply agreement negotiations, rollout of the cypress thinning programs, negotiations of regulatory conditions and interagency transition arrangements. We do have a figure in relation to the payment of assistance. The payment processes for both worker exit assistance and business exit assistance are progressing without delay. What took years to deliver on the east coast under the Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Program has taken a matter of months in the Brigalow as the formula for determining assistance is much simpler. We are expediting assistance to eligible employees who are either being redeployed or accepting a special redundancy payment of up to \$72,000. Part-time employees are eligible to a pro rata special redundancy payment based on their part-time hours. As of 30 November 2005, 130 applications for workers exit assistance have been received. Of these, 82 have been approved for assistance totalling \$6.1 million. Payments to the remaining approved workers are currently being facilitated. Ten of the workers have accepted the Government's offer of alternative employment: nine have been employed by the Department of Environment and Conservation and one is employed with Forests New South Wales. These workers have access to generous training assistance to help them prepare for new tasks. A number of applications yet to be determined from workers and principals who may be made redundant from businesses are currently being assessed for exit assistance. Should the businesses be approved for exit assistance, these workers will also be approved for assistance. Assistance to businesses that have decided to exit the Brigalow and Nandewar timber industries is progressing well. As of 30 November 2005, five mills and one small hardwood operator have been approved for exit assistance totalling \$9.2 million.

Mr Colless to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

### **QUESTION**

**The Hon. RICK COLLESS:** How many of those displaced workers have been offered positions with Forests New South Wales and National Parks?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** As I said before, one—

**The Hon. RICK COLLESS:** You spoke about nine and one. Where were they from? What mills were they from?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will have to take that on notice. We will be announcing soon a recruitment program for the cypress thinning program. If my memory serves me correct, it will employ up to 35 people.

#### **ANSWER**

All displaced timber workers in the Brigalow and Nandewar regions and nearby areas who are eligible for assistance under the Brigalow Timber Workers Assistance Fund Guidelines are offered employment with the Department of Primary Industries (Forests NSW) and Department of Environment and Conservation (National Parkes and Wildlife Service). If necessary, jobs will also be available with some local councils and the Western Plains Zoo.

As at 11 January 2006, eleven workers have taken up positions with the Department of Primary Industries (Forests NSW) and Department of Environment and Conservation (National Parkes and Wildlife Service); and a further two are being processed.

Of the 13 workers: 6 are from Bingara Cypress Pine and all are with the Department of Environment and Conservation (National Parkes and Wildlife Service); 3 are from Gallagher Insultimbers and have opted for DEC; 1 from Gwabegar Sawmill opted for Department of Primary Industries (Forests NSW); 1 from JT & AH Burns opted for DEC; 1 from Ramiens Timber Co opted for DEC and one from the small business 'M O'Neill' opted for DEC.

**CHAIR:** Who decides, and on what basis is it decided, whether State government-owned businesses or business enterprises will pay local government rates?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** That is in the realm of government policy. I will take that on notice. I do not set that.

#### **ANSWER**

Land owned by the Crown is exempt from rates under Section 555 of the Local Government Act.

This question should be addressed to the Minister for Lands or the Treasurer.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



## **QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 44**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

### **QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Can you indicate to the Committee the amount that would be saved by Forests New South Wales not having to pay rates in its production of forests?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Let me take that on notice. For instance, you have to remember that New South Wales Forests spends a hell of a lot of money in regional New South Wales, for instance, on roadworks, on fire protection—

### **ANSWER**

Land owned by the Crown is exempt from rates under Section 555 of the Local Government Act. This includes both dedicated State forests and freehold land. It should however be noted that rates are collected by local councils for Forests NSW properties in some instances:

- Council rates are paid by occupation permit holders and lessees on about 30 per cent of Forests NSW lands. These rates are estimated at \$0.6M per annum.
- In cases where Forests NSW is the plantation service provider for a third party, such as under its agreements with the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) , the investor pays rates on its plantation land. The rates paid by the investors are not known to State Forests.
- Forests NSW pays rates for some office buildings or makes ex-gratia payments for workshop sites. This recognises the value of the direct services provided to these facilities by local government.

An estimate of the local government rates payable by Forests NSW if its lands were not exempt was made by Treasury when it reviewed reciprocal charges between local government and State agencies and GTEs in 2002. The analysis showed that an extra \$1.23M pa would be payable if unoccupied forests and plantations were rateable. However, the analysis for that review showed that Forests NSW now provides services (roads, bridges and gravel) worth \$3.4M pa to Councils at no expense to Councils. In other words, Councils now enjoy a net

benefit. In addition, Forests NSW provides fire fighting and fire management services, the benefit of which to local Councils is estimated at \$1.3M pa.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 45**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Does State Forests pay local government rates on any of its properties?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I think as a rule we do not pay rates but I am not sure whether there might be some asset there that pays rates, but in general we do not pay rates.

**CHAIR:** For example, Edrom Lodge, Eden?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I would have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

Please refer to my previous answer.

As to the specific example referred to by the Honourable Member, Edrom Lodge at Eden is no longer owned by Forests NSW.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 46**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Could you indicate how many jobs have been lost as a result of fire safety grants for more highly mechanised logging, for example, mechanical harvesters?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I am happy to take that on notice, but that would be very difficult to work out because mechanical harvesters have been introduced over a number of years and there has been an overall reduction in just about every industry with the replacement of labour with mechanical machinery. There would be some impact. Whether we can work it out is another question.

**CHAIR:** Can you take that on notice, if you can work it out?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** We will have a go at it.

**ANSWER**

I assume the question is intended to refer to "FISAP grants" not "fire safety grants".

Records are not kept on the employment consequences of the introduction of mechanised harvesting, whether due to industry development grants under the Forestry Industry Structural Adjustment Package (FISAP) or for any other reason.

Given the amount of restructuring over the last decade or so in the forestry industry due to such factors as reductions in timber volumes due to the creation of new national parks and a range of other factors, it would be impracticable to attribute any change in employment to a particular factor.

While it is true that FISAP grants have been made to assist in the increase mechanisation of logging operations, these are not the principal driver. There has been a trend to mechanisation for some time in the industry at the choice of logging contractors. Additionally, Forests NSW in letting contracts for logging operations has required mechanical harvesting (where physical conditions allow). This has principally been to promote the safety of logging operations.

I do not accept that the introduction of new technology necessarily results in job losses, though there may be changes for individuals. Increases in productivity, efficiency and occupational safety are also important economic factors in operations remaining viable and able to continue to employ.

The FISAP Industry Development Program grants are used to assist industry to modernise and mechanise the various timber activities, including mills, to meet Occupational Health & Safety Standards and to maximise the competitive value adding output for each worker.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 47**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Is New South Wales State Forests involved in any way in the indigenous forests strategy?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Can you give any details on that?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take it on notice.

**ANSWER**

The NSW Government supports in principle the 'Commonwealth National Indigenous Forestry Strategy' (May 2005). The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy proposes ways for Aboriginal communities to participate in building competitive and ecologically sustainable forest industries. It also provides a framework for industry and Government to work with Aboriginal communities for rural and regional economic benefit.

**CHAIR:** What is the total budget for all Forest New South Wales activities related to education, public relations and advertising?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take it on notice.

**ANSWER**

Expenditure on activities with a primarily educational focus by Forests NSW 2004-05 is calculated as \$1.5M. This figure aggregates the costs of a range of items including the operating costs of Cumberland State Forest Educational Centre, publications like 'Bush Telegraph', recreational facilities brochures, extension forester advice and exhibits at shows. Community and media relations expenditure was \$658,000 (salaries component).

Expenditure on advertising in 2004-05 was \$65,929 mainly comprised of public notices and recruitment advertising.

Media and external communications services that might be regarded as "public relations" are now provided by corporate units within the Department of Primary Industries and are not separately charged to Forests NSW at this stage of the DPI roll-out. Forests NSW continues to fund a number of publications (notably 'Bush Telegraph') and former Forests NSW staff positions undertaking public affairs and communications functions that were transferred to DPI pending the development of a service agreement covering cost apportionment between DPI and Forests NSW.

**CHAIR:** Could you give an indication of the total cost for Forests New South Wales of compliance with EPA regulations?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** PhD research projects in some of these questions. We will have a look at it.

**ANSWER**

Forests NSW calculates its costs of harvesting supervision and environmental compliance on a total annual basis. The calculated figure includes Forests NSW expenditure on complying with the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval which incorporates the Threatened Species Licence and Environmental Protection Licence. Harvest supervision is necessary to meet the conditions of these two Licences and thereby achieve overall environmental outcomes.

Forests NSW has reported that \$6.157M was spent in 2004-05 on harvesting supervision and environmental compliance in native forests (including \$2.446M on tree marking and \$1.602M on pre logging surveys for threatened fauna). In

addition, meeting the EPA's water quality monitoring requirements cost Forests NSW \$363,000.

An annual licence fee of \$525,000 is also paid to the Department of Environment and Conservation to cover the costs of its independent monitoring of Forests NSW environmental compliance on soil and water protection.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 48**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Total cost for Forests New South Wales of compliance with EPA regulations?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Are you going to give me six months to work that out? But, yes, I will take it on notice. But it would be how long is a piece of string to that question, but we will try to give you an answer.

**ANSWER**

Refer to answer for Question on Notice No. 47.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 49**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** And also the total cost for Forests New South Wales of complying with provisions to protect threatened species? The same?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes. I will take it on notice.

**ANSWER**

Forests NSW calculates its costs of harvesting supervision and environmental compliance, including provisions to protect threatened species, on a total annual basis. The calculated figure includes Forests NSW expenditure on complying with the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval which incorporates the Threatened Species Licence and Environmental Protection Licence. Harvest supervision is necessary to meet the conditions of these two Licences and thereby achieve overall environmental outcomes.

Forests NSW has reported that \$6.157M was spent in 2004-05 on harvesting supervision and environmental compliance in native forests (including \$2.446M on tree marking and \$1.602M on pre logging surveys for threatened fauna).

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 50**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Could you indicate the total information obtained by Forests New South Wales from royalties on pole blocks?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will get that information for you.

**CHAIR:** If it were possible could you perhaps go back three or four years to get that information for the Committee?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** We will see what we can do.

**ANSWER**

Please see the Table below for the information sought.

**Annual Pulplog Sales Revenue - Forests NSW**

<b>Pulplog Source</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>
Native Forests	\$7.304M	\$6.383M	\$5.696M
Hardwood Plantations	\$0.308M	\$0.245M	\$0.237M
Softwood Plantations	\$8.460M	\$9.405M	\$9.378M
<b>All Sources</b>	<b>\$16.072M</b>	<b>\$16.033M</b>	<b>\$15.311M</b>

Source: Forests NSW - based on average product prices

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 51**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** You accept that some canola exports to Europe will have to be labelled as GE?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** No, I am not accepting anything in this relation. I will get some advice on that.

**CHAIR:** You will take that on notice, but at the moment you feel there is no canola—

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** No, I have not said that at all. I did not say that. I said that I am not necessarily accepting your position. I will get some advice in relation to this matter.

**ANSWER**

Regardless of the various opinions on the issue, the only opinion that really matters is that of the industry and marketers that may export canola to the EU. To date, I have been informed by a range of marketers as well as peak industry bodies such as the Grains Council of Australia, Australian Oilseeds Federation, Australian Seeds Federation and the NSW Farmers' Association that they support the thresholds as introduced.

NSW DPI is working with industry to finalise protocols for the production of canola below the threshold requirements including the determination of appropriate testing for GM in conventional canola varieties.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 52**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** What measures have been undertaken by you or your department to avoid the presence of GM material, particularly in relation to this year's harvest of ATR grace canola, which has confirmed contamination levels of up to 0.5 per cent?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I think where we are aware of where there is a possibility of the unintended presence of GM material in the ATR grace, we are taking measures to control it. As for other areas, I do not have the information and I would be only too pleased to present you with it.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Would you agree that by establishing legal thresholds for contamination without putting in place the segregation measures in the supply chain does not demonstrate an attempt to avoid the contamination, as is required by the EU regulations?

**ANSWER**

My Advisory Council considered both the issue of unintended presence in ATR Grace and the implementation of testing to monitor adherence with the proposed thresholds. The Council agreed that the introduction of thresholds was appropriate given that 180,000ha of ATR Grace had been planted in NSW over the past few years with 15,000ha this season and was not able to be quarantined from other canola.

The introduction of thresholds in NSW in no way impacts on the capacity to export canola to the EU as the NSW thresholds apply under NSW legislation not EU legislation. Some marketers might choose to introduce more specific segregation measures to meet EU regulations should a significant EU market eventuate. However, at this stage, I have been informed by a range of marketers as well as peak industry bodies such as the Grains Council of Australia, Australian Oilseeds Federation, Australian Seeds Federation and the NSW Farmers' Association that they support the thresholds as introduced.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 53**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Ms Hale to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Are you aware of outbreaks of phytophthora cinnamomi or root rot on the North Coast?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I do not have specific information on it.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** But you are aware that there have been outbreaks?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I have heard there have been outbreaks in a number of areas, yes, but I do not have the specific information with me. I am happy to supply you with it.

**ANSWER**

Forests NSW has advised that the soil-borne pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi* has been identified as a causal agent of eucalypt 'dieback' in several regions of Australia. The severity of this disease is dependant on the moisture and temperature conditions of the soil and the composition of the vegetation. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is pathogenic to a wide range of woody plants, however, not all species are equally susceptible.

Surveys have found the fungus to be present throughout coastal eucalypt forests, however, its occurrence at the local scale is patchy in NSW. Forests NSW knows of no recent 'outbreaks' of *P. cinnamomi* in native forests managed by Forests New South Wales.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 54**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Colless to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. RICK COLLESS:** Continuing on the forest industry theme, can you explain the delay in fully responding to concerns to your office about the firewood industry in a letter dated 10 June 2005 from Heather and Jack Andrews of Andrews Haulage?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I do not recall the specific letter. I will give you a written answer to that.

**ANSWER**

In reply to their letter of June 2005, I asked Forests NSW to advise Mr and Mrs Andrews that their firewood allocation was to be subject to a review of firewood operations and the conditions to apply under the Threatened Species Licence. Negotiations with the Department of Environment and Conservation over the Threatened Species Licence to apply in the Community Conservation Area are continuing and the review of firewood operations is due for completion at the end of January 2006.

I am advised that Forests NSW has kept Mr and Mrs Andrews informed of its negotiations with the Department of Environment and Conservation over the Threatened Species Licence conditions and the review of firewood operations.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 55**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

- a) Can you provide the Committee with actual or estimated cost savings realised by the creation of the New South Wales Food Authority in April 2004?
- b) Can you also provide a total list of the increases in taxes and charges administered by the new Food Authority and the percentage of the increase?

**ANSWER**

- (a) The establishment of the NSW Food Authority has resulted in significant savings on overheads, especially since previous Health staff were located throughout the State at area public health units. However, to put an exact or estimated figure to the actual savings has proven to be difficult as it involves reviewing area public health units' individual budgets and these units have been restructured since the establishment of the Authority. Nonetheless, the Authority estimates that at least \$120,000 is saved on a yearly basis in the form of staff savings and on-costs.
- (b) A schedule of increases (and decreases) is provided below. Increases relate to Consumer Price Index increases and it is noted that previously there had been no increases in licence and audit fees since July 2000.

Industry was consulted on the increases through consultative committee meetings and licence holders were advised of changes through industry specific circulars.



**Meat Industry Fees**

Licence Type	No. Staff	2004 Licence Fee	Current Licence Fee	2004 Applic. Fee	Current Applic. Fee	2004 Total *	Current Total	% increase or decrease of Total
<b>Abattoir</b>	1 – 5	\$250	\$250	\$125	\$50	\$375	\$300	-20%
	6 – 50	\$500	\$500	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$550	-26.7%
	51+	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$50	\$3,000	\$2,050	-31.7%
Animal Food Processing Plant	1 – 5	\$500	\$605	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$655	-12.7%
	6 – 50	\$750	\$895	\$375	\$50	\$1,125	\$945	-16%
	51+	\$2,250	\$2,650	\$1,125	\$50	\$3,375	\$2,700	-20%
- Chiller (Class 4)	N/A	\$150	\$185	N/A	N/A	\$150	\$185	20%
Game Meat Processing Plant (Class 1,2,3,4,5)	1 – 5	\$250	\$310	\$125	\$50	\$375	\$360	-4%
	6 – 50	\$500	\$605	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$655	-12.7%
	51+	\$2,000	\$2,355	\$1,000	\$50	\$3,000	\$2,405	-19.8%
Knackery (no classes)	1 – 5	\$500	\$605	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$655	-12.7%
	6 – 50	\$750	\$895	\$375	\$50	\$1,125	\$945	-16%
	51+	\$2,250	\$2,650	\$1,125	\$50	\$3,375	\$2,700	-20%
Meat Processing Plant (Class 1,2,3)	1 – 5	\$250	\$250	\$125	\$50	\$375	\$300	-20%
	6 – 50	\$500	\$500	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$550	-26.7%
	51+	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$50	\$3,000	\$2,050	-31.7%
Rendering Plant (no classes)	1 – 5	\$250	\$250	\$125	\$50	\$375	\$300	-20%
	6 – 50	\$500	\$500	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$550	-26.7%
	51+	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1000	\$50	\$3,000	\$2,050	-31.7%
Retail Meat Premises (no classes)	1 – 5	\$250	\$250	\$125	\$50	\$375	\$300	-20%
	6 – 50	\$500	\$500	\$250	\$50	\$750	\$550	-26.7%
	51+	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$50	\$3,000	\$2,050	-31.7%
Animal Food Van Game Meat Van Meat Van (All classes)	N/A	\$150	\$185	\$75	\$50	\$225	\$235	4.4%

\* Total = Application fee + licence fee

**Dairy/Plant Product/Goat Milk/Seafood/ Industry Fees**

<b>Licence Type</b>	<b>2004 licence fee</b>	<b>Current licence fee</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Dairy Farm	\$240	\$300	25%
Dairy Vehicle Vendor	\$140	\$180	28.5%
Milk Collector	\$400	\$485	21.3%
Milk Store/ Dairy Produce Store	\$220	\$275	25%
Dairy Produce Factory			
- Class 1 (Milk Processing Factory <10 employees)	\$750	\$750	0%
- Class 2 (Milk Processing Factory 11-70 employees)	\$50,000	\$50,000	0%
- Class 3 (Milk Processing Factory > 70 employees)	\$205,000	\$205,000	0%
- Class 4 (Dairy Product Factory < 10 employees)	\$750	\$750	0%
- Class 5 (Dairy Product Factory 11-30 employees)	\$1,500	\$1,500	0%
- Class 6 (Dairy Product Factory > 30 employees)	\$80,000	\$80,000	0%
Plant Product Processors			
1 – 5 Employees	N/A	\$260	0%
6 – 50 Employees	N/A	\$515	0%
51 or more Employees	N/A	\$2,060	0%
Plant Product Store	N/A	\$275	0%
Plant Product Transport Vehicle	N/A	\$185	0%
Goat Milk Dairy Farmer	\$100	\$100	0%
Unpasteurised Goat Milk Producer	\$300	\$300	0%
Goat Milk Dairy Produce Factory	\$500	\$500	0%
Commercial Fishers	\$310	\$310	0%
Finfish or Crustacea Aquaculture			
1 – 10 Employees	\$250.00	\$250.00	0%
11 – 50 Employees	\$500.00	\$500.00	0%
51 or more Employees	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0%
Shellfish Area Service Levy			
Flat fee	\$1,060	\$1,060	0%
Per Hectare	\$31	\$31	0%
Seafood Transport Vehicles	\$160.00	\$160.00	0%
Seafood Processors and Stores			
1 – 10 Employees	\$250.00	\$250.00	0%
11 – 50 Employees	\$500.00	\$500.00	0%
51 of more Employees	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0%

A \$50 application fee is payable for all dairy/Plant Product/Goat Milk and Seafood licence applications

Audit and Inspection Fees are charged at a rate \$140 per hour and in addition travel time fee charged at a flat rate of \$35 per audit. These charges are subject to GST. This rate has not changed since July 2004.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 56**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I turn now to FarmBis and ProFarm. You claim to be offering cheaper subsidised courses under ProFarm. Can you explain why the New South Wales Farmers Association charges \$300 for non-members and \$225 for members for the chemical application course in Tamworth, course AGF3, which the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] offers for \$350? Why does the New South Wales Government charge \$269 for a one-day chemical refresher course, when commercially the course is offered for \$200 for non-members and \$150 for New South Wales Farmers Association members? Why is your Government charging more money for these courses than what is charged commercially when they are supposedly subsidised? Will you review the costs of these courses?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take that on notice. I am advised that there are some variations in the courses, but I will take it on notice and give you a full reply.

**ANSWER**

The prices charged by the NSW DPI for its training courses in chemical use, (under the brand name of SMARTtrain), reflect the full cost of running the courses. These courses cover the full suite of chemical use training needs and are backed by extensive research and resources that keep reference material up to date as a useful guide for course participants.

SMARTtrain courses are not subsidised by NSW DPI because they are offered in a commercially competitive environment and National Competition Policy prevents government agencies from offering subsidies that may give them an unfair advantage in the market place.

I have been advised that the NSW Farmers' Association is currently offering courses priced on direct delivery costs only, using reference material produced by others. In addition I am advised that the NSW Farmers' Association courses are tailored for specific areas and do not include the full suite of competencies provided in SMARTtrain.

The costs of all PROfarm courses will be reviewed by NSW DPI in September 2006.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 57**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Colless to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. RICK COLLESS:** In relation to inland professional fishing licences, are you aware that there is a current fishing licence for waters on Yanga Station?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** On Yanga Station in western Riverina? No, I will have to take that on notice. I think someone said this at some point to me but I do not have the details.

**ANSWER**

I am advised that there are no specific commercial fishing licences for waters on Yanga Station. However, there are up to four holders of Inland Restricted Carp and Yabby Fishery endorsements that have regularly fished the waters within and bordering Yanga Station.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 58**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

Two dairy extension officers have resigned from the Department of Primary Industries in the last 12 months and no indication has been given that they will be replaced. How are the 80 dairy farmers in inland areas of New South Wales going to access extension services and why are the areas of Sydney and the Riverina, where there is a higher ratio of dairy farmers to extension officers, having to put up with a lower level of service?

**ANSWER**

Services to dairy producers will continue to be provided through the *Dairy Pathways* project.

The *Dairy Pathways* project will capitalise on the technical capability of the NSW DPI dairy section and pastures agronomists, and focus on dairy industry issues that will best address improved profits, lifestyle and environmental sustainability for the State's dairy farmers.

The need for additional technical support for dairy farmers in the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee River Valleys has been identified by NSW DPI and this need will be addressed in 2006. The recruitment of an Intensive Grazing Systems Officer with a focus on the development of optimal grazing practices under spray irrigation is being considered as a component of the *Dairy Pathways* project. This position is intended to be based in the animal nutrition section at the Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 59**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

When will you release the final report of the assessment into the impact of open-cut coalmining in the Upper Hunter Valley, which was announced by the former Minister for Mineral Resources last year?

**ANSWER**

The report was prepared by the Department of Planning and was released by the Minister for Planning on 20 December 2005.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 60**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** In relation to bellbird associated dieback, how do you account for high grading in dieback areas, that is, harvesting the last millable healthy trees in, for example, the Tintenbar and Ewingar State Forests, leaving dead and dying trees for the next cutting cycle? There is a significant sustainability problem there.

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** We, in the department, always place a high priority on sustainability, and I am sure in this instance it will. But as to the specific question about those two forests, I will get you a written answer.

**ANSWER**

Native forests managed by Forests NSW, including Ewingar and Toonumbar State Forests in northern NSW are harvested in a sustainable manner in accordance with the Regional Forest Agreement and the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval supervised by the Department of Environment and Conservation. In no instances are State forests harvested without providing for regeneration to meet future harvesting requirements.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 61**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

**BACKGROUND**

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** The area generally referred to as the Sugarloaf Range in the Hunter region includes parts of the Heaten and Awaba State Forests. These forests are recognised by Forests NSW for the important biological, scenic, recreational, cultural values they provide to the local community. Approximately 81 per cent of the Sugarloaf Forests are excluded from harvesting and forms part of the large informal reserve. The remaining 19 per cent is available for harvesting and will provide local sawmills with timber for use as building materials for housing and furniture, and continue to maintain local employment.

A comprehensive regional assessment and regional forest agreement processes undertaken across the lower and upper north-east of New South Wales resulted in the establishment of the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval [IFOA], the regulatory regime under which State Forests are managed and licensed for timber harvesting. The IFOA protects soil and water quality, threatened species, rainforest, high conservation value old-growth, steep slopes and rocky outcrops. Harvesting operations in compartments 248 and 250 of Awaba State Forest this year was completed in accordance with the requirements of the harvesting plan and the IFOA.

No areas of high conservation value old-growth forest or rain forest, as identified in the IFOA, was harvested during this operation. Areas of unmapped rain forests were identified and managed in accordance with Forests NSW rain forest protocol, that is, no logging took place in unmapped rain forests, as defined. Compartments 260, 264 and 268 in Heaton State Forests, part of the Sugarloaf Range, are available for harvest, However, currently there are no plans to undertake operations within those areas in 2005 and 2006

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** I appreciate your detailed answer and I am heartened to hear that no rain forests have been logged in those areas. What percentage of timber logged in compartments 248 and 250 went to domestic and export wood chip and what percentage to high quality sawlogs?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I would have to get the information to you on that. But as I say again, thinning operations are vital for the future production forests, and it will continue to remain an important part of it to increase our productivity.

**ANSWER**

Logging operations in cpts 248 and 250, Awaba State Forest in 2005 yielded 49per cent by volume of pulplogs sold to customers for export and domestic markets and 51 per cent by volume of sawlogs, 16 per cent of which were high quality sawlogs.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 62**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Fisheries is the lead agency?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Not, Byron Marine Park.

**CHAIR:** Yes, in that particular marine park, the Department of Fisheries is the lead agency?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes. I will take that specific question on notice. But we do generally operate with a great deal of mutuality.

**ANSWER**

No. NSW DPI works with the Marine Parks Authority in relation to the Cape Byron Marine Park and all other marine parks.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 63**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** This is working with the local Arakwal indigenous people. The 1.5 staff positions from the DEC indicate that the DEC, the terrestrial side of national parks, has been supportive and Fisheries has not. I am just asking if there is anything specific that shows—

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** That is just typical misinformation. I will give you a written answer.

**ANSWER**

Funding arrangements for Aboriginal staff working in the Cape Byron Marine Park are determined by the Marine Parks Authority, which incorporates representatives from NSW DPI, DEC and the Premiers Department. NSW DPI cooperates in the administration and management of marine parks, including agreements and outcomes in relation to Aboriginal interests.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 64**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Would you investigate that matter?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will certainly have a look at it. I reiterate that it is a joint managed park and there are many operational activities that have to be conducted to make the park work.

**CHAIR:** I am asking that the contribution, particularly towards consultation on the part of Fisheries, has been lacking compared with National Parks under the DEC?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I said I will give you an answer.

**CHAIR:** I will take your word to investigate that matter. What amount of funding and staff has the Government invested in educating the local communities on the Manning Shelf about the need to protect marine wildlife and how the community will be involved in the marine park process?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take that question on notice, but there will be considerable effort in that regard.

**ANSWER**

Extensive community consultation is already underway and information about the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park is readily available on the marine parks website, in brochures and by contacting the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The consultation process also includes the formation of focus groups and the establishment of an advisory committee.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 65**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** Has testing happened in the past, or is this the first time it has been done?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I would have to take that question on notice. I am not aware of specific testing, but there is no doubt that there was knowledge of some dioxin problem, pollution problem in Homebush Bay because there were restrictions on fishing.

**ANSWER**

I am advised that dioxin testing of sediments and biota in Port Jackson has been undertaken in the past.

I am advised that testing undertaken in the 1980s resulted in certain fishing bans being put in place upstream of Gladesville Bridge to protect public health. Further testing was undertaken in the 1990s and additional testing is currently being carried out.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 66**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** I am asking if that is possible. Is it the fact that there has been no previous testing on that particular food source?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I am not 100 per cent certain of what testing was done on prawns but I will undertake to get that information for you.

**ANSWER**

Refer to my previous answer.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 67**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Chair to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**CHAIR:** There is an issue because you closed off certain parts of the industry on the results of current testing. Was testing done before? If it was done on the results of a higher level of contamination, is that not an inconsistency?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** No. No. Do not misinterpret what I am saying. The thing is that in the past it may be that testing was done—I do not have the results of that but I will look that up for you—

**ANSWER**

Refer to my previous answer.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 68**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Ms Hale to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I think the department would have protocols in place to stop the spread of any of these major diseases, but I do not have specific information in front of me, as I said you before, in relation to root rot. I will present that to you on notice.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Are you aware of complaints about the Clarence County Council driving heavy machinery through areas affected by phytophthora and not practising wash down procedures?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will have to take that question on notice.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Presumably your protocols would include a requirement that machinery and vehicles be washed down?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take that question on notice.

**ANSWER**

Because there are no outbreaks on Forests NSW land, there are no wash down protocols.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 69**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Turning to the drought, today what has been the total expenditure on drought relief measures by departments and agencies under your portfolio of Primary Industries? You may wish to take this question on notice. Can you provide a breakdown of the funding received by each agency and for each specific program for the duration of the drought?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Each agency? There are a number of agencies that have programs, which we co-ordinated by which are outside my portfolio responsibility. You want, for example, the Department Community Services et cetera?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes. I am happy for you to take that question on notice. Has the department undertaken any analysis of the adequacy, success or appropriateness of the Government's current drought policies?

**ANSWER**

The total expenditure on drought relief measures by the State Government is over \$160 million.

The breakdown of the funding received by each agency for each specific program is:

- 45.48% to the Department of Primary Industries for a range of drought assistance measures including transport subsidies, waiving of bee permit fees, vertebrate pest control, drought support workers and farm family gatherings.
- 35.35% to the Rural Assistance Authority for EC interest subsidy and Special Conservation Scheme loans.
- 6.18% to the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability for ensuring town water supplies.
- 4.59% to the Department of Community Services for drought household payments and counselling.
- 4.06% to the Department of Natural Resources and for waiving of Western Land lease and Wild Dog fees.
- 2.53% to the Department of State and Regional Development for small business assistance.
- 1.31% to Rural Financial Counselling Services.
- 0.49% to TAFE for training of farm workers.

The Government is continually reviewing the appropriateness of its drought policies and assistance measures.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**



**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 70****MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005****MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Will you provide the Committee with a breakdown of the assistance that has been provided to farmers, region by region?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will take that question on notice. In some instances that would be possible. For instance, I think transport subsidies can be broken down. I am not sure about some of the other areas, but we will see what we can do.

**ANSWER**

Not all assistance measures can be broken down by region.

1. Breakdown of transport subsidies by Rural Lands Protection Board:

RLPB	Transport Subsidy Payment	RLPB	Transport Subsidy Payment
Armidale	\$1,891,753	Kempsey	\$2,379,613
Balranald	\$795,804	Maitland	\$374,427
Bombala	\$793,902	Milparinka	\$925,170
Bourke	\$1,355,257	Molong	\$1,232,403
Braidwood	\$1,455,034	Moree	\$917,140
Brewarrina	\$1,575,084	Moss Vale	\$1,257,581
Broken Hill	\$1,408,949	Mudgee	\$2,241,021
Casino	\$1,717,038	Murray	\$853,569
Central Tablelands	\$2,084,017	Narrabri	\$831,779
Cobar	\$1,184,580	Narrandera	\$834,403
Condobolin	\$3,285,883	Northern New England	\$1,476,677
Cooma	\$1,557,949	Northern Slopes	\$494,874
Coonabarabran	\$2,303,054	Nyngan	\$1,907,580
Coonamble	\$2,405,965	Riverina	\$1,277,244
Dubbo	\$1,832,098	South Coast	\$3,753,829
Forbes	\$2,377,119	Tamworth	\$2,724,326
Gloucester	\$873,724	Tweed/Lismore	\$440,357
Goulburn	\$2,017,658	Wagga	\$2,268,849
Grafton	\$477,619	Walgett	\$2,843,142
Gundagai	\$2,279,955	Wanaaring	\$724,231
Hay	\$1,216,087	Wentworth	\$646,282
Hillston	\$1,295,777	Wilcannia	\$1,475,323
Hume	\$2,506,946	Yass	\$1,575,015
Hunter	\$1,683,436	Young	\$1,992,766
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,822,289</b>

2. Breakdown of Exceptional Circumstances approved applications by Rural Lands Protection Board:

<b>RLPB</b>	<b>EC \$ Approved</b>	<b>RLPB</b>	<b>EC \$ Approved</b>
Albury	24,890	Hunter	1,679,850
Armidale	8,286,090	Kempsey	2,401,550
Balranald	3,412,090	Milparinka	703,740
Bombala	565,250	Molong	2,490,410
Bourke	3,112,050	Moree	4,404,170
Braidwood	659,960	Moss Vale	1,859,820
Brewarrina	1,926,805	Mudgee-Merriwa	4,529,150
Broken Hill	2,301,440	Murray	6,906,410
Casino	4,674,770	Narrabri	3,152,140
Cobar	1,246,780	Narrandera	6,611,960
Condobolin	15,145,840	Nth New England	5,530,740
Cooma	1,140,410	Northern Slopes	4,298,320
Coonabarabran	6,910,380	Nyngan	5,574,190
Coonamble	7,416,050	Riverina	11,551,346
Cntrl Tablelands	5,039,920	South Coast	4,074,720
Dubbo	10,775,920	Tamworth	9,107,860
Forbes	17,943,790	Tweed	86,220
Gloucester	273,000	Wagga Wagga	9,141,030
Goulburn	1,904,920	Walgett	9,558,030
Grafton	3,474,620	Wanaaring	1,296,207
Gundagai	5,076,762	Wentworth	2,757,960
Hay	4,004,380	Wilcannia	2,948,860
Hillston	4,351,230	Yass	3,231,100
Hume	4,085,440	Young	6,519,750
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$227,051,831</b>

3. Breakdown of Special Conservation Scheme approvals by Rural lands Protection Board:

<b>RLPB</b>	<b>\$ APPROVED</b>	<b>RLPB</b>	<b>\$ APPROVED</b>
ARMIDALE	\$303,297	KEMPSEY	\$127,789
BALRANALD	\$631,788	MAITLAND	\$137,586
BOMBALA	\$62,424	MILPARINKA	\$63,750
BOURKE	\$669,150	MOLONG	\$685,146
BRAIDWOOD	\$70,040	MOREE	\$742,153
BREWARRINA	\$319,371	MOSS VALE	\$418,506
BROKEN HILL	\$325,380	MUDGEE-MERRIWA	\$940,689
CASINO	\$408,640	MURRAY	\$1,251,540
COBAR	\$241,067	NARRABRI	\$980,157
CONDOBOLIN	\$2,468,534	NARRANDERA	\$5,632,659
COOMA	\$116,025	NTH NEW ENGLN	\$893,031
COONABARABRAN	\$1,992,257	NRTH SLOPES	\$1,053,836
COONAMBLE	\$1,414,801	NYNGAN	\$651,074
CTRL TABLELANDS	\$948,390	RIVERINA	\$1,706,582
DUBBO	\$2,447,716	SOUTH COAST	\$155,720
FORBES	\$4,713,249	TAMWORTH	\$1,350,382
GLOUCESTER	\$191,499	TWEED-LISMORE	\$195,656
GOULBURN	\$75,208	WAGGA WAGGA	\$2,440,803
GRAFTON	\$204,901	WALGETT	\$4,256,166
GUNDAGAI	\$399,916	WANAARING	\$124,740
HAY	\$572,961	WENTWORTH	\$1,308,383
HILLSTON	\$727,075	WILCANNIA	\$377,131
HUME	\$785,218	YASS	\$218,310
HUNTER	\$331,891	YOUNG	\$1,130,634
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$47,263,221</b>

Waiving of Western Land lease and Wild Dog fees and the vertebrate pest control project were for the Western Division.

All the NSW Rural Financial Counselling Services have received equal assistance.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 71**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Can the Committee be provided with a breakdown of assistance that has been provided, based on departmental expenses, costs, bureaucrat salaries and consultancies versus payments made directly to farmers and small business affected by this drought?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Every payment we have made in transport subsidies is a straight payment. There is no calculation of departmental costs in that. There is no question that interest-rate subsidies are a set figure; they are a percentage of what the Commonwealth spends. In those two major policies, and they would account for nearly \$90 million, there is no calculation of any departmental on-costs. But I will have a look at the other figures for you.

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No 30.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 72**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you. We you provide the Committee with a list of those consultants or agencies that have been commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the department assessing the drought or the Government's drought policies? Could you also provide a table outlining the costs involved with any consultancies or other work contracted outside those agencies?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** In relation to the drought?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I am not aware of any. I will supply the Committee with a written answer.

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No 31.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 73**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** No, it is not. To my knowledge it is down there and on the job. You can rest assured that if there were to be any usage around Sydney Harbour the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have been invited. However, it is doing its job, which is chasing after all the abalone poachers and other illegal activities. Honourable members would remember that this boat was a recommendation from the Palmer review into illegal activity. We have taken a substantial step. Fisheries officers were a very proud crew for the boat and felt it was the best boat purchased by the department for a generation. We have taken a lot of other steps, and I will provide that to the Committee.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You will take that on notice?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Yes.

**ANSWER**

Refer to Question on Notice No 21.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE: No 74**

**MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2005**

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

Mr Gay to the Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

**QUESTION**

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** What proportion of the \$2.8 million assistance package provided to the Hawkesbury River oyster growers over three years has been already exhausted? Do you anticipate having to top it up because of not providing enough assistance in the first place?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** Not at this stage. I think it was a very generous offer and it was acclaimed by the growers at the time.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** How much has been used?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I do not have that figure to hand.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** How do you know that you will not need more?

**The Hon. IAN MACDONALD:** I will give you an answer to that in writing.

**ANSWER**

I am advised that expenditure of the \$2.7 million assistance package set aside for the cleanup of existing oyster leases in the Hawkesbury River is being spent in accordance with the budget for the three-year project. Expenditure is reflected in the work, which is progressing as planned. The current Government support package is helping to ensure that the oyster industry in the Hawkesbury remains economically viable in the long term.

**IAN MACDONALD MLC**