

RAIL FREIGHT SUBSIDY FOR GRAIN GROWERS, COST

411. Hon KIM CHANCE to the minister representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Based on current yield assumptions, what is the expected total cost of this year's rail freight subsidy for grain growers?
- (2) Will this cost be funded from the consolidated fund and thus borne by the general community, including drought-affected farmers?
- (3) Is it correct that farmers in some areas are expecting good yields?
- (4) Is it correct that the greatest beneficiaries of this subsidy will be the farmers with the most grain to deliver; that is, those who are not affected by the drought?
- (5) Can the minister explain the logic of providing this amount of assistance to those who are not disadvantaged by the adverse seasonal conditions at a cost to those who are disadvantaged?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Based on the current yield assumptions, the estimated cost of this year's rail freight subsidy for grain growers is expected to be between \$7m and \$10m.
- (2)-(5) This response is part of a package of assistance measures that the Government is and will be providing to farmers to assist them through the difficult season.