

PRIMARY PRODUCERS, EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES APPLICATION

227. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the minister's position regarding the latest exceptional circumstances application?
- (2) Bearing in mind the dry season that some primary producers in the State are experiencing and the possible ramifications of another bad year, does the minister intend to keep the adverse seasonal advisory committee operational?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) The current application for exceptional circumstances - which is sometimes referred to as EC3 - has been prepared. Over the past few days some minor changes have been made to the application. My understanding is that the case is likely to be ready for transmission to the Commonwealth today, but I have not yet signed it off as the final version has not been delivered to me. I expect the application to go to Canberra tomorrow. The application was substantially completed on Monday, but one or two issues needed to be tidied up. The Government and I are greatly disturbed about the possibility of yet another bad year, particularly as it appears that some of the areas that have been hardest hit over the past three years are likely to face a fourth disastrous year. For some areas, particularly along the south coast, it is still too early to tell. South coast areas can recover as they usually get some rain during the spring. It is of serious concern to me: I have already raised the matter informally with Cabinet to ensure that Cabinet is aware of the circumstances.

I will retain the Seasonal Advisory Committee. I have been impressed with the work of that committee. I have been extremely grateful for the work the committee has done with all three exceptional circumstances applications to the Commonwealth.