

## **WATER AND RIVERS COMMISSION**

*Supplementary Information No 12.*

*Question: Hon Murray Criddle asked -*

*I refer to the last two lines at the bottom of the list of output performance measures on page 666. Are we to interpret the figure of \$40 110 in 2004-05 as the cost to taxpayers to process farm water grants worth \$13 298? Will the minister explain the increase in costs from the 2002-03 figure?*

*Answer:*

The \$40,110 average cost does not specifically refer to the cost associated with processing farm water grants but rather the entire implementation of the rural water planning program. The Program incorporates three grants schemes, namely the Farm water Grants scheme, Pastoral Water Grants Scheme and the Community Water Supply Program and several other initiatives including, farm water planning and technical support, and emergency water supply planning. Therefore whilst the amount of funding allocated to the provision of grants is relatively high a significant portion of the administrative costs are allocated to activities outside of the processing and allocation and monitoring of grants

In fact the administration of the program represents little more than 5 percent of the total cost of the output for 2004/2005.

The increase in the average cost per activity from 2002/2003 relates largely to the delayed impact of the special drought assistance allocation of \$1.5 million in December 2002, which has inflated the total output costs in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

*Supplementary Information No 14.*

*Question: Hon Murray Criddle asked -*

*How much funding is set aside in the 2004-05 budget for the farm water grant scheme and will the minister direct me to the line in the accounts for that allocation?*

*Answer:*

Generally, an amount of approx \$1 million is allocated from the annual allocation to the Rural Water Program for the provision of farm water grants under the Farm Water Grants Scheme.

It is important to understand that the \$5.668 million earmarked for 2004/2005 reflects the cost associated with the implementation of the entire rural water planning program. The Program incorporates three grants schemes, namely the Farm water Grants scheme, Pastoral Water Grants Scheme and the Community Water Supply Program and several other initiatives including, farm water planning and technical support, and emergency water supply planning.

Furthermore \$3.1 million of the 2004/2005 allocation represents commitments primarily under the three grants schemes from previous years that have not yet been claimed by the grant recipients. The carryover commitments include grants approved from the special \$1.5 million drought assistance allocation in 2002/2003

It should also be noted that farmers and pastoralist in receipt of a grant are given up to two years to undertake their water supply works programs and claim their grant. It is therefore quite possible that a grant approved in one financial year may pass across two more financial period before it is paid out. For example, grants approved in 2004/2005 may not be paid out until 2006/2007.

*Question on Notice: Hon Dee Margetts asked -*

*One of the 'Major Initiatives' identified for the WRC's Output 5: Protection Policies, Guidelines and Regulation for 2004/05 is the "continued integration of water source protection plans with other catchment, allocation and statutory planning where practicable both within the Commission and with other agencies" (P668).*

*Answer:*

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following response:

The other agencies that the WRC will be working with are:

- Department of Health;
- Water Corporation;
- Western Australian Planning Commission;
- Department for Planning and Infrastructure;
- Local Government;
- Environmental Protection Authority;

Office of Water Policy;  
Economic Regulation Authority;  
Department of Conservation and Land Management;  
Office of Native Title/ Department of Indigenous affairs;  
Forest Products Commission; and  
Any other agency with an interest in the protection of public drinking water source areas.

*Question: Hon Dee Margetts asked -*

*Given that one of the significant issues and trends identified for the Water and Rivers Commission in the upcoming financial year is the increased environmental risk to the allocation business as a result of low rainfall years in the South West, which will effectively necessitate "closer management ... policy development, resource monitoring and re-evaluation, user compliance monitoring and community education and awareness raising" (P659), why has the budget estimate for the net amount of appropriated funds for the Water and Rivers Commission been decreased by \$1.7 million since the last financial year?*

*Answer:*

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following response:

In 2003-04, Output 6, for the Water Rivers Commission, Water Resource Information, Protection Plans and Works included \$2.178m of deferred funding from 2002-03 relating to Salinity. This amount together with associated overheads accounts for the reduction in funding in 2004-05 for this output.

*Question: Hon Dee Margetts asked -*

*In light of the Auditor-General's assessment of the efficacy of the Water and Rivers Commission last year and of the fact that "both surface and groundwater sources are vulnerable to contamination from a wide range of land use activities and appropriate protection mechanisms must be recognised and in place" (p659), why has the budget estimate for the Water and Rivers Commission's Output 6: Water Resource Information, Protection Plans and Works been decreased by almost \$5 million from \$21,031,000 last financial year to \$16,175,000 this financial year?*

*Answer:*

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following response:

The Water and Rivers Commission's budget estimate of \$21,031,000 for Output 6 in 2003-04 included deferred funding from 2002-03 relating to Salinity (\$2.178m) which together with associated overhead costs accounts for the difference.