

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Minister for Agriculture
Witness:	
Committee member:	Mr Richard Riordan MP
Page/s of transcript:	

Relevant text:

3. Departmental Secretary, for 2017/18 and for 2018/19 so far, can you please provide the committee with the number of Departmental staff that reported incidents of bullying to your Department.

Answer:

Since DJPR was formed on 1 January 2019, the department has received six bullying complaints from employees.

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr R Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant text:

4. For the same timeframe, 2017/18 and for 2018/19 so far, can you please provide the committee with the number of Ministerial staff that reported incidents of bullying to your Department?

Answer:

There have been no reported incidents of bullying from Ministerial staff to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr R Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant text:

5. Are able to provide a breakdown of all bullying incidents by category identified, whether gender, sexuality, physical for those two previous questions as well.

Answer:

Of the six formal bullying complaints received by DJPR since 1 January 2019:

- Five were from women and one was from a man

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr R Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant text:

6. Secretary, are you able to please provide the committee with a copy of the latest People Matters Survey results for your Department and, in addition, the itemised results for each portfolio agency under your Department.

Answer:

The Victorian Public Sector Commissioner (VPSC) will be releasing the data of the recent 2019 People Matter Survey to all participating public sector organisations in July 2019.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Minister for Agriculture
Witness:	
Committee member:	Mr Richard Riordan MP
Page/s of transcript:	

Secretary, BP2 PG 57 identifies \$685 million in Reprioritisations and revenue offsets and \$251 million in savings. This follows on from reprioritisations and savings in last year's budget.

Relevant Text 8. Can you please detail the reprioritisations which have occurred in your Department during 2018/19, for which unit of your Department they applied to and for which programs or policy areas?

Answer:

DJPR was established on 1 January 2019, therefore reprioritisations from the 2018-19 budget are not applicable.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 9. One Department has set a target of reducing their workforce from 13,000 to around 7,000 in 2019/20. What is your Department's headcount reduction target to achieve employee savings?

Answer:

DJPR does not have a headcount reduction target.

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 10. Can you please provide the committee with a list of how many fixed terms contracts are not going to be renewed in each unit of your Department?

Answer:

Renewal of fixed term contracts is considered on a case by case basis. DJPR does not have a list of fixed term contracts that are not going to be renewed.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 11. The budget forecasts \$2.5 billion in reprioritisations over the forward estimates. How much of the \$2.5 billion will impact your Department?

Answer:

The department is currently working through reprioritisations as part of its internal budget process.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 12. The budget forecasts \$1.97 billion in savings over the forward estimates. How much of that \$1.97 billion will impact your Department?

Answer:

DJPR's current allocation of 2019-20 savings was provided in response to Question 10 of the 2019-20 Budget Estimates General Questionnaire.

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 13. Has the Department's Base Review begun? If not, when will it begin?

Answer:

The department's Base Review commenced on 3 June 2019.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	N/A
Committee member:	Mr Riordan
Page of transcript:	N/A

Relevant Text 14. Has anyone been contracted to conduct the Base Review at your Department? If so who and at what cost?

Answer:

PWC are supporting the department to deliver the review. Procurement for all base reviews has been undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	Ms Jaclyn Symes, Minister for Agriculture
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien MP
Page/s of transcript:	5

Relevant text:

Mr D O'BRIEN: Can you perhaps take on notice how much of the \$8.45 million that has been spent so far has actually gone to farmers, being those whose families' main income comes from agriculture?

Ms SYMES: In relation just to the education?

Mr D O'BRIEN: In relation to the assistance that has been provided so far.

Ms SYMES: The whole package?

Mr D O'BRIEN: Yes.

Ms SYMES: I will endeavour to see what I can provide for you in terms of the break-up.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Presumably you will have a break down of who received the funding.

Ms SYMES: Some of the money comes from different parts of government, Mr O'Brien, so what I can provide for you I will provide for you.

Answer:

In 2018-19 the Victorian Government committed \$45.754 million to support farmers, farming families and communities affected by drought and dry seasonal conditions.

This includes \$8.45 million in family support, including farming families, through Back to School Support, Camps, Sport and Excursion Funding, and Kindergarten Support for families in East Gippsland and Wellington shires. This \$8.45 million is administered by the Department of Education and Training. These programs recognise that drought has a social and economic impact on whole communities, not only individual farms and farmers. The entire community benefits when families with kindergarten and school aged children are supported to continue to participate fully in education, and when community-based kindergartens are supported to remain open.

The Department of Education and Training does not collect data on parents' occupations for the purposes of these drought relief programs.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	Hon Jaclyn Symes MP
Committee member:	Mr G Maas
Page/s of transcript:	12

Relevant text:

Mr MAAS: Excellent. Thank you. With climate change making extreme weather events like drought more frequent and more severe, would you be able to inform the committee what the government is doing to assist our farmers to deal with climate change?

Ms SYMES: Yes, sure. Thanks, Mr Maas.

The CHAIR: Minister, you have only got about 10 seconds to go, so I will ask you, if you can, to take that question on notice.

Ms SYMES: Not a problem.

Answer:

Victoria undertakes extensive research and innovation, co-funded by industry. Much of it focuses on supporting agricultural industries adapt to climate change.

Agriculture Victoria is a world leader in research into low methane feed supplements, improved farm management and the genomics of pastures and methane-producing livestock.

Specific projects include:

- Dairy projects to improve the drought tolerance and persistence of pastures and identify feed that reduces heat stress and methane emissions.
- Breeding research for higher heat tolerance in animals and lower methane emissions in Australian dairy herds.
- Innovations to help grain farmers adapt to a changing climate, including grain varieties that can retain productivity in a hotter and drier climate.

Agriculture Victoria is developing technologies to support production in hotter, drier environments. Advances include sub-soil manuring and breeding new pasture and grain varieties able to maintain productivity as rainfall declines and temperatures increase.

Agriculture Victoria is working with industry to improve livestock and crop management decisions, leading to increases in productivity.

The award-winning communication tools, Climate Dogs, the Break and Very Fast Break, have improved farmer understanding of climate risk, leading to improved decision making.

Agriculture Victoria supports industry leadership in mitigation and adaptation. Some industry bodies (e.g. processors like Fonterra) and research and development corporations (e.g. Meat and Livestock Australia) have already set targets for reducing emissions.

Last year the Agriculture Ministers' Forum agreed to develop a nationally coordinated approach to support the agriculture sector to adapt to climate change. Victoria is leading this work.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	Hon Jaclyn Symes MP
Committee member:	Ms Bridget Vallence (Member for Evelyn)
Page/s of transcript:	14

Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Minister, noting that there is not much time remaining, in budget paper 3, page 256, you have amalgamated performance measures for clients engaged with agricultural productivity services and client interactions with land health services to create a new performance measure for clients engaged with agricultural services. Can you explain why the previous measures had a combined target of 5610 client interactions last year but the new measure only has a target of 4300 client interactions?

Ms SYMES: I will take that one on notice.

Answer:

The Agriculture Productivity and Land Health Services performance measures have been consolidated to provide a more effective measure of the number of clients engaged by Agriculture Services.

Previously, the Land Health Services performance measure calculated the total number of client interactions, including multiple engagements with the same client. For example, if a client attended two Land Health Services events during the year, then this would be measured as two client interactions. The previous Agriculture Services performance measure was based on the number of unique clients engaged, and as such did not count multiple interactions of a client with Agriculture Services programs.

The revised target for client interactions of 4,300 reflects the change in the definition of the performance measure from total client interactions to unique client engagements. This means that engagement with an individual will only be counted once during the reporting period, irrespective of the number of interactions they have had across one or more program areas.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	Mr S Phemister
Committee member:	Ms B Vallenge
Page/s of transcript:	14

Relevant text:

QUESTION NO:

Ms VALLENCE: Thank you. In budget paper 3, page 395—this is to you, Secretary—can you list the seven strategies developed in the 2018–19 period?

Mr PHEMISTER: Sorry, Ms Vallenge, which performance measure are you referring to?

Ms VALLENCE: Strategies developed to overcome identified trade barriers—my apologies. The second-last one on that page.

The CHAIR: Secretary, apologies for interrupting, but that will have to be taken on notice. Could we move to my time—

REPLY:

Agriculture Victoria is leading work to overcome identified trade barriers. As part of this work, Agriculture Victoria has prepared seven strategies for the 2018-19 financial year.

The strategies cover the following topics:

1. plant based protein industries
2. supply chain transparency
3. chemical management in export industries
4. agronomist information for export growth
5. information for new and emerging Victorian exporters
6. export capability development of native foods
7. digital technologies for better food safety.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Agriculture
Witness:	Ms Jaclyn Symes, Minister for Agriculture
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	17

Relevant text: "On the one that we provided some notice, there was another question about operational budgets. Could we also get the answer to that on notice—not right now."

Answer:

Operating budget

I understand the member is seeking information about the department's operational budget for the following research centres: Ellinbank, Tatura, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Rutherglen and AgriBio.

The total budget for the Agriculture Research sub-output is \$142.9 million (Budget Paper Number 3, page 255) for the 2019-20 financial year.

This budget is managed through state-wide research and innovation programs, not geographic location. These programs are focused on key industries: dairy, grains, horticulture and red meat, and are delivered across regional sites. Each program forms a cross-location innovation cluster.

For example:

- the dairy program is delivered out of Ellinbank, Hamilton and AgriBio, Bundoora.
- the grains program is delivered from Horsham, Hamilton and AgriBio, Bundoora.
- the horticulture program is delivered in Tatura, Mildura and AgriBio, Bundoora.

Agriculture Victoria's major research and innovation programs are co-invested, co-designed and co-delivered with industry partners. Three examples of major research initiatives delivered from our regional research centres are:

1. The DairyFeedbase research initiative is delivered across Ellinbank and Hamilton and is a 6-year, \$54 million research and innovation initiative.
2. The renewed grains innovation initiative under the bilateral agreement with the Grains Research and Development Corporation is delivered across Horsham and Hamilton investing \$52 million over a five-year research and innovation partnership.
3. The new Almond 21 innovation initiative is a joint investment with Horticulture Innovation and the Almond Board is delivered across Mildura and AgriBio,

Bundoora, by applying \$2.5 million per year in research and innovation including \$1.25 million per year Government contribution.

Regional innovation precincts containing SmartFarms also focus on cross sector challenges like climate change, biosecurity, digital agriculture and developing a future orientated workforce.

The four SmartFarms are located at Horsham for a grain focus, Hamilton with a high rainfall zone focus, Ellinbank with a dairy focus, and Tatura with a horticulture focus, and a satellite in Mildura (also horticulture focused).

The investment includes development of the technologically advanced "Virtual SmartFarms" connecting Agriculture Victoria's research capabilities across its distributed geography for maximum impact.

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Portfolio:	Minister for Agriculture
Witness:	
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien MP
Page/s of transcript:	

Relevant text: Mr D O'BRIEN: All of the above? Okay. Can you tell me how many individuals were charged in the year 18–19 under section 77G of the act?

Ms SYMES: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Two charges were laid under section 77G of the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004 in 2018/19.