

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 841
Asked on Tuesday, 5 June 2007

MR PEARCE asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Beattie Government assistance to primary producers affected by drought and the rebate program on Part A tariffs for irrigators who are customers of SunWater—

Will he provide an update on this program?

ANSWER:

Due to the prolonged drought, the Queensland Government is providing eligible irrigators with a rebate for the payment of the fixed water charges incurred from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008 in areas where there is, or has been, low water availability.

A rebate of up to \$10,000 per financial year is available for eligible irrigators on paid invoices issued for a quarterly, half yearly or yearly billing period. Only one application is required to be completed for rebates being sought for invoices issued between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2008. The amount of the rebate is determined by past and current low water availability, that is a 20% or less announced allocation.

Irrigators who are suffering financially and are unable to pay their invoices, are able to apply for the rebate under Financial Hardship. A current low-income health care card from Centrelink or a certificate from a suitably qualified person (eg accountant or bank manager) is required with the application. A cheque is then made payable to the water service provider.

As at 13 June 2007, QRAA had received 822 applications under the Irrigators Fixed Water Charges Rebate Scheme.

Of these applications, 733 have been approved at an approval rate of 96% for total assistance of \$1,123,000. These applications represent, in the majority of cases, applications covering a nine-month period from 1 July 2006 to 31 March 2007. Assessments of fourth quarter 2006-07 rebates are currently under way. A total of 10 applications have qualified as hardship cases.

Only 32 applications have been declined and no appeals have been received. The balance of 57 applications were either being assessed or awaiting assessment.

Applications received by Water Service Provider are as follows:

- Sunwater @ 73% (main systems being Lower Lockyer, Barker Barambah, Logan River, Upper Condamine and Nogoa McKenzie)
- Pioneer Valley @ 26%
- Condamine Plains @ 1%.

Given that irrigators can apply for the rebate at any time up to 30 September 2008, the number of applications received to date is considered satisfactory.