

Question on Notice

No. 1531

Asked on 31 October 2018

MR A HARPER ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how many Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate (EWIR) payments have been made by Queensland since the Commonwealth ended the EWIR top-up in 2015?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The EWIR program is a component of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) which provides primary producers in drought declared areas with a rebate on the purchase and installation of water infrastructure, for example, pipes, pumps, tanks, troughs and new bores necessary to supply water to meet the emergency needs of droughted livestock. The EWIR is up to 50 per cent of the cost of this infrastructure, up to \$50,000 per year.

Between early 2015 and 7 November 2018, the Queensland Government has processed 2,716 EWIR claims valued at \$23.004 million.

On a number of occasions, the Queensland Government has requested that the Federal Government reinstate its 25 per cent top-up co-contribution to the EWIR program, the funding for which ceased in early 2015.

The reinstatement of the Federal top up program was one of the announcements made by the Federal Government at the national drought summit on 26 October 2018. Following this announcement, the Palaszczuk Government has requested the Federal Government backdate the federal top up program to provide assistance to producers who have accessed the EWIR since the federal top up ceased in 2015. Negotiations have commenced with the Federal Government to provide the federal top up to Queensland producers.