



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Drought

SPEECH

Thursday, 27 November 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner		Responder	
Speaker	Fitzgibbon, Joel, MP	Question No.	

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (13:57): Coalition members representing rural and regional seats have been lining up to declare the minister's Drought Assistance Package for farmers a failure. The minister's only response is to continually promise to put more money into the fund. The problem is that he cannot spend the money already in the fund. Farmers cannot access the concessional loan scheme or the Farm Household Allowance package. It is time for the minister to concede that his drought package is a failure and to think about some new directions.

There are two components to the drought package which have met with some success. One was the Water Infrastructure Grant Scheme that had a small amount of money and was oversubscribed almost overnight. The second was the strategy to deal with wild dogs, one of the biggest challenges facing those on the land. The minister needs to put some of his money into the wild dogs program as a practical way of helping farmers. He can also have a look at freight subsidies so that farmers can get concessional feed to where it is needed most—a scheme which does not differentiate between regions and is properly weighted so that discrimination does not occur. These are practical things the Prime Minister and his ministers could be doing for farmers.

The drought continues to bite hard in every state in this country, including Victoria, where— (*Time expired*)