



25 June 2015

Mr Brendan Smyth
Chair – Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020, Canberra, ACT 2601

Dear Mr Smyth

RE: CLARIFICATION ON ANSWER GIVEN TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-2016

I am writing to clarify an answer given at the Estimates Committee provided by me on 12 June 2015. The answer, on page 26 of the proof document, was in answer to how the Conservation Council estimated the reduction to the annual weeds allocation and reads:

Mr Butler: The way **we** estimated the cut was through advice from the TAMS financial officer who gave us the figures of the 50 per cent and the 43 per cent discretionary and overall funding. We based it on last year's funding level, and that brings it down to a \$700,000 cut. (**emphasis mine**).

I was providing answers in my role as the Conservation Council Weed Officer, but was also drawing on my role as the Conservation Council representative on the ACT Weeds Advisory Group (WAG).

The clarification I wish to provide is the "we" in the above answer was given based on advice I received through the WAG, not as a result of the Conservation Council's efforts to obtain an answer.

As indicated by Mr O'Loughlin in a related answer, the Conservation Council made calls (some by me) to various relevant government officers. They were either unavailable and did not return calls or felt they were unable to comment and referred us to other officers. The "we" in this instance refers to advice received by email to key members of the WAG. That email (6 June), was addressed to four government officers and the two community representatives and indicated the Chair of the WAG had discussed the matter with the TaMS Finance Officer, and based upon that advice, a \$700,000 cut for this year was the result based on last year's budget. The email was sent to inform the WAG members of the magnitude of the cut, and calling for the WAG Secretariat (one of the addressees) to organise a meeting as soon as possible to discuss how the weeds program could be organised for this year.

I hope this clarifies this answer for the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Butler".

Geoff Butler
Weeds Officer