

AAA FARMBIS PROGRAM

**767. Hon KEN BASTON to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the minister's media statement of 27 June 2006 in which he announced funding of \$500 000 for the training of indigenous land managers in Western Australia over the next two years. Given that since 1997 the AAA FarmBis program has provided nearly 40 200 training grants to more than 20 000 participants in Western Australia, is any monitoring undertaken to track the effectiveness of the program's long-term outcomes? If monitoring is undertaken, what are the criteria for that monitoring, particularly with regard to ongoing employment and continuity of employment of trainees; and, if not, why not?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I make the point that the announcement that I made on 27 June regarding that funding of \$500 000 is a separate matter from the AAA FarmBis program, but I am happy to take the question. I fully support the state's ongoing investment in the FarmBis program as a key investment in assisting farmers and land managers to build appropriate skills to ensure the sustainability and self-reliance of the state's primary producers. The FarmBis program is a joint federal-state government initiative. In response to the member's question about monitoring, I can advise that the FarmBis program has an extensive monitoring and evaluation framework that examines issues including value for money for training events through to changed practices by participants. One element of the framework is the telephone surveying of participants, which regularly indicates that around 84 per cent have made changes to not only their farm management practices but also personal goals as a result of participation in learning activities supported under FarmBis. The honourable member also asked about the impact of FarmBis on trainees. I advise that eligibility for support under the FarmBis program is limited to the management team of individual businesses. That includes the principal operator, family members and staff employed in a management capacity. Therefore, in effect a station manager is eligible; a farm labourer is not. In formal education terms this means that support is available for training only at level 4 and above. That is, the funding is for managers of primary industry businesses and those who hold business decision-making responsibilities. FarmBis funding does not support the training of trainees, who are generally at entry level to the industry, which is level 1 to level 3, and have no managerial or business decision-making responsibilities.