

DROUGHT — SOUTHERN RANGELANDS — FARMERS ACROSS BORDERS

**1310. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I have a question without notice. I refer to confirmation received today that volunteer organisation Farmers Across Borders has written to the minister at least twice about providing generously donated feed to drought-affected areas of WA.

- (1) Has the minister received and read that correspondence?
- (2) Why did the minister fail to provide a timely response to the initial letter from March?
- (3) Will the minister commit to providing state funding to Farmers Across Borders so 1 200 bales of hay can be delivered urgently to the southern rangelands?

**Hon Martin Aldridge:** Too busy in Broome and Albany.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister for Agriculture and Food.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

What was that?

**Hon Alanna Clohesy:** Too busy in Broome and Albany.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** Absolute rubbish!

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) I was very interested that the member asked the question without notice; he obviously does not want a detailed answer. I think there was a general letter in March, and I believe Hon Darren West met with Farmers Across Borders. Then we received a letter from it last week. I have not got the March letter right before me, but I believe the letter we got in the middle of last week was the letter that raised the issue of providing feed to the pastoralists in that area. We have contacted Farmers Across Borders and asked to meet with its representatives, and it has indicated that they are not available to meet until late November or early December.

I am not really quite sure what is going on here. I know Hon Colin de Grussa was a farmer in the past and he would know that there is nothing unusual about pastoralists doing things that have totally shocked Vince Catania, MLA—things such as destocking when there is little feed or water. That is a shocking thing! The other thing that shocks him is that people have to buy in feed sometimes. That is very much part of the practice. As I said, we have been going around to those pastoral companies.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** We have been going around in a way that the previous government never did. We have made 100 visits in the last four months to make sure that everyone was absolutely aware of what was going on and find out whether they needed any help with their dewatering points.

**Hon Martin Aldridge** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** If they wanted any help with filling in the draft form applications, we were there. Unlike the previous government, which used to inspect about seven pastoral leases a year, we have visited 100 pastoral leases in the past four months.