

AGRICULTURE — BIOSECURITY — FEDERAL–STATE MEETINGS

1334. Hon DARREN WEST to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

- (1) Given that the Standing Council on Primary Industries no longer exists, can the minister confirm whether there have been any joint meetings between federal and state ministers responsible for agriculture specifically to discuss biosecurity matters?
- (2) Are there plans to hold any meetings in the future; and, if so, when will those meetings be held?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for the question.

- (1)–(2) Since the Standing Council on Primary Industries the member is talking about was done away with, there has been one meeting that I did not attend, but I had somebody attend on my behalf and represent me. There will be another one, but I am not sure when the next one is. We do recognise the importance of state ministers actually meeting and discussing all their common issues, particularly biosecurity issues, but there are others. I think it is a shame that SCOPI was done away with in the sense of where it stood, but it is certainly agreed amongst all states that basically we should continue to keep that dialogue between the states, discussing the issues of Australia.