

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**FRESH CHICKEN MANURE INQUIRY**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN  
AT PERTH,  
WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2000**

**SESSION 1 OF 2**

**Hon M.D. Nixon (Chairman)  
Hon Ray Halligan  
Hon Ken Travers**

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**Committee met at 1.00 pm**

**NANOVICH, MR MICHAEL,  
Director,  
Felav Pty Ltd,  
PO Box 384,  
Wanneroo, examined:**

**RISEBOROUGH, MR TOBY,  
Managing Director,  
Organic 2 000,  
59 Safari Place,  
Carabooda, examined:**

**CHAIR:** Please explain the capacity in which you are appearing before the committee.

**Mr Nanovich:** I am here as a representative of the Horticultural Poultry Litter Users Committee in the absence of our chairman Mr Nick Tana, who regrets he is unable to be here. He has asked me and Mr Riseborough to attend on his behalf.

**CHAIR:** You are also probably signatories to the petition.

**Mr Nanovich:** Yes, I am.

**Mr Riseborough:** I am also a committee member.

**CHAIR:** You will have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood that document?

**Mr Nanovich:** I have.

**Mr Riseborough:** Yes. I refer the committee to points 12 and 13 in that document. Are we at liberty to go back to our committee and discuss this hearing? This refers to making public what happens here.

**CHAIR:** Everything you say will go on the public record as soon as possible. It will appear on the Internet anyway.

**Ms BEATTIE:** Whatever is said in the hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege. You can repeat what you have said outside the hearing, but it will not be covered by privilege. This is designed to protect you from defamation on the grounds of what is said here.

**CHAIR:** The transcript will be published on the Internet in three weeks.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That would not be the case if we were to go into closed session, but this is a public session.

**CHAIR:** These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the hearing for the record. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you, and I remind you that it will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during the proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in a closed session. However, even if your evidence is given to the committee in a closed session, the committee can still report your closed evidence to the Legislative Council if it considers it necessary to do so, in which case your closed evidence will become public.

As you are aware, this hearing has been scheduled to consider the following petition -

. . . ask the Legislative Council to seek an extension of time for the use of fresh chicken manure for horticultural use while tests continue to find a viable alternative acceptable to the industry as we believe failure to allow such an extension will put the horticultural industry in jeopardy.

You may also care to comment on the proposed power station. Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**Mr Nanovich:** We are very grateful to be invited to appear. We are requesting that the Government extend the deadline for the banning of the use of raw poultry manure. The industry has never supported its banning, but it is not opposed to change. Those involved in the industry have always indicated that they are not backward-thinking people.

Our business has over 200 acres in vegetable production, mostly in leafy lines. We are qualified growers under the safety quality foods system and the hazard analysis critical control point plan. We also employ approximately 23 people, so ours is a large business. The banning of the use of poultry manure will affect our industry. We are probably on a par with the biggest lettuce producers in Western Australia. We produce quality vegetables and our aim is to maintain that high standard.

The industry is at a threshold after learning that the banning of the use of raw poultry manure will come into effect. It has not yet come into effect, but an announcement is about to be made. Other methods of disposal of this waste are available, such as burning it for power use. I do not think that the total broiler-growing industry is in favour of burning the waste, because it is a valuable commodity to the horticultural industry and we believe the evidence is based on the breeding of stable fly. The stable fly is an indigenous insect; it has been around since horses have been along the coastline from the Northern Territory to the southern part of the State. It is unbelievable that a decision that could destroy the viability of thousands of horticulturists could be considered in such a selective and narrowly focused inquiry. They may be tough words, but it will be tough if that becomes a fact.

Poultry manure is a major source of fertiliser and a soil builder in the horticultural industry. It does not start and finish with vegetable growing; it is also used in the fruit growing areas,

vineyards, nurseries and so on. Thousands of people will lose if the ban comes into force. As I said, we are not opposed to change. We believe in good, clean practices. We have had trials on our farms on a number of occasions. We have had traps and we spray our manure heaps. We do everything we can to keep the fly problem to a minimum.

Education and management are big factors in keeping these problems as small as possible. People also live on their farms and they will suffer if fly breeding is allowed to expand; it affects them too. I believe that the problems start when people start to move in. I am not being selfish, but it is a rural area. People travelling 300 miles north on the Great Northern Highway who stop to have lunch and open their picnic basket are swarmed by thousands of flies. Flies are a problem in Australia.

We believe that the time frame for bringing in the ban and the indication that the material may be burned should not be accepted. As I said, the industry will be affected economically and quality will also suffer. It is a great contributor to good quality product not only in the vegetable industry but also in orchards and vineyards. As many trials as possible should be conducted before a suitable and viable alternative is found. I do not believe any alternative will be as good as using raw poultry manure.

This situation could be handled more effectively if it were policed or if people were educated about how to use this material. This could involve a licence. Licences would not have to be ripped off everyone. Just because we have a half a dozen bad boys, we should not penalise the whole school. Some of the local authorities that have imposed very stringent conditions are driving people out of business. I will not name any local authorities, but one producer in the northern region has spent a huge amount. It is about 120 kilometres from Perth. The producer concerned is on the decline; he is starting to think about closing down the major proportion of his operation because of the stringent conditions applied to him and the industry. Many employment opportunities will disappear. He is looking at setting up his operation out of the country because of these stringent conditions. It will be a sad day for horticulture in Australia if that happens. Many people are employed in the industry and many other industries are associated with it. The amount of money generated by horticulture throughout Australia exceeds the amount of employment and money generated by the wheat and sheep industries. It is a big industry. I do not believe that the ban is justified at this stage. Every avenue should be exploited to see that the best possible alternative is found, and then we will build up around that.

As I said, the industry is not opposed to change. We are honest and responsible people. If there is a problem, let us try to sort it out. We do not want to see the Government making a decision that could affect the livelihood of thousands of people and businesses in Western Australia. Once it happens in Western Australia, it will creep to the Eastern States. It could become a national disaster for the horticultural industry. I ask the committee to pass this information to the Government. I do not believe that any Government has the right to disadvantage or to crucify an industry.

**Mr Riseborough:** This committee was established because of the feeling in the horticultural industry that the alternative case had not been put succinctly and efficiently. Members of Parliament have decisions to make and we are concerned that our point of view has not been put clearly. We accept that in many respects that situation is of our own making. I ask the

committee to consider the difference between getting the poultry meat industry together to speak with one voice and to find an alternative to using poultry litter and getting the horticultural industry together to come up with a cohesive alternative. These are very different groups and our difficulties are based on that. I urge the committee not to belittle the case of the horticultural industry on that basis.

Members should be aware that we are talking about 3 500 business people in horticulture versus about 350 business people in the poultry meat group. We are from diverse ethnic and commercial backgrounds; we are also diverse in our socioeconomic backgrounds. The key is that we sell our produce on an open market. Therefore, by nature, there is a lack of cohesion and cooperative thinking. How a market gardener makes a living is very different from how a poultry farmer makes a living. The poultry farmer takes his brood stock from a mother company. There are only two mother companies in the State. He also takes his feed from that company. He holds and grows these birds for a period and then returns them to the company, which in turn does the marketing. These guys are very similar in their nature. Therefore, the poultry industry is facing a much easier challenge in coming up with an alternative. We are simply asking the committee to consider this alternative. It will be put through a more awkward body.

**CHAIR:** This is a parliamentary committee, not a government committee. Normally we are able to agree. We have brought down more than 50 reports, and only one minority report has been tabled. That report did not go against the committee's findings, but was tabled because the member believed the legislation should not have been introduced. The committee does not have power, but hopefully it has some influence. It will present a report to Parliament to provide information. You are putting views on the public record.

Can you spell out the difference between the manure produced by the meat-bird industry and that produced by the egg-bird industry and the proportions? Are there different processes for using it?

**Mr Riseborough:** The number keeps swelling, but let us assume that we are talking about a 200 000-tonne crop of poultry manure. That would break down to 180 000 tonnes of meat-bird manure and 20 000 tonnes of egg-bird manure. Those two products are very similar in that they are both chicken waste products. However, the waste from the meat birds - which produce the 180 000 tonnes of waste - comes with bedding. Those birds are run out as day-old chickens onto a concrete floor. The producer will use a bedding of sawdust or straw to insulate the chicks from the chill. The chicks will live on that for six to eight weeks and then be sent to market. The shed is cleaned, and that waste is what Mr Nanovich, his colleagues and I use as raw poultry manure. The 20 000 tonne of egg-bird manure is created by chickens who live in cages for 18 months and lay an egg each day. The droppings fall to the floor clean - no bedding is involved. That waste is scrapped up every six or 12 months. The basic difference is that one has a bedding component and the other is pure.

**CHAIR:** Is it the bedding waste that is being considered as a power source?

**Mr Riseborough:** We are now led to believe that the egg-bird manure cannot be burnt, whereas the meat-bird manure can be burnt. There is a slight difference in the nutrition, but they are all fed on a cereal-based substance. One can be burnt and one cannot. I assume it is the bedding

that makes the difference.

**CHAIR:** As horticultural producers, do you have any ideas about the best way to limit the fly problem?

**Mr Nanovich:** Yes - education and policing. If everyone toed the line, it would work. There are always rotten apples. In this case, some naughty boys were not doing the right thing. The Wanneroo objection was raised by a minority of people. One of those people used to come to our stockpile to get the edges of the poultry manure, bag it and use it in landscaping at Wembley Downs, City Beach and Floreat had an argument with the neighbour, so arranged a stampede to ban the use of raw poultry manure.

It is all about good practice. Care should be taken when it is used. People should know how to use it. It should be sprayed, the heaps should be kept in a dry spot or on a hard surface - as we do. It should be kept away from water. There is no problem. Negligence creates the problem and away it goes. We can make it look good and we can make it look bad. It all depends how it is managed. Management is the most important factor. If everyone toed the line, the problem would be minimal.

Poultry manure is not only a soil builder, it also acts as a fertiliser. That is why there is no substitute at this stage.

**CHAIR:** I have been told that even if it is kept dry and the flies are not in it before it is applied, it will still breed flies.

**Mr Nanovich:** Repellents are available. If people apply them, the problem is minimal. It is generally said that the greatest problem with the fly is in January, February and perhaps March. There is no problem during the rest of the year. We are applying it now and I could have lunch on top of the heap. There is no problem. We visited people just down the road and our dog was immediately covered with flies. We did the right thing by spraying and keeping our situation clear. These people were running horses and for some unknown reason they were not doing the right thing and they had a problem. That is up to them.

I admired the way the Wanneroo council went about dealing with the problem. It was policing the situation and taking action where necessary. If strong action is taken at the right time, people will toe the line. If that does not work, a licence scheme could be established. If licensees do not apply the material correctly, the licence can be withdrawn and they will have no right to use it. But the rules should be stringent.

**CHAIR:** Can insecticides be used which kill the flies that breed in the paddocks but which do not damage the horticultural product?

**Mr Nanovich:** Yes. Not very long ago Agriculture WA strongly recommended about 25 to 30 cubic metres per hectare for Chinese cabbage. It is an export commodity and we must use poultry manure to grow a good quality export item. We have now had this turnaround and we are being railroaded. I believe that Agriculture WA knows that the industry cannot do without raw poultry manure.

**Mr Riseborough:** We want all these questions answered. We are getting Mr Nanovich's opinion. While I treasure that, some would agree and some would not. That very issue, along with many others, should be quantified by Agriculture WA or another credible authority and the industry should be told how it can be used. If there is no way we can use poultry litter without breeding flies, we must accept that. On the other hand, if there are periods during the year in which it can be used and periods during which it should not be used, and if on-farm storage is required and regulated, so be it. Alternatives have to be thought through by an authority above us. It is then up to the industry to say that it accepts that as best practice. We will also be required to accept any penalty that is imposed on us and a policing policy that requires us to comply.

We could spend a lot of time discussing when we do and do not produce a maggot. An alternative might be on-farm storage and physical application. That would be either a blanket pre-plant - the waste is hoed in prior to planting - or sidebanding. That is used when we have a young plant and we trickle the waste on the surface. That should be evaluated; it may be outlawed. So be it. However, we and our competitors should be told to outlaw it. There could well be an argument that in the hottest months we do not use manure. The other alternative may be to alter the nature of the manure. That could bring into play the notion of composting. It comes down to policing, management and best practices.

**Mr Nanovich:** A chemical can be used prior to the manure being removed from the poultry sheds.

**CHAIR:** If it is sprayed on the fertiliser and dug in, it should be okay for a while.

**Mr Nanovich:** I understand a chemical can be used in poultry premises when they are cleaned out.

**CHAIR:** How many crops do you get a year on a typical Wanneroo horticultural property?

**Mr Nanovich:** Some people get four, five or six. They will be alternating. We have 200 acres, so we can spread our wings. We do not have any more than two crops of lettuce; we have one crop of broccoli; one crop of cabbage; one crop of Chinese cabbage; one crop of onions; and two crops of celery.

**CHAIR:** How many times a year would you want to apply poultry manure?

**Mr Nanovich:** In January and February it must be used fairly sparingly. It cannot be used as coarsely then as we use it now simply because the heat, water and growing conditions are a little tricky; we must balance it. We like to tone down then. After that, we can apply it. We do not chuck on heaps and heaps because that can create a burning problem. If it is used with discretion on each crop, there is no problem. However, damage can be done if it is used heavily. Used correctly, it is a good fertiliser; in fact, it is exceptional.

**CHAIR:** I was wondering if it could be used from, say, May to August when a fly problem did not occur. Would it be practical to apply it only once a year? Perhaps half the farm could be fertilised in, say, May and the other half in August.

**Mr Nanovich:** You could probably get away with not using it in say, January and February. However, it is not possible when growing certain lines. To grow cauliflowers the earth needs some guts. It is okay for the academics to tell us what we should do, but it is not always possible. The earth needs guts to keep the cauliflower growing all the time. The moment it stunts, it will not become a quality, first-grade product, which is the aim of all producers. These days we must have a good product to sell. If we are to compete on the export market it must be exceptional. For the three months January, February and perhaps March we could do without it, but we would have to start using it in April.

**CHAIR:** In other words, rather than saying it can be used only for four months, we could say it should be avoided for four months and still be an economic proposition.

**Mr Riseborough:** To avoid using it for a few months, would be far more economic than not being able to use it at all. If that proposition were put to some Gingin growers at the moment, they would jump at it. It would make the difference between viability and failure.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is there a set of best-practice guidelines for using chicken manure at the moment? I got the impression you are suggesting that is what must be drawn up. Who would be the appropriate person to draw them up? No doubt you would have a fair amount of knowledge. You suggested Agriculture Western Australia.

**Mr Nanovich:** AgWest works closely with the industry. It has video tapes describing proper practices and unacceptable practices.

**Mr Riseborough:** Yes; AgWest has historically worked closely with horticulture and they have a good relationship. AgWest knows the point at which vegetables grow best, etc. As Mick Nanovich has already said, the issue of policing must be thought through. Some growers use good husbandry, some use poor husbandry and some have no regard for the consequences of flies versus producing a good, cheap vegetable. That is where the shift must come. This industry must embrace best work practices which will include, ideally, a self-monitoring system.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** We need to develop best practice guidelines that do not exist now, although some information is available.

**Mr Riseborough:** The macro information is available; the micro "how to" information in a book that could be distributed to each grower is not compiled.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Best practice would need to be policed. Do you have any suggestions on an effective method of policing?

**Mr Riseborough:** Industry self-monitoring is the best method. As Mick Nanovich said, perhaps a financial penalty or denial of the resource would be an ideal final consequence of breaking those practices. I believe self-monitoring is the way to go. If we leave it to each shire to monitor, there will be a differential that will be ultimately prejudicial to growers. Two growers in a region that have different interpretations of health rules will end up on the same market floor.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I can understand the desire for uniformity. However, if best-practice



guidelines are in place, uniformity will occur. If someone were not following best-practice guidelines, other than catching them when they were not following them, is there a way of determining whether they are following them? Obviously they could be caught with wet manure sitting on a pad by someone visiting them.

**Mr Nanovich:** Yes.

**Mr Riseborough:** If this committee were to say it will stall this banning threat, but the industry must get together and present best-management practices itself, it will come up with something. At the moment growers are panicking that they will be denied this resource. We have strategically worked out how we will go about it. However, the strategy of implementation of plans and finite steps have been put to the sideline to ensure we have an audience. If we knew we had that audience we could simply prioritise a plan and bring it back to the committee; and it would work.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It is obviously not an issue that has just arisen; it has been around for some time. Obviously some people in the industry have been working hard on it and some have not.

**Mr Riseborough:** There are mavericks.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** What time frame are you looking at? What penalties will be required for those who are not prepared to run with the issue?

**Mr Nanovich:** It is like a bad driver, how long do we put up with him until he kills somebody? We slip into him; he should not be driving with bad habits. As I indicated earlier, if he does not abide by the rules and regulations he should have his licence ripped away from him so he can no longer use it. We should make those stringent rules. For far too long the minority receive consideration over the majority. Why penalise the majority when we have 8 to 10 per cent of bad people?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I understand what you are saying. How long will it take us to reach the point of policing? I have not followed the issue, but I am aware it has been around for some time. There is now a deadline and deadlines are always a good way of getting people focused, as we know in this place better than anyone! What time frame does the steering committee think is necessary to reach a successful resolution? I take it the committee is very clear that if best practice were followed, the use of poultry litter would not cause a problem.

**Mr Riseborough:** We could minimise the problems.

**Mr Nanovich:** Yes, with good housekeeping.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** What time frame is necessary?

**Mr Riseborough:** That falls into two categories: One is to adopt the best work practice which we could produce in two months. However, it is difficult to quantify what is best work practice. If, for instance, we continue with side dressing with manure on the surface, I would ask AgWest

to quantify whether that process breeds flies. If so, I would want to know whether it could be modified or whether it must be eliminated. It could take a year or two to come up with a quantified answer. We would have to have a Bob Pullen or somebody like that to say to us they already have that information - it may be a matter of searching correspondence - or they need some time to look into it.

**CHAIR:** We tried to get him here but he is away.

**Mr Riseborough:** If the committee wanted us to prioritise, it would take no time for the industry to come up with best work practice.

**Mr Nanovich:** We have a fairly well qualified scientist on our committee, who was a user of poultry manure. We have also initiated a move through the HRDC. I am a state "leaf" representative on the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation, taken out of the vegetable levy - a tax.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It could not possibly be a tax; that would breach the state Constitution!

**Mr Nanovich:** We allocated about \$145 000 to engage Dr Peter Keating to undertake research into the use of raw poultry manure and compost poultry manure. In this coming week we will get the blessing from the HRDC. The Government will subsidise us dollar for dollar which will amount to something like \$300 000. Once that gets the green light we can start to talk about it properly. We are awaiting that information. We would like to work on the guidelines on how to enforce best practice. Stiff penalties will be imposed. If Nanovich, for example, does not toe the line, he should have his licence ripped off him.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I may have a bias because I represent the North Metropolitan Region, but the stable fly problem seems to be in Wanneroo and other areas north of Perth. Is that right or does it apply to all horticultural areas in Western Australia?

**Mr Nanovich:** I suppose that is where the activities are in that region. This is why it is at the forefront. Do not get us wrong; we are aware of those who are negligent in their use of chicken fertiliser and they need to be stepped on. About six years ago we had a meeting organised by our local MP with the Health Department about the fly situation. The Health Department was not interested in changing the legislation. It said the council had the powers under the legislation to police it and to take the necessary action and Health Department would not be introducing a total ban statewide.

**CHAIR:** We have got the message that the steering group would like the same rules to apply to everybody, the monitoring of which may have to be done by the shire ranger.

**Mr Riseborough:** They might; we ask this standing committee to consider a proposal from us regarding - I have not discussed this thoroughly with my committee - the industry self-monitoring its practices. That would have a better chance of achieving uniformity.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** When you say self-monitoring, are you talking about industry monitoring industry, rather than individuals monitoring growers?

**Mr Riseborough:** I do not know the framework, but we would set up a body in each region to undertake the job, which may be in liaison with local government health inspectors, to ensure a really useful conduit that works, rather than an autocratic conduit.

**CHAIR:** For anything like this to work the producers must cooperate or it will not work.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It is far better for one of their own rather than a bureaucrat to tell them they are doing something wrong.

**Mr Nanovich:** The word "levy" comes into the debate again.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** How long have you been using chicken manure in the horticulture industry?

**Mr Nanovich:** We have been supporting the broiler-growing industry for about 43 years. We first got the manure from Diamond Farm in 1957 or 1958. We were still in Osborne Park and we got it through a person by the name of Mackintosh and we have been using it ever since. We used poultry manure from layers earlier. So we have been involved in poultry manure now for more than 60 years.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** When were you first made aware of the stable fly problem?

**Mr Nanovich:** When this fuss arose - probably six or seven years ago.

**Mr Riseborough:** I became involved five years ago.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** Mr Nanovich, you said you were aware of some chemicals that are available to spray on the manure when it is in the shed?

**Mr Nanovich:** I am led to believe that.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** It sounds as though you have some research to undertake. I was going to ask whether you were aware that it was cost effective to the horticulturalists. How much would it add to your costs? Perhaps it must be explored.

**Mr Nanovich:** That will be explored. We have employed professional people and we are waiting for Dr Peter Keating's report to come out. We will produce a brochure, as have other people. We are not dilly dallying around; we are prepared to spend time and money on the issue.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** Mr Riseborough, I accept your point about the code of practice. I can see you have been through a traumatic time over the past 12 months.

**Mr Riseborough:** It is an interesting industry. "Maverick", or "belligerent" are terms that come to mind. I openly challenged our industry when we finally sat down together and got this issue rolling. I made the opening point that we could fairly be described as a belligerent industry. The difference between these two industries is that one involves people with common commerce. Ours is diverse. The tendency has been to say, "I don't give a damn about how many flies I

breed, as long as I get a lettuce to the market ahead of someone else." I am hoping that from this will come the recognition by this industry that it can speak effectively through a representative committee.

It sounds amazing that we need to say this, but surely in this millennium, this industry can learn to represent itself coherently. It is not over yet.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** It has brought you closer together. You spoke of an industry-driven check and balance against those who are not doing the right thing as far as the code of practice is concerned.

**Mr Riseborough:** Serious consequences are what it is all about.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** Having gone through what you went through, and not wanting to go through it again, that will force you to invoke severe penalties if someone stands outside the code.

**Mr Riseborough:** When I was invited onto the committee I said I would not accept the invitation unless the people were prepared to endorse change. I will not join a committee that says what we are doing is all right. That would be belligerence, and I am not interested in that. I was given an undertaking from the audience and we are making effective changes.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** I can understand what you were saying about the so-called level playing field and the reason you do not want regulatory bodies, such as local government authorities involved. I remind you that you have parliamentary privilege in this hearing. You referred to the Shire of Gingin that has created enormous problems for one of your number. That shire is going down one path and Wanneroo is going down another.

**Mr Riseborough:** Spearwood is another; it goes on around the metropolitan area.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** That is not what you want.

**Mr Riseborough:** It is unfair. Tom Arkley, who does most of our nutritional analytical work, has been asked to quantify the value of poultry manure. He did it in two ways: One way was to give the nutrients a dollar value and the other was to look at it subjectively; for example, at water holding capacity, organic value, non-leaching capability, pH buffer and so on. He came up with \$90 a tonne as the nutrient value of poultry litter. The horticulturalists pay about a third of that. To deny me, a grower operating in the Gingin shire, that resource and have my neighbour in Wanneroo doing it, immediately would create a commercial differential which would be prejudicial. It is hurting those people. Gingin does not have the noisiest, most aggressive, maverick growers. Those people are in pain and beginning to speak with one voice because of that.

**Hon RAY HALLIGAN:** In an article in *Farm Weekly* of 25 May reference is made to more power to WA poultry growers. Reference is made to using that manure and to 250 000 cubic metres of that waste which can be burnt to generate power. The article says that another advantage is that the residual ash still contains a high nutrient content for horticultural fertiliser.

Can you comment?

**Mr Nanovich:** It is potassium.

**Mr Riseborough:** Farmers know when they burn a heap of sticks they get a wonderful crop under the heap. It is all about potash, which lasts two years and is a readily leachable resource. Poultry manure has 35 balanced elements. The residual of this burning process will give us one of them.

**CHAIR:** I understand you have a press statement you would like to table.

**Mr Nanovich:** It is a well-worded and fair statement by Mr Nick Tana.

**CHAIR:** Mr Riseborough, can you provide us with a list of the nutrients?

**Mr Riseborough:** I will leave Tom Arkley's report. We are trying to add credibility. It is one thing to emotively put our case; it is another thing to support it with hard evidence.

**CHAIR:** Feel free to send any extra submissions or reports, although it will not be too long before we report to the Parliament.

Our Advisory Research Officer just reminded me that Parliament may prorogue before the report is completed. If that happens, it would have to be resubmitted before we could continue because we would lose our magic wand.

**Mr Riseborough:** What does that mean?

**CHAIR:** In a sense a line is drawn after this session of Parliament and any unfinished business drops off the agenda.

**Mr Riseborough:** All our members will want to know whether the ban would miss the cut. Can poultry litter be banned before our case is put?

**CHAIR:** I do not think that will happen. It will clear our agendas. We usually send a letter to the principal petitioner to see whether he wants to have it retabled. It only needs one signature; it is not difficult to do, but it will keep the issue rolling.

**Mr Riseborough:** One case would not go unheard while the other was heard?

**CHAIR:** No. We will continue. However, if you do not resubmit the petition, if required, we cannot continue.