



Parliament of South Australia
QUESTION TIME
20 February 2020

FRANCES BEDFORD MP JP *Member for Florey*

YAMBA QUARANTINE STATION

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. How many of the approximately 7,400 fines issued at the Yamba quarantine station would not have been issued under the previous policy approach, and what is the value of fine revenue under the new policy to date?

The Hon. T.J. WHETSTONE (Chaffey—Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development) (15:02): I thank the member for Florey for her question. There would have been no fines issued under the previous regime at Yamba because the fines were never enforced. We have not introduced the fines; we are just enforcing the fines now. If we are talking about what is the collective, the amount of money that has been issued for those fines, that is something I will have to speak to Biosecurity SA about and come back to the member with.

EDFORD (Florey) (15:02): Supplementary: since the introduction of zero tolerance, how much fruit has been seized at the Yamba quarantine station and has this differed in any way from the normal amounts of fruit declared in preceding years?

The Hon. T.J. WHETSTONE (Chaffey—Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development) (15:03): Again, I thank the member for a very important question because this zero tolerance approach was in response to the continual outbreaks of Queensland fruit fly. What we've seen at the Yamba quarantine station or the Yamba roadblock has been a decrease in fruit that has been collected. We have seen a decrease in

fruit in the collection bins, but we have also seen an increased number of collection bins.

In coming into government, we gave a commitment to South Australians that we would increase the collection bins by three. We've done that. Those bins have been on the Lindsay Point Road, another bin has been on the Mannum Road and we've also seen another bin on the Wentworth Road. Those three extra collection bins now cover all the arterial roads coming into the Riverland, and that was done so that we could actually have full coverage of people travelling with fruit or vegetables or prohibited materials into that area—that fruit fly free area I might add—so that they could voluntarily dispose of fruit.

What I would say is that what we have seen since the zero tolerance approach has come into play is that unfortunately people are still coming to South Australia through the Yamba roadblock with fruit and vegetables and prohibited materials. That is unfortunate. We have put extra signage coming into South Australia. We have increased our random roadblocks so that we can actually send the message. We have put extra expenditure into signage, into education programs.

We have done that for the good reason that we are protecting a \$1.28 billion horticulture industry in the Riverland. That is about protecting exports and it is about protecting the livelihoods of those fruit producers, those food producers who rely on exports. They rely on that clean green fruit fly free image they have spent so many years building.

I might say that there have been concerns about fines issued, and I have received a number of letters from members of parliament because they are representing their constituency. But if those constituents read the signs, if they take keeping South Australia fruit fly free seriously, they won't bring fruit and vegetables into those pest-free areas that will put our horticulture industry at risk. I know that I have received letters that these fines, and this zero tolerance approach, are frivolous. I think it is outrageous that we have MPs who are treating this zero tolerance approach with contempt.

I have given every opportunity for those people to declare their fruit with the bins, and if they don't do that then they receive an on-the-spot fine. That on-the-spot fine, again, is a deterrent, just as it is going into Western Australia, just as it is protecting any valuable food producing sector anywhere in the country. South Australia has a proud history of being fruit fly free, while we see the increase of fruit fly, particularly in our eastern seaboard with Qfly. We see the continual pressure on our western borders with Mediterranean fruit fly.

Those threats that come to our horticulture industry are now being met with fines. Biosecurity officers are issuing fines for very, very good reason, and that is to look after horticulture, to look after our reputation and to make sure that we can continue to uphold our image when it comes to protocol export markets.

Ms BEDFORD: I have a really important supplementary which will take two seconds.

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey, the time has well expired.

Ms BEDFORD: Two seconds: have any of the 7,400 fines been waived by you or your office?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I move an extension for one minute of question time.

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey, the time was well expired but, with the agreement of the other parties, I promise you that you will get the next question.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (15:08): A further supplementary to the Minister for Primary Industries: have any of the approximately 7,400 fines been waived by you or anyone from your office?

The Hon. T.J. WHETSTONE (Chaffey—Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development) (15:08): The question was: have I or anyone from my office waived any of those fines? No, they haven't.

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (15:08): Have any of the fines issued under the new regime been waived?

The Hon. T.J. WHETSTONE (Chaffey—Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development) (15:09): I'm not aware, but I am happy to take that question on notice and come back to the member with an answer.



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