

AGRICULTURE — WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL

713. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

I have a supplementary question. Thank you, minister. I appreciate the minister's great concern around the agricultural sector and the new legislation. Why then, as part of this consultation, has the minister omitted opportunities for face-to-face consultation in the wheatbelt and the upper great southern, which covers the majority of the agricultural region in which the issues the minister has raised are concerned? Why are they not included on the consultation list and why have they been prevented from contributing in face-to-face consultation with the minister's department?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

They have not been. I am not exactly aware of all the decisions of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety on the process that it is going through to do consultations but I say to the member, again, that I have already engaged in consultations with the rural industry. I have engaged directly with Safe Farms WA about its program and I have just highlighted the fact—I am sorry that I missed the correct name—that I am going to one of the field days to continue that consultation. Let us not underestimate the challenge here. We have to have a major cultural change in the agricultural industry. The agricultural industry, unfortunately, is not accepting its current legal obligations. It is 10 times more likely that a worker will be killed in the agricultural sector than in the mining industry. Those people who pretended to represent agricultural industries need to join with the government in accepting the challenge of the need for cultural change in that industry.