

ANIMAL ACTIVISM

114. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's recent comments about the trespass laws and penalties for animal activists clearly needing to be reviewed, which directly contradicts his Minister for Agriculture and Food's comments.

- (1) Is the Premier at odds with the minister over trespass laws and the changes that need to be made?
- (2) Does the Premier accept that trespass by animal activists is a major issue in regional areas and agree that mixed messages from his government at this time are unhelpful for the agricultural sector?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) No. I do not agree with the Leader of the National Party that the Minister for Agriculture and Food and I are at odds. Obviously, this is a serious issue, and it has been occurring in a range of locations. It is disruptive, in particular, for some farmers and some farming activities. I have indicated that I do not support this sort of activity and that I do not support activists who race through restaurants disrupting people who might be eating their dinner. It is obviously unacceptable conduct. I met with the Commissioner of Police to discuss this and other issues. We discussed the penalties for trespass—from memory, the maximum penalty for trespass is 12 months' imprisonment and/or a \$12 000 fine—and we discussed that that has not been reviewed for a while. I then discussed that with the Minister for Police and said it is obviously something that we need to review with a view to lifting it so there is a maximum penalty, which sends a message to the courts if people are prosecuted.

The police commissioner also mentioned the circumstance of aggravation, whereby people stream live on Facebook or something like that whilst in someone's restaurant or on someone's property, and how that might be a circumstance of aggravation. I agree with him on that. That is what the government is working on. As the Leader of the National Party knows, during the eight and a half years of the last government, the penalties for trespass were not increased. However, we are now examining this issue with a view to lifting them.