

CORONAVIRUS — AGRICULTURE WORKERS

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

I refer to Craig and Michelle, a couple currently living in their motorhome in South Australia who have secured work on-farm in Merredin for the upcoming harvest but who have had their G2G PASS application to enter Western Australia rejected five times since 7 August 2020.

- (1) Does the Premier think it is appropriate that farm businesses and people like Craig and Michelle are experiencing weeks of delays to secure essential work in the agricultural sector?
- (2) What additional information does he think is required to gain approval, given that Craig and Michelle have provided a letter of confirmation of employment from their future employers; copies of their contract; copies of their passports, licences and Medicare cards; confirmation that they have resided in South Australia for six months; and evidence of their ability to quarantine safely in isolation upon their arrival?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I do not know who Craig and Michelle are and I do not know anything about their circumstances. If the member wants to give me the details, I will pass their details to the WA Police Force, which manages these things in accordance with the law, and let it manage this particular case. I get a great many cases brought to my attention through my office —

Ms M.J. Davies: They're not the only ones, Premier. There are more involved.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, that is right. We have a hard border.

Ms M.J. Davies: So you think it's acceptable for them to take five weeks —

Mr M. McGOWAN: We have a state without COVID. Everything is a balance, and there are trade-offs.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I said earlier in question time, and I will repeat it: we are a major state of Australia, we have the strongest economy in Australia and we are the strongest growing state. We have a fly in, fly out workforce coming from the east to live here. Today I noted that Woodside announced it is doing the same as BHP and Rio Tinto, and I congratulate Woodside for that. This is significantly strengthening the Western Australian economy through doing this, but there are trade-offs involved. One of the trade-offs is that we have a hard border with the east to keep COVID out. It has had some complainants. I was talking about the commentators over east who are complaining about the arrangement in Western Australia. They seem to want the virus to come in here and then as the alternative we would have to adopt the New South Wales' model of tracing and clamping down, closing businesses, having restrictions on dancing, drinking, parties, weddings and funerals and all those sorts of things. I disagree with that. I think having a hard border and having a far more open economy, a far stronger economy and far more life and vitality in our state is a better model. I do not get how they cannot understand this.

The Tasmanian Premier agrees with me, but I note that there is never any complaint about him. I wonder why that is? What could it be that is different? What could it be? Let us think about that. It is certainly not that Tasmania has a more robust economy than ours. Surely, if members are concerned about the strength of an economy, they would be more worried about the Tasmanian example than the Western Australian example.

In any event, I digress. If the member wants to bring that case to my attention, I will pass it to the police. I do not know the truth or otherwise of everything that the member has just alleged. I will pass it to the police for it to deal with.