

CHIPCO SPEARHEAD HERBICIDE — LOCAL COUNCIL USE

17. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

- (1) Is the minister aware of a recent media report that stated that several councils in the metropolitan area using the toxic weedkiller Chipco Spearhead remove warning signs almost immediately after spraying, despite the substance being known to be harmful if it comes into contact with skin within two weeks of being used?
- (2) In light of that media report, will the minister revise her recent advice to the house that councils are applying weedkiller in accordance with label instructions and best practice advice?
- (3) Will the minister order an immediate audit of the use of the weedkiller?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(3) Yes; I did see a report in *The Sunday Times* in which I think the member was quoted. I stand by the advice that I gave the house last year; that is, as Minister for Environment, I expect that any user of a pesticide or herbicide utilises those products appropriately according to the instructions. I am not aware of any councils that are not; if the member has advice, I would be very happy to receive it.

Hon Sally Talbot: Are you saying this is wrong?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am answering the question!

Hon Sally Talbot: You're not!

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: If the member has some information to provide to me, I am happy to receive it. My advice is that obviously this is a matter for local government authorities, and I expect that they will do the right thing.

Hon Sally Talbot: What will you do if they are not?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Just let me finish!

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: Don't get aggro!

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am not getting aggro, but I would actually like to be able to answer the question. Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us not let the fact that we are in this place influence our behaviour!

Hon Ken Travers: That's right, Mr President!

The PRESIDENT: Let us have a question asked and answered.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I advise the member that pesticides are approved for use in Australia not by me, but by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, which is a commonwealth authority. If Hon Sally Talbot has a problem with pesticide use, she should also speak to her commonwealth counterpart.

Hon Sally Talbot: So it is not your problem!

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am advising the member who actually regulates this.

Hon Sally Talbot: Did you contact them when you read that report?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: In addition, for the information of the honourable member, pest control operators are also regulated by the Department of Health. As I said, it is my expectation that people will do the right thing, and if they do not, that can be investigated by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Hon Sally Talbot: Did you contact the feds?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Have you got some information to provide to me?

Hon Sally Talbot: It was in the newspaper.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Give me a break!

Hon Sally Talbot: You are the minister!

The PRESIDENT: Order! That last question was concluded as far as I was concerned, but some members did not think it was. It is concluded.