

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WORKERS REGIONAL TRAVEL
AND ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SCHEME

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

I refer to the failed primary industries workers regional travel and accommodation support scheme, which, as of yesterday, had approved only 90 of the 345 applications for travel and accommodation reimbursements. With the tightening of the border controls between South Australia and Western Australia and the possible risk of outbreaks elsewhere, what options will the government pursue to ensure that the agricultural, pastoral and horticultural sectors have access to the 7 000 workers who are required?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Obviously, I have answered this question broadly many times. We have closed international borders, by the commonwealth government, which I support. We have controlled borders with most eastern states and a hard border with South Australia and people transiting through South Australia. If agricultural workers wish to apply for a G2G PASS, they can come from Queensland, the ACT, Tasmania or the Northern Territory, right now, subject to a health check upon arrival. If they wish to come from New South Wales or Victoria, they can come to Western Australia now, subject to two weeks' quarantine and mandatory testing. That is the current situation. With the exception of South Australia, or people going through South Australia, they can still get here, subject to the appropriate testing and quarantine arrangements, in particular from the two biggest jurisdictions, which are New South Wales and Victoria. That is the arrangement.

In terms of the arrangement that we put in place to assist people to go out and work, we lead Australia in providing \$4 000, potentially, for people to work in agriculture. I urge agricultural organisations to promote it to Western Australians so that they can get out there and take advantage of the opportunities and the funding that is available. Obviously, we have to put in place the appropriate checks and balances to make sure that people do not exploit or abuse the system. Often we find that people who go and do agricultural work find that it is not what they expected. If they go there for one day, we do not expect the state to pay them \$4 000 because it is not what they thought it would be. We all know that it can be difficult and hard work. That is the arrangement. Obviously, we continue to look at the issue of Vanuatu, which the other states are taking up. Vanuatu is largely COVID free; in fact, it is COVID free—that is my understanding. We are looking at whether or not we can work on a number of agricultural workers coming from that jurisdiction to Western Australia, subject to quarantining and COVID testing.