

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — RELATIONSHIP WITH WAFARMERS

**580. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

Before I ask my question I would like to wish Robert Taylor from *The West Australian* well. I believe this is the end of his career with *The West*. One thing I can say to Robert is: it was not me who said, “I hope you’ve got a one-way ticket.”

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you members!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I refer to the comments made by a major stakeholder group that Mr Redman does not listen and does not want to do anything himself. His lack of attention to a serious issue such as drought is obvious.

- (1) Will the minister concede that, to a major stakeholder group, his two years in the job have been a failure?
- (2) Why has the relationship between him and WAFarmers broken down?
- (3) What will the minister do to change the perception that he does not listen, does not want to do anything himself, is not taking drought seriously and is arrogant?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:**

(1)–(3) Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, you have the opportunity to answer the question.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for the question and, obviously, seriously challenge the notion he has put. For the first time, a Minister for Agriculture and Food in this state has put up a priority plan for agriculture in Western Australia, a vision and a set of planning priorities for agriculture in Western Australia; has rolled out some industry development plans, which has involved serious engagement with industry about the deployment of the agency’s resources to make a difference in the sector; has undertaken a high-level reform process within the Department of Agriculture and Food to ensure its resources are deployed so that they make a difference in the farming sector; has opened the Muchea saleyards, which languished under the member’s government for about eight years; has made the strategic decision to support the development of genetically modified crops in Western Australia to ensure that farmers in Western Australia can remain competitive on the international stage; and will release a raft of decisions soon that support agriculture in Western Australia.

On the other side we see that the tenet of the policies of members opposite sits around review, assess and inquire. The tenet of this side of the house sits around decide, act and implement. I am certainly prepared to take up discussions with any farming group in Western Australia. If I cannot defend the decisions I make in any forum the farmers like, I should not be making those decisions. I am prepared to take up that debate. I regularly meet with a range of farmers’ groups. I do not go along to get tickled on the belly by them and, vice versa, I do not think they expect that either. I am prepared to take up those debates. We have made some of the hard decisions in this state on agriculture in total support of the sector.

It is really interesting that I have not seen a darn thing from the other side of the house in setting high-level policies for agriculture or any sort of vision for agriculture in Western Australia. I stand on our record and on the record that I will put in place with the support of the Liberal–National government on this side of the house by rolling out the resources and with an agency that makes a difference to support what is a significant industry in Western Australia.