

BANANA INDUSTRY — FOREIGN IMPORT CONTROL

421. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

With regard to the importation of Philippine bananas into Western Australia and the issue of biosecurity:

- (a) will the State Government support the Carnarvon chemical-free, organic banana growers in their mission to ban the import of these bananas; and
- (b) who will take responsibility for the destruction of the organic banana industry if foreign pests are introduced with the imports?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) The State Government would be able to provide support to the Carnarvon banana growers' mission if any pest or disease risks to banana industry are considered as inadequately addressed by Biosecurity Australia's import risk analysis.

The Federal Senate has referred the Import Risk Analysis (IRA) for the importation of bananas from the Philippines to the Senate Standing Committee for inquiry and report by 19 March 2009.
- (b) Australia has a conservative, but not a zero risk, approach to the management of biosecurity risks. If an incursion of exotic pest is detected, the provisions of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD), ratified by the Australian Banana Growers Council, apply.