



Speech by

KEN TURNER

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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PRIMARY INDUSTRY REGULATIONS

Mr TURNER (Thuringowa—IND) (7.24 p.m.): I am very concerned about proposed new regulations that may be placed on growers throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia. Some of the suggestions that have been put forward border on the ridiculous and only add further difficulties to the growers' workload and cost. To suggest that watches worn in the paddock and shed be removed in case the glass breaks and shatters on the fruit, also to suggest that all glass on gauges on tractors and fruit handling equipment be taped over while in use, and that no frogs, birds, geckoes or roosting birds be allowed in packing sheds would not be possible. To suggest that the staff—casual or permanent—working for the grower be excluded if they have a communicable disease, coughs, colds, or sneezing on or near produce is also impossible to police. The list goes on and on.

If these regulations are put in place and no changes are made further along the chain, I suggest the regulations will be an absolute waste of time. There is transport from the grower to the wholesaler, auction, delivery to the retailer and then to the consumer. I ask: will the staff members at all these other points of contact be required to remove their watches and other items that may pierce the produce? Will glass displays and fluoro lights be banned? I also point out that the customer can place fresh produce into shopping trolleys, along with household chemicals, ratsack, pet chemicals, kerosene, turps, and the list goes on—all of which, if not handled properly, can puncture, leak, drop, ooze or break. That is highly unlikely, but just as likely as what could happen on the farm. Will the public be warned to comply with the same regulations as the grower?

We then come to the situation where shoppers may have a communicable disease. They poke, squeeze, prod, handle and sneeze over the fresh produce on the retail shelf. We must make sure that our future farming prospects are not eroded by unrealistic compliance regulations and that a sensible, simple and cost-effective position be applied. Areas such as chemicals, fertilisers and water quality can be the main basis for safe food production. The risk of any contamination elsewhere is so small that it does not require addressing. Commonsense must prevail before small business is dealt another blow with unworkable regulations.
