



Speech by

**KEN TURNER**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Hansard 22 August 2000

### **FRESHCARE**

**Mr TURNER** (Thuringowa—IND) (10.25 a.m.): The increased use of antibiotics for animals and humans, the overuse of antibacterial cleaning products and prepackaged foods are the major reasons for the rise in food-borne illnesses. Over the past few years lethal strains of bacteria and viruses such as salmonella and E. coli have been responsible for all incidents of large-scale food poisoning. All arose from value adding by follow-on industries and did not relate to the grower, yet the grower is being asked to pay.

The Queensland Government has launched Freshcare, which implements an auditing system and extra food and water testing for the grower. This translates into the farmer, often already on the breadline, forking out another \$600 plus a year. In an ABC radio interview, Gary Frolove of the DPI said that the Freshcare program aims to create a 99.9% food safety record for this industry. The Australian horticultural sector has already implemented assured supplier programs at considerable cost and would argue that there already is a 99.9% food safety record. They demand that Queensland fruit and vegetable growers, DPI and Freshcare provide documented examples of past instances of food poisoning arising from their industry.

Gary Frolove went on to say that there are three major retailers that drive the whole industry and that growers who do not comply with the new supplier program, Freshcare, would eventually be squeezed out of the central marketing system. Growers are not against safe food programs that make sense, but with low-risk product they do object to overregulation.

Are we making Queensland a Smart State by squeezing growers out of the industry and making our community dependent on imported food? Independent auditors will become the new industry while our farmers become modern-day peasants. Perhaps we should actively promote food safety in the home, where most food-borne illnesses occur.

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