



## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

2023-24

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

No. 371

THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER 2024

(The Questions and Answers Paper published on Monday to Friday of each week will contain, by number and title, all questions to which answers have been received the previous day and any new questions asked that day. Consequently, the full text of any question will be printed only twice: when notice is given; and, when answered.)

Notice given on date shown.

<b>Publication of Questions</b>	<b>Answer to be lodged by</b>
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Q & A No. 362 (Including Question Nos 2805 to 2805)	8 November 2024
Q & A No. 363 (Questions—Nil)	-
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Q & A No. 367 (Including Question Nos 2818 to 2819)	15 November 2024
Q & A No. 368 (Including Question Nos 2820 to 2843)	18 November 2024
Q & A No. 369 (Including Question Nos 2844 to 2852)	19 November 2024
Q & A No. 370 (Including Question Nos 2853 to 2858)	20 November 2024
Q & A No. 371 (Including Question Nos 2859 to 2861)	21 November 2024

**10 OCTOBER 2024**

(Paper No. 356)

\* 2788 AGRICULTURE—TOMATO BROWN RUGOSE FRUIT VIRUS—The Hon. Aileen MacDonald to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales—

- (1) Minister, following correspondence from me to you on 25 September 2024 about a letter from Mr Brett Ryan, State Manager of Vertical Farming, can you confirm you are aware of the warning of an outbreak of Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus in South Australia?
- (2) Are you aware that this virus has previously not been found in Australia, and has been detected in three businesses in Northern Adelaide Plains in South Australia, and has resulted in control orders restricting the movement of tomato, capsicum and chilli plants into New South Wales and other states?
- (3) Are you aware of the risk this virus poses to the Costa Group's Guyra glasshouses which include 40 hectares of growing area over two sites, a 2.5-hectare plant nursery and a newly developed Innovation Centre designed to trial and develop new produce lines?
- (4) Do you accept the risk this virus poses to Costa Group and its 800 employees, 94 per cent of whom live in the Armidale local government area?
- (5) What measures have you taken to prevent the spread of this potentially catastrophic virus from entering New South Wales?
- (6) What is your timeline to roll out further biosecurity measures to ensure this highly transmissible virus does not contaminate the Costa Group's tomato production in Guyra, New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The NSW Government was advised of an incursion of Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) in South Australia by the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer on 9 August 2024. My Department continues to provide me with regular updates.
- (2) I am aware ToBRFV is new to Australia. I'm also pleased to report that extensive surveillance and testing in NSW and other states appears to support that the virus remains contained within glasshouses on 3 properties on the Northern Adelaide Plains in South Australia.  
  
NSW has enacted a Control Order, which applies to these, and closely linked, properties. It prohibits movement of any material - including tomato plants and fruit - that might carry this disease into NSW.
- (3) The Costa Group has met with my Office and the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department) has been in regular contact with them.
- (4) This disease is a serious risk to tomato production across NSW and Australia. The NSW government has robust plans for the management of exotic plant diseases and collaborates with industry, other jurisdictions and international experts to minimise this risk.
- (5) The NSW Government has communicated with concerned stakeholders including Costa, NSW Farmers, major retailers and wholesalers as well as smaller producers. The Department is playing an active role in the development of a national, coordinated response plan which will contain and eradicate this virus from Australia. In the interim we will maintain effective regulation to control the movement across our border of any material which might carry the disease.
- (6) A Control Order has been in place since mid-September and the Department's compliance staff have been active in the Flemington Markets (and other import points) to ensure importers are aware of and complying with the requirements of the Order.

The Department continues to meet regularly with industry to provide updates. NSW also facilitated discussions between the Australian and state governments and industry experts with ToBRFV technical experts from the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This information has been invaluable in the development of a national response plan for this virus

which will be implemented in the near future. The NSW government will provide resources to support this plan in its aim to eradicate ToBRFV from Australia.

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2859 HEALTH—ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITLIST REVIEW—Dr Amanda Cohn to ask the Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources representing the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast—

(1) In relation to the report 'NSW Health elective surgery waitlist review' dated 26 September 2024, which found that at Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) "there are internal perceived pressures to avoid breaches", "clinical reviews which resulted in a Clinical Urgency Category decrease were noted to be influenced by non-patient factors such as resourcing constraints or likelihood of exceeding the maximum recommended procedure period", and that "HNELHD specialties had a substantially higher variance between the reported and recalculated breach rates compared to state average", what is now being done to ensure elective surgery waitlist data is accurate?

(a) What is now being done to ensure elective surgery waitlist data is comparable between Local Health Districts?

(2) Is the Ministry aware of the findings mentioned in question one, or similar findings, occurring in any other Local Health Districts?

(3) What is being done by the Ministry to ensure that real or perceived pressures to avoid breaches are not having unintended consequences on resourcing or patient health outcomes?

(4) What action is the Ministry taking to ensure that clinical urgency categories will only be adjusted in the interest of patient outcomes?

2860 TRANSPORT—2018 WESTERN SYDNEY RAIL NEEDS SCOPING STUDY—The Hon. Mark Latham to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism representing the Minister for Transport—

(1) What were the benefit cost ratios for the various rail links examined in the 2018 Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study?

2861 FINANCE—UNPAID COVID FINES—The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham to ask the Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources—

(1) Of the 9,068 unpaid and outstanding COVID-19 fines across 47 offence descriptions, could you please list each of the 47 offences and the number of unpaid or outstanding COVID-19 fines for each offence?

David Blunt AM  
Clerk of the Parliaments