

**4.16 Senator S.C. Ferguson of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the removal of infestations of Japanese Knotweed:**

Further to the supply of the extremely useful app for identifying the locations of infestations of Japanese Knotweed, what steps, if any, will the department be taking to get rid of this weed?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

Yes, the Senator is absolutely on the right track. *Fallopia Japonica*, a very virulent weed. I am pleased to say that my department is working closely with officers of the Planning and Environment Department in the battle to control this weed. At the present time it is only Environment Officers who operate the app referred to, however officers from my department provide information to the Planning and Environment Department as and when they encounter the weed and this information is used to update and maintain the Planning and Environment Department's system. As part of our service-level agreement with the Planning and Environment Department, each year our countryside team inject the stems of Japanese Knotweed with weed-killer. This is an extremely labour-intensive but very effective method of control, achieving a kill-rate of approximately 90 to 95 per cent. Unfortunately for various reasons relating to when the plant is susceptible to the weed-killer, this work can only be undertaken in July and August. This severely limits the areas of treatment that we can undertake in any one year.

[11:15]

**4.16.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Is the Minister for Transport and Technical Services aware that in a number of locations the weed has been cut back and taken down to the green-waste composting department in his department? Given that segments of this weed can stay dormant for 20 years and a one-centimetre section can give you a new plant in 10 days in the right conditions, what is he going to do to ensure that the compost has no Japanese Knotweed in it which will contribute to the spread of the weed?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Indeed, the Senator raises a very interesting point. Officers down at La Collette are very well aware of this problem, and should any Japanese Knotweed come in it is put in a separate receptacle that is taken around to the Energy from Waste plant and immediately incinerated at high temperature. Should a small section of knotweed be introduced into the composting system I am assured that since we have purchased the new windrow system, the new machine for that, the temperature in the compost is sufficient to destroy any weed and any seeds that should arrive in it. The soil itself is independently tested at regular intervals.

**4.16.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Given that Japanese Knotweed grows on volcanoes to begin with, is the Minister for Transport and Technical Services sure that the heat is sufficient to kill it, because there is a very large clump of Japanese Knotweed just near Mont Orgueil Castle, and I would hate to see that disrupted by the weed growing underneath it. Is he absolutely certain that the heat is going to be enough to kill it?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I am assured it would be. On a volcano is not quite the same thing as in it, but I am assured that the heat generated by the compost is sufficient to destroy the weed and, as I have said, the soil is periodically tested for just such an eventuality.

**The Bailiff:**

Very well. On that note we will bring Questions on notice to a close and then in accordance with Members' earlier decision we will have next a statement from the Minister for Treasury and Resources relating to the Budget, and I invite the Minister to make that statement.