

**Response is in red font to the additional questions on notice from the Chair, Senator Sheldon issued on Thursday the 17<sup>th</sup> of March to Sunny Ridge.**

1. At the 10 March hearing, Aleki and Talipope said they told their team leader on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 that they were coming to the Senate for the 2 February 2022 hearing.

Also at the hearing, Ms Sauliuma-Duggan said she told Madec liaison officer Mr Rob Hay on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January that she was picking up the Samoan workers and bringing them to Canberra.

Please advise:

- a. When (date and time) Sunny Ridge first became aware of these conversations. **The hearing on 10 March is the first time the Company was aware of the above statements.**
  - b. When (date and time) Sunny Ridge first became aware that Aleki, Talipope and the other Samoan Madec workers were going to Canberra. **The first time Sunny Ridge management was made aware of the Senate Select Committee hearing and the participation of Talipope and Aleki was on 3 February via the Sydney Morning Herald news article. There is an email from the Company HR Manager at 10.49am AEST advising of the matter and asking Laurence if he was aware of who the worker may be.**
2. In correspondence to the Committee dated the 10 February, Mr Burt says that Madec received a letter on 31 January from Sunny Ridge asking that 6 Samoan workers – all of whom came to Canberra for the Senate hearing – be relocated by 4 February. Allegedly, that letter said the workers were disengaging from work and not showing up for shifts.

As discussed at the hearing, based on data Madec provided to the Committee, both Aleki and Talipope worked well over 40 hours per week in the weeks ending 12, 19 and 26 January.

When asked about this by Senator Canavan, Mr Collard cited only the week ending 2 February. Mr Collard said that Talipope didn't present for work on 26-31 January, and Aleki didn't present for work 30-31 January.

**The statement that I advised the Committee Talipope did not present for work from 26-31 January is incorrect. If you refer to page 16 of the Hansard transcript of 10 March you will note that I confirm the specific days that Talipope did not present for work being the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of January. The 29<sup>th</sup> of January Talipope did work and the 30<sup>th</sup> of January was his rostered day off.**

**Response to Senator Canavan's question on notice also covers this point.**

Please advise:

- a. What time did Sunny Ridge send that letter to Madec on 31 January? It was a text message sent at 9.39am AEST it has been included as Appendix A in my response to Senator Canavan's question on notice.
  - b. Given we know Aleki was travelling to Canberra on 31 January, can Sunny Ridge confirm that the only other day of work Aleki allegedly missed in the four weeks prior to the letter from Sunny Ridge, is the 30 January? As recorded in the Hansard transcript of 10 March, I confirmed that in the week leading up to 2 February hearing Aleki had missed the 30th and 31st of January and left early on Thursday the 27th without authorisation. This has been addressed in my response to Senator Canavan's question on notice from the hearing of 10 March. I will also reiterate that neither Aleki or Talipope notified the Company of their intended absence on the 31st of January.
  - b. Has Sunny Ridge ever previously requested that Madec workers be relocated due to behaviour or attendance issues? If yes please advise on how many occasions and when. Yes I personally requested on 29 December 2021 in an email to Laurence Burt that he removed eight Samoan workers. This was due to inappropriate behaviour and non-attendance.
  - c. Has Sunny Ridge ever previously requested that Madec workers be relocated after missing just one or two shifts? If yes please advise on how many occasions and when. As tabled to Senator Grogan at the hearing on 10 March the Company has strawberry picking windows of 24-48 hours before fruit over ripens and becomes waste or rejections with major retailers. This is even more critical in the summer months where temperatures can place further restrictions on picking windows. In regard to Talipope he missed 4 of his scheduled 5 days in that work week. Aleki missed 2 full days and left unauthorised on another. Important to note no notification verbal or written was provided to Sunny Ridge for any absent days due to the hearing.
3. Has anyone at Sunny Ridge ever discussed or mentioned the topic of dismissal or repatriation of the Samoan workers who came to Canberra with anyone at Madec, including either Madec management, employees or seasonal workers? No - the first time dismissal or repatriation was raised with the Company was by Angus Thompson the journalist from the Sydney Morning Herald and we provided our response which he published in his article on 11 February.
  4. Please provide a copy of the letter sent by Sunny Ridge to Madec on 31 January requesting that the Samoan workers be relocated.

This text message is already supplied as Attachment A in our response to Senator Canavan's question on notice.