

30 June 2011

Office of the Chief Executive  
Biosecurity Australia  
GPO Box 858  
**CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Dear Sir/Madam

### **QUARANTINE CONTROL FOR APPLE IMPORTS**

Council is extremely concerned that Biosecurity Australia is recommending that New Zealand 'Commercial in Confidence' standard commercial procedures will be Australia's quarantine control for apple imports.

The horticultural industry in the Greater Shepparton region is a major contributor to export earnings for this country and the region is concerned that such an approach carries potential risks of introducing fireblight and other pests and diseases into Australia.

Council cannot understand how delegation of this important role can be given to a foreign industry that has a clear conflict of interest.

Our farming community has already experienced difficult times with the prolonged drought followed by excessive wet weather, and can ill-afford the risk of pest introduction brought about by what could only be described as inadequate controls that rely on New Zealand commercial procedures that we are unable to source the details of, due to confidentiality measures.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2005-06) reports that the value of the Agricultural industry in Greater Shepparton is approaching \$1Billion.

The Goulburn Valley area comprises in excess of:

2,131 hectares of apple trees

3,321 hectares of pear trees.

In addition to the primary production value of the commodities there are obvious multiplier economic effects in relation to the primary food industries in terms of production that adds value to primary produce, transport industries, cool storage and employment.

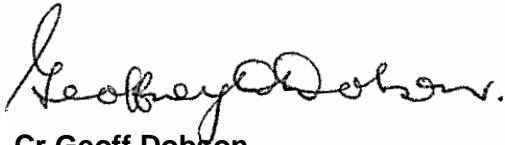
The Northern Victorian Regional Transport Strategy, commissioned by the Hume Regional Management Forum in 2009 showed a total of 11.8 million tonnes of freight originating from, and coming into, the region during 2008. This demonstrates the breadth of the impact that this industry has on our economy.

All these components in the value-added chain and the regional economy will be placed at risk if an outbreak of fireblight occurred, and Council believes that this risk increases dramatically with the proposed import rules.

Council strongly requests that Biosecurity Australia, in deliberating on its advice, arrives at a protocol that has the appropriate strength to protect our pome fruit industry.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Dobson'.

**Cr Geoff Dobson**  
**MAYOR**

cc Senator The Hon Joe Ludwig – Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
cc The Hon Peter Ryan MP - Minister for Regional and Rural Development  
cc The Hon John Lenders – Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

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