



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Andrew Metcalfe AO
SECRETARY**

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30 April 2013

Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan
Committee Chair
Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Heffernan

Thank you for your letter of 25 March 2013 advising me of the Committee's work in relation to my department's risk assessment methodologies as it relates to the inquiries into:

- the effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapple from Malaysia
- the effect on Australian ginger growers of importing fresh ginger from Fiji
- the proposed importation of potatoes for processing from New Zealand.

Since my recent appointment as Secretary, I have been familiarising myself with the role the department plays in assessing the potential biosecurity risks associated with imported commodities.

I have received substantial briefing on my obligations as the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine. I am committed to having the best biosecurity arrangements in place to ensure Australia is adequately protected and that technically and scientifically valid information is considered in assessing potential biosecurity risks.

The issues raised by the Committee are significant. I am looking at them closely and will provide a detailed response once I have thoroughly considered them.

I hope that this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

(Andrew Metcalfe)