



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT

REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Senator the Hon. John Hogg
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr President,

In 2012, the Senate referred several inquiries regarding the importation of fresh produce to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee. The details of which are as follows:

Inquiry	Date Referred	Previous Interim Report/s
Inquiry into the effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapples from Malaysia	20 June 2012	October 2012 March 2013 July 2013
Inquiry into the effect on Australian ginger growers of importing fresh ginger from Fiji	19 September 2012	March 2013 July 2013
Inquiry into the proposed importation of potatoes from New Zealand	12 September 2012	March 2013 July 2013

Submissions received to each inquiry from pineapple, ginger and potato stakeholder groups raised issues relevant to their specific industry. Whilst the three inquiries were all referred within a three-month period, and shared similar reporting dates, the committee resolved to conduct hearings for each of the inquiries separately.

As noted in the committee's previous interim reports tabled in March and July 2013, following the completion of the evidence gathering part of these three inquiries, the committee made the decision to amalgamate the three reports and table them together as a single report. The committee noted that this approach would enable the recurring theme common to each of these inquiries (the operation of DAFF Biosecurity's Risk Estimation Matrix (REM)) to be a central focus, whilst at the same time allowing for detailed consideration of the significant and specific issues relevant to each separate inquiry.

The committee has been unable to conclude its analysis of the REM. In order to give further consideration to the evidence provided and conclude its deliberations, the committee flags the likelihood of it recommending to the Senate the re-referral of the inquiries to the committee in the next Parliament, so that they may finally be concluded.

Yours sincerely,

Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan
Chair

5 September 2013