



**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**SECRETARY**

28 March 2008

Committee Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Ms Jeanette Radcliffe

At the recent Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee hearing on 8 February 2008, I took on notice a question from Senator Fielding as to whether the confidential report provided by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis (ACERA) on an evaluation of the inspection scheme for the importation of New Zealand apples could be tabled.

The ACERA report draws from information provided by the New Zealand Government in the draft Work Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for the importation of New Zealand apples into Australia. As outlined to the Committee on 18 February 2008 by Ms Gordon, Executive Manager Quarantine, these documents have been provided by New Zealand on an in confidence government-to-government basis.

Given that the ACERA report is closely related to these documents I have been informed by the Department's legal advisors that before providing such documents to the Committee, I would need to seek permission of the New Zealand Government to avoid a breach of confidence. As a result, I am not in a position to table the ACERA report to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Conall O'Connell

