



4 October 2019

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Fearmongering hurts Tasmanian farmers

Labor and the CPSU are deliberately spreading mistruths to push their own political agenda, with no regard for the fear they are creating in the blueberry industry.

For Labor to claim Biosecurity Tasmania has been cut or mismanaged is an outrageous mistruth and could hurt the livelihoods of farmers and fruit growers through putting market access at risk.

The fact is since 2014 this government has consistently delivered additional funding for biosecurity, increased the number of staff, doubled the number of detector dogs and invested in vital infrastructure to protect our state.

We recently advertised 20 new positions in the south, north and north-west and this year's budget confirmed an investment into Biosecurity Tasmania of over \$30 million including an additional \$2.6 million per year into the frontline.

I am assured that Biosecurity Tasmania has adequate resources to respond to blueberry rust and other issues based on risk. They are also working hard with interstate authorities on market access for the coming season noting that exports to New South Wales and Queensland continue to be unaffected.

Following a recent detection of a number of blueberry rust infected plants at a small number of Tasmanian retail nurseries, Biosecurity Tasmania acted swiftly, applying all appropriate biosecurity measures.

The Government is also investing in research into new treatments for blueberry rust by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture.

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility between government, industry and the community, and vigilance and this latest case shows how the system is working.

I ask all Tasmanians to be on the lookout for signs of blueberry rust and further information is available at: www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/blueberryrust

