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TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE



Guy Barnett, Minister for Minister for Primary Industries and Water
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Ongoing support for Tasmania's potato industry

Yesterday morning I met with key representatives from Tasmania's potato industry, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and Biosecurity Tasmania, to discuss potato imports into Tasmania.

Biosecurity Tasmania independently assesses the merits of any fruit and vegetables allowed into Tasmania. This assessment is based on science and evidence, independent of political opinion.

In the case of potatoes, their import has never been prohibited, subject to meeting import requirements.

However, based on industry feedback, I can advise the Department will today send the Statement of Reasons for the conditional exemption directly to industry representatives so they can better understand the decision and provide comment.

This will form the basis of a formal review of the conditional exemption by the Department Secretary.

A usual three-yearly Import Risk Assessment ('IRA') review covering potato imports into Tasmania will also commence immediately in consultation with industry, and we expect the IRA will be available for public comment before the end of the year.

It's important to note that our system is underpinned by a nationally and internationally recognised cooperative approach, and to be clear, trade between States is not unusual and happens regularly.

Tasmania relies heavily on this freedom certification to underpin our own export trade. Whether it be cherries, apples, pears, broccoli, peas, carrots – the same rules apply, and I have full confidence in Tasmania's biosecurity system.

Improved communications with industry on this matter would have been beneficial and I have asked the Department to review their consultation processes.