



**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Minister for Regional Services
Minister for Sport
Minister for Local Government and Decentralisation
Senator for Victoria**

MEDIA RELEASE

\$650,000 to Boost Fresh Produce Sector

22 November 2018

The Minister for Regional Services, Bridget McKenzie visited a strawberry farm in regional Victoria today to announce details of a \$650,000 assistance package to help maintain and restore consumer confidence in the safety and quality of Australia's fresh produce.

“The events of the past few months have dealt a significant blow to our strawberry farmers and Australians who love their fresh fruit and vegetables,” Minister McKenzie said.

“We were all moved by the way Australians rallied to support our farmers and the Liberal National government is determined to keep the passion and momentum going.

“I visited the Australian Strawberry Distributors in Wandin, Victoria, to understand the consequences of the recent food security issue and to reiterate how seriously our government takes the safety and security of our food supply.

“Consumer confidence, both domestically and internationally, in our food supply is critical for Australian businesses and our international reputation for exporting safe products.

“This funding is in addition to the \$350,000 already announced by the Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud, to support the strawberry industry to regain and retain market share in key export markets, and maintain or restore confidence in the industry and supply chain.”

The \$650,000 will help promote Australia's fresh produce sector, supports our strawberry growers and also encourage Australians to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. The package will:

- further support Food Standards Australia New Zealand, who played a pivotal role in coordinating the original response and to broaden and speed up their review into high-risk foods and
- offer assistance to states and territories to give them greater capacity to back health departments with their investigations; and
- initiate an online and social media campaign that will promote and restore consumer confidence in the safety and quality of Australia's fresh produce; encourage healthy eating and raise awareness of the health benefits of consuming fresh fruit and vegetables.

“While around a third of Australians meet the recommended serves of fruit, we know that only 4 per cent of Australian adults and 1 per cent of children consume the recommended amount of vegetables – we need to reinforce to message that ‘fresh is best’,” Minister McKenzie said.

“Australia has a strong record of food safety and I encourage everyone to continue to support the Australian fresh food sector which is valued in the billions of dollars and employs thousands of Australians.”

ENDS

Media Contact:

Jonathan Hawkes I 0434 660 801 I Jonathan.Hawkes@health.gov.au

Authorised by B McKenzie, The National Party, Bendigo VIC