

Increases to Fees and Charges for Biosecurity Inspections of Plant Imports into Tasmania

Strong biosecurity underpins Tasmania's \$2.4 billion agriculture and seafood sector, our \$3.09 billion a year in agricultural exports and our \$2.8 billion inbound tourism industry.

Pests and disease cost our farmers and fishers, they risk market access for a products, they can harm our environment, and they can ruin the natural environment that thousands of tourists come to Tasmania to experience.

As our trade and tourism sectors continue to grow, we must keep pace with best practice biosecurity practices to manage and mitigate against pests and disease.

The experience of the recent fruit fly incursion, and other biosecurity incursions nationally, tells us that the threat of pests and disease is increasing and we must have a strong biosecurity program in place as a preventative measure.

The Government has invested a total \$30.36 million into Biosecurity Tasmania in 2019/20, including the addition of \$2.62 million per year on frontline biosecurity to keep Tasmania fruit fly free and free from other pests and disease.

The increased investment will deliver **more biosecurity inspectors doing more inspections** of high risk produce and imported freight and goods. Intercepting through inspection is a strategy which works.

Furthermore, we will also:

- Build on existing partnerships with the TFGA and Fruit Growers Tasmania, and invest in **industry preparedness and emergency response**, with wine and nursery industries as an immediate priority.
- Undertake a **new tourism biosecurity program**, engaging with the tourism industry and visitors about the importance of biosecurity.
- Further improve **signage and review our compliance measures** at airports and ports.
- Introduce **new electronic import traceability and verification systems** for more efficient biosecurity inspection administration and market reporting.

This additional investment will be supported by changes to the partial cost recovery of inspection service fees from 2019-20 onwards. The fees will remain below full cost recovery for the service with the Tasmanian Government continuing to fund the balance of the cost.

This boost to biosecurity coverage addresses the potential risks of imported produce, freight and goods bringing pests and diseases to the State. Importantly Biosecurity Tasmania will retain this revenue for biosecurity services, rather than it being used for general Government revenue.

Changes to import inspection fees

In order to achieve our biosecurity objectives, fees have been increased under the *Plant Quarantine Regulations 2017* for:

- Examination of documents, vessel or prescribed matter under the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997*,
- Certificates of Release, and
- Examination of unit of freight.

The inspection fee (per 15 minute unit for an ordinary work day) has increased from \$18.96 to \$27.54, with \$8.10 (94%) of this increase due to the proposed regulatory changes. A unit of freight will increase from \$7.90 to \$18.63 per 6-minute unit, with \$10.53 (98%) of this increase due to the proposed regulatory changes.

Prior to these changes, border inspection service fees under the *Plant Quarantine Regulations* had not been reviewed in decades and were well below cost-recovery.

Full details on the amendment of the *Plant Quarantine Regulations 2017* are contained in the *Regulatory Impact Statement for the Draft Plant Quarantine Amendment Regulations 2019*.

Exemption and remission of fees

Under section 99 of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment (DPIPWE) may, by public notice, exempt any prescribed matter, place, person or class of person from complying with this Act. Such an exemption can include a full or partial waiver of fees that would otherwise be payable under the *Plant Quarantine Regulations 2017*.

A person can seek a waiver/remission of fees on the grounds of financial hardship or public interest, or any other factor the person feel may be relevant. An application for a reduction or waiver of fees must be:

- (a) made in writing, addressed to the Secretary of DPIPWE; and
- (b) supported by sufficient evidence; and
- (c) emailed to Biosecurity.Tasmania@dpiwpe.tas.gov.au

Exemptions for persons or classes of persons will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and are required by law to be publically notified in the Tasmanian Government Gazette.

For further information or to contact Biosecurity Tasmania

Biosecurity Tasmania

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