

Question on Notice
No. 601
Asked on 10 May 2005

Mr WELLINGTON asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) -

QUESTION:

With reference to his Governments requirements for Queensland producers of a range of products to meet stringent quality assurance standards —

While on his overseas trade visits around the world, when and in what countries has he spoken about the need to ensure that overseas producers of products who want to export to Queensland, have to meet similar quality assurance standards that Queensland producers have to comply with?

ANSWER:

The purpose of my overseas trade and investment missions are to promote Queensland and increase export opportunities for Queensland companies. I do not seek to increase imports to Queensland.

In terms of imported food product approvals, Australia's approach to quarantine incorporates a variety of strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing quarantine risks through pre-border and post-border activities. Standards and compliance relating to plant and animal matter imported from overseas is handled primarily by the Federal Government through the Australian Customs Service, in conjunction with, amongst others, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS).

The offshore area of AQIS is responsible for the development and implementation of agreed arrangements to reduce quarantine risks associated with particular goods or activities.

Commercial importers of food such as fresh fruit and vegetables or food containing milk, egg, meat or other animal products must obtain an import permit from AQIS prior to importation.

All imported food must also meet the requirements of the *Imported Food Control Act 1992 (Cth)*, regulated by the Imported Food Inspection Scheme. The Imported Food Inspection Scheme is jointly run by AQIS and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). FSANZ develops food risk assessment policy for the Imported Food Inspection Scheme and AQIS has operational responsibility for inspection and sampling.

For imported products other than food, requirements for imported products are found under the *Customs Act 1985 (Cth)* and other customs-related legislation.

Product standards other than for food are dealt with by Standards Australia, which details the Australian standards for a large range of products. These standards, which are voluntary, apply to both local and imported products. The voluntary standards may also be adopted as mandatory requirements under either Commonwealth or State legislation.

Standards Australia is Australia's leading standards development organisation and is recognised through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth Government.

There is a general commitment under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Mutual Recognition, which was signed by Heads of Government in May 1992, for all participating jurisdictions to ensure the mutual recognition of regulations and standards for goods and occupations. Queensland has participated in mutual recognition since 1 March 1993.

In Queensland, enforcement of standards of consumer goods is handled under the *Fair Trading Act 1999* and *Fair Trading Regulation 2001*.

The Office of Fair Trading's role in product safety is to ensure consumer products (locally produced and imported) are as safe as possible and that consumers are fully informed about using products safely with the long-term aim of reducing product related injuries to Queenslanders.

Where a product (local or imported) does not comply with the Australian standard, the Queensland Government may ban a product that is deemed unsafe under the provisions of the *Fair Trading Act 1999*.