



## Media Release

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### **Ministers Joyce and Billson must get Horticulture Code review right – Australia’s fresh fruit & vegetable supply chain depends on it**

The Federal Government’s review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct\* must fix the faults in the eight-year old Code or risk destabilising Australia’s fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain.

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA), the national industry body representing wholesalers and supporting businesses in Australia’s six central wholesale fruit and vegetable markets, says the review recently announced by Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and Small Business Minister Bruce Billson was critical to the proper functioning of Australia’s Central Markets.

FMA Executive Director Andrew Young said the Central Markets in Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth represented a \$7 billion a year industry and were significant employment hubs with more than 17,500 people employed directly or working on-site to buy fresh produce every day.

“Every year, more than 400 FMA member wholesalers on-sell fresh produce from more than 90% of Australia’s estimated 17,000 commercial fruit and vegetable growing establishments - over 50% of all fresh produce consumed in Australia is handled by a market wholesaler,” Mr Young said.

“Without properly functioning Central Markets, Australia’s fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain would collapse – so the Code review must deliver a balanced outcome for growers and wholesalers.

“The Horticulture Code of Conduct is inflexible and anti-competitive and discriminates against the primarily small family businesses that operate as fruit and vegetable wholesalers across Australia.”

Mr Young said the Code of Conduct demanded methods of operation that were inconsistent with how growers and wholesalers do business, and how they want to do business.

“The Code burdens wholesalers with responsibility for all the red tape paperwork while the regulators turn a blind eye to growers who pick and choose if and when they want to operate under the Code – and who face no penalty for non-compliance,” Mr Young said.

“If the Code of Conduct was followed to the letter, wholesalers across Australia would be forced to return or reject about 40,000 tonnes - 2000 semi-trailer loads - of fresh fruit and vegetables every week received from growers who refuse to sign agreements or who choose to operate outside the strict requirements of the Code.

“The Code is commercially impractical and the massive wastage from its proper application would be unconscionable.”

Mr Young said the FMA was committed to participating in a robust review of the Code and finding a resolution that was equitable and commercially practical.

“FMA is not opposed to a Code of Conduct, but it is opposed to the Code’s unworkable regulations which must be revised so that both growers and wholesalers are treated fairly and are able to operate their businesses the way they need to,” Mr Young said.

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact  
Andrew Young, Executive Director, on 07 3915 4200 or 0438 388 411**

*\*Note: The Horticulture Code was established in 2007 to regulate trade in horticulture produce between growers and traders of fresh fruit and vegetables and to provide an alternative dispute resolution procedure. The Horticulture Code is a prescribed, mandatory industry code under the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The code came into operation with the aim of improving the clarity and transparency in transactions between horticulture growers and traders and to provide some standard procedures and mandatory requirements in the trading relationship.*