Speaker 1: Hi, I'm Maggie Beer, and I would love to welcome you to my home here in the incredibly special and beautiful Barossa Valley. Biosecurity is a critically important aspect of our efforts to prevent, respond to and recover from pest and diseases that threaten our economy, environment, and our agricultural industries, which underpins our unique way of life that we enjoy here in Australia. All this is vital to our communities wherever we live and we all need to be aware of it.

I've had several firsthand experiences with the problems that can arise from a biosecurity incident. In 1996, when about to export our pate to Japan for the first time from our newly built export kitchens into Tanunda, a minor outbreak of bird flu occurred in Victoria, and so all exports stopped. This happened again in the mid two thousands when large scale avian influenza or bird flu outbreaks were occurring in parts of Asia.

This outbreak sparked fears that the highly pathogenic strain of the virus could spread to other parts of the world. So Australia's strict biosecurity measures are aimed at preventing the disease coming into Australia through imported birds or poultry products from other high risk countries, so essential.

We must protect ourselves from rogues who look to smuggle eggs and even birds in for their own personal benefit. While bird flu has never made it to Australia on a large scale, each of the seven outbreaks we have had since 1980 have had serious and prolonged consequences for access to international markets. And whilst the disease was quickly controlled on each occasion because of our strong emphasis on reporting biosecurity incidents, our ability to act quickly and ongoing surveillance which demonstrated to our trading partners that the disease had in fact been eradicated.

Whilst it is possible to start again, the damage to not being able to supply markets, no matter that the outbreak has no connection to the exporter, is immense and confidence has to be regained. Without Australia's excellent biosecurity measures of our controls of disease, it would be impossible for Australian exporters to flourish.

Had highly pathogenic bird flu established in Australia and spread rapidly as it has in other countries, it would have had a major impact on the whole industry and the access we all have to high quality poultry and egg products. We need this public conversation so we know why it's essential. We continue to take biosecurity threats very seriously.

We should all be proud of our Australian grown produce and support our farmers so we can continue to have access to these products. We can only continue to have this wonderful produce because of our strong biosecurity measures that we need to work at protecting.

You may be asking what can you do to protect Australia from pests and diseases? It is very simple. Be a biosecurity champion and comply with our biosecurity laws, which vary from state to state. The penalties for biosecurity risk-taking are high, and the impact on our farmers and environment even higher.

Effective biosecurity and health mitigation has enhanced Australia's reputation as an exporter of high quality, clean and safe agricultural produce. We have such amazing produce and diversity in micro climates all over Australia. And for me, particularly here in the Barossa.

Part of continuing to flourish is the need to protect what we have, and we can only do that with good biosecurity practice. So remember, if you see anything unusual, report it. It's up to us all. Biosecurity, it's everybody's business.