### Organisation name:

Australian Fresh Produce Alliance

### Feedback:

Fruit and vegetable exports have grown strongly over recent years and are expected to continue to grow. Individual companies, industries (by product) and regions are looking at new export opportunities aligned to key strengths domestically and opportunities overseas.

Technical Market Access Protocols remain the key enabler for export of Australia's fruit and vegetables. Without technical market access the tariff and quota reductions under free trade agreements cannot be realised into key markets.

The strong reputation of the Australian food system is a key element in securing and maintaining market access, and also for driving a product differentiator ('Premium Australian Produce') in our key export markets. Australia's food systems underpin food safety, quality and provenance - continued development of these systems will support Australia's continued export growth.

The overall domestic regulatory environment facilitates Australia's exports as it supports the premium Australian food reputation. The framework and regulations, maintenance and incident response are critical components of the system and its operation. The system, and the resultant safety and associated quality, of Australian horticulture produce are identified by foreign buyers, importers and retailers in conversation as part of the key value proposition of Australian horticulture.

The recent incidents identified in the report – “listeria in rockmelon, foreign objects in strawberries, adulteration of honey” (page 13) - include production and supply chain factors however most of the recent challenges for the fresh produce sector have been imposed by external forces. Industry is taking a more proactive role in this area and needs Commonwealth Government support and partnership to:

* Respond to new risks within and outside of the supply chain with an industry led approach to addressing the underlying issues.
* Coordinate the key players across multiple states and territories to deliver cohesive and considered responses.

The continued export growth for Australian fruit and vegetables is a truly national trend - while there are individual products and regions experiencing strong export growth, it is not restricted to particular regions. The membership of the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance is a prime example - the 14 member companies have more than 100 production locations across every state and the Northern Territory. The companies also have more than 1,000 growers in their commercial supply to domestic retailers and for export. These companies comprise $4.5 billion of the $9.1 billion turnover of the Australian fruit and vegetable sector and a third of Australia’s fruit and vegetable exports.

The Australian food export system must continue to develop into a truly national approach, integrating through the supply chain.

The continued consumer and market trends to demonstrate product integrity, safety and traceability is leading to an increased focus on the supply chain. Our farmers, and agricultural supply chains are facing increased requirements which need integrating, including:

* the full range of audits
* food safety requirements
* market access protocol requirements (interstate and export)
* biosecurity regulations
* import and export regulations
* trusted trader arrangements
* cost recovery from industry/costs through the supply chain
* traceability
* proposed property identification system.

Industry and government need to consider a shared objective for fruit and vegetable supply chains, and how to achieve that objective for Australian and overseas consumers in an efficient and effective manner.

### About the AFPA:

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) is made up of Australia’s key fresh produce growers and suppliers. The members include Costa Group, Perfection Fresh, Montague, One Harvest, Pinata Farms, Fresh Select, Mitolo Group, Mackay’s Banana Marketing, Driscoll’s, 2PH Farms, LaManna Premier, Rugby Farming, Freshmax and Fresh Produce Group. These businesses represent half the industry turnover of the Australian fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) sector - $4.5 billion of the $9.1 billion total; 1,000 plus growers through commercial arrangements and more than 15,000 direct employees through peak harvest, and up to 25,000 in the grower network. "