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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

23 February 2022

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Biosecurity Tasmania - Securing Our Borders from pests and disease

Biosecurity Tasmania staff continue to play a key role in helping to keep Tasmanians safe and protecting our environment, world class agricultural and tourism industries from biosecurity threats.

Tasmania's agricultural sector can be assured that we are better protected now than ever before from pests and disease.

Today I attended the 600-count inspection of produce at Toll's Approved Quarantine Place (AQP) at East Devonport, which is a vital part of the Securing Our Borders initiative.

This type of inspection (600 pieces of produce each day) is supported by our investment of an additional \$2.6 million which included recruiting 20 additional Biosecurity Tasmania staff, education and awareness programs, and improved biosecurity preparedness and emergency response capacity.

The additional staff have been working to check fresh produce at the border specifically during October to March to help manage the increased risk during the warmer weather of carrying pests such as fruit fly, tomato-potato psyllid, blueberry rust and grape phylloxera.

This move is vital to ensure the protection and support of the State's primary industries and brand, and the maintenance of grower access to premium export markets.

During the 2020-21 season, and despite the operational challenges presented during the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 4,659 individual inspections were undertaken at AQPs across the State. Biosecurity Tasmania has hand inspected 2,085,764 individual pieces of produce during this period.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has significantly increased biosecurity spending to protect our borders and doubled the number of detector dog teams to 12 since coming to Government.

Our booming agriculture sector is projected to reach a farm-gate value of \$10 billion by 2050 and it supports jobs and growth in rural and regional communities while underpinning our entire economy.

Despite the global pandemic, demand remains high for Tasmania's high quality produce both locally, across the country and internationally and the Government is committed to supporting farmers.

Border security is everyone's responsibility so we ask everyone to remain vigilant and if you see something suspect (such as insect larvae) in produce that you have bought from the supermarket, or grown in your backyard, please report it to Biosecurity Tasmania on 03 6165 3777.

The Tasmanian Government thanks all Biosecurity Tasmania's staff for their professionalism in continuing to help protect our state, our industries and our environment.

To learn more about what you can and can't bring into Tasmania visit:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/biosecurity/travellers-guide-to-tasmanian-biosecurity-what-you-can-and-cant-bring-into-tasmania>