



Dale Last MP
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Media Release - Last calls for Quarantine resources

With the latest Brisbane COVID-19 cluster appearing to be under control, Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Affairs, Dale Last, has called on the government to bolster quarantine assessment teams to avoid what he describes as a looming fruit and vegetable crisis.

Mr Last said delays in assessments of quarantine facilities meant time had run out for some producers and, with each passing day, delays would increase the pain faced by producers, communities and consumers throughout the state.

“For months now producers have been warning that fruit and vegetable crops were at risk due to the lack of farm labour and the government needs to start heeding those warnings,” Mr Last said. “Time is critical, with farmers desperate for workers, and with each passing day the risk of price rises for fruit and vegetables because of reduced production is rising dramatically.”

“I’m calling on the Premier to ensure the CHO has the resources needed to process both applications for quarantine facilities to house seasonal workers and applications for these workers to enter Australia.”

“It appears that there simply aren’t enough resources available, and that lack of resources could cause businesses in regional Queensland to go under; it’s as simple as that.”

Mr Last said that Queenslanders needed to understand that the issue would affect everyone, not just growers and the communities they lived in.

“There is no denying that reduced supply will result in higher prices for fruit and vegetables,” he said.

“Some families will, undoubtedly, be unable to afford Queensland grown produce unless we get these sites assessed, approved and the workers on the ground in the very near future.”

“The Premier talks about a health response and an economic response. What we see here is a looming disaster due to a lack of health resources.”

“No one is calling for shortcuts to be taken because everyone knows we must ensure the quarantine process is effective but the longer it takes to assess these facilities, the more fruit and vegetables that either won’t be planted or will be left to rot on the ground.”



“Any reduction in supply causes an increase in price and the threat to supply is growing by the day. Producers, communities and Queensland families need these Pacific Island workers here and working as soon as possible and the state Labor government needs to ensure whatever resources are needed to make that happen are available sooner rather than later.”

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