



NEW SOUTH WALES

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,  
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

### **Biosecurity Australia walking very fine line on Philippine banana import decision: Macdonald**

Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald today called on the Federal Government to take special oversight of Biosecurity Australia's role in the proposed importation of bananas from the Philippines.

"The last thing we want to see is an exotic disease slip past our border and cause major disruption and a potential economic catastrophe for the State's \$60 Million banana industry," Minister Macdonald said.

"Any Import Risk Assessment (IRA) must put the future of our industry first and be based on solid science.

"We saw the cost equine influenza (EI) had on our horse industries; we don't want another episode like that.

"The Philippines is known to be home to a range of pest and diseases that affect bananas that are exotic to Australia.

"These include Black Sigatoka fungus, Moko bacteria and Banana Freckle fungus.

"Our banana industry has a history that tracks back to the late 1800s which these diseases have the potential to decimate.

"Biosecurity Australia this week gave the green light to importation of bananas from the Philippines after lengthy analysis, but this doesn't negate the fact that this product still represents a serious risk and many of our 300 plus banana growers are very nervous.

"Some quarters of the industry are not totally convinced that this decision isn't opening up the gates for a flood of cheap, disease ridden fruit into our shops, potentially out pricing good home-grown products.

"The State's banana growers deserve to know in no uncertain terms on what conditions these bananas can be imported and when is the first lot expected to hit our shores."