

Media Release

19 September 2006

GROWERS WELCOME MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT

Horticulture Australia Council (HAC), the peak national body representing the horticultural industries, today warmly welcomed the Government's announcement on the Code of Conduct for the industry.

HAC Chair, Stuart Swaddling, said today: "We have been working closely with Government, for the past 12 months in particular, to develop a Code of Conduct to ensure ethical and professional business practices in the sale of fruit and vegetables.

Federal Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran announced today that the necessary regulations to introduce a mandatory Code would be introduced to Parliament as a matter of urgency, thus delivering on the Government's 2004 election commitment.

Minister McGauran stated that this decision follows a unanimous stance by grower organisations, at a meeting last week, that only a mandatory code would end the problems facing the sector.

Mr Swaddling said that this decision was the beginning of a new era for horticultural industries. "Wholesale horticulture will now join the 21st century in our business practices", he said. "We look forward to working with wholesaler representatives to revitalise the sector in this country, and ensure a smooth transition to the new system."

"We will be working closely with the Government on implementation of the mandatory Code, ensuring growers and traders fully understand their new rights, responsibilities and requirements.

"We have worked for two years to develop a mandatory Code of Conduct that will put an end to the clear market failure in the horticulture supply chain and bring about the culture change so desperately needed in our industry." Mr Swaddling said. "We are confident that this step will improve the efficiency and transparency of the supply chain for suppliers, traders and consumers alike".

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Members of HAC include:

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Avocados Australia Ltd
Australian Banana Growers' Council
Australian Citrus Growers Inc
Australian Dried Fruits Association
Australian Mango Industry Association Ltd
Australian Mushroom Growers Association Ltd
Australian Nut Industry Council
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