



## David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

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# Media Statement

September 19, 2018

### **Tougher Penalties for Fruit Contamination**

AS delicious Granite Belt strawberries will soon hit our shelves this season, Maranoa MP David Littleproud urged berry-lovers to “cut them up, not cut them out” and continue to support local farmers.

“The idiots who deliberately sabotage the livelihood of strawberry farmers and the health of consumers should have the book thrown at them,” Mr Littleproud said.

“Let’s not forget Australia has a strong record on food safety. These incidents are rare and isolated in Australia’s food safety history.”

Mr Littleproud said supermarkets and consumers need to back our farmers and continue to buy local produce – cut up the strawberries, don’t cut out our local producers.

“Australians support our farmers and I know they’ll support strawberry growers by continuing to buy fruit,” he said.

“The Coalition Government will also provide an addition \$1 million dollars for more food safety officials to increase detection and fast track recalls.

“Queensland Police and Queensland Health continue to lead investigations. Perpetrators will feel the full force of the state laws.”

Mr Littleproud said strawberry growers across the region are feeling the pressure of this incident with unbelievable lows in punnet prices.

“I urge consumers to cut them up, not cut them out and continue to support our strawberry farmers,” he said.

“The strawberry incident began on September 13 when a sewing needle was found in a strawberry and has escalated with copycat cases occurring across Australia.

“Today the Federal Government moved to changed the law so dropkick offenders get up to 15 years jail for food contamination,” Mr Littleproud said.

“As part of the new bill, nobody will be able to escape conviction just because they didn’t intend to cause public alarm or anxiety or economic loss. Recklessness will be enough for significant jail time.

“Sabotage offences will be amended to ensure that sabotage of Australia’s food supply is considered a serious crime.

“If you undertake this sort of deliberately destructive behaviour, you will be punished.”

–ENDS–

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