



Citrus Australia Policy Statements – Federal Election, 2019

Background

The citrus industry is a major employer in regional and rural Australia; an estimated 25,000 people are employed in citrus production with more employed in allied businesses. More than 25,000 hectares of citrus are grown across five states with a five year average production of 710,000 tonnes.

The Australian citrus industry contributed in excess of \$800 million to the GDP through farm gate sales in 2018.

More than 270,000 tonnes of citrus were exported in 2017, contributing \$460 million to the GDP. Ninety per cent of this trade was to Asian nations to our north.

Labour Policy

People employed in the citrus industry have the right to a safe work environment and are entitled to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Much of the work in the citrus industry is seasonal; physical and time critical. To that end, Citrus Australia:

- Supports piece rate as a motivation for efficiency and reward
- Support the seasonal worker program as a core component to a stable seasonal workforce
- Support legislation that recognises the variability of horticultural workplaces
- Supports raising the superannuation threshold from \$450 a month
- Opposes industrial manslaughter rules
- Opposes expansion of penalty rates
- Promotes a uniform and efficient national labour hire contractor registration process and system, including no under payment and misuse of piece work agreements.

Biosecurity

Australia benefits from natural protection as an island continent; however, the increase in holiday makers and international visitors and the reported increase in imported goods has significantly increased the risk of exotic pest incursion. The Australian industry directly employs tens of thousands of Australians and is the lifeblood of many regional centres and towns. Strong biosecurity underpins security of food supply for consumers and Australia's reputation on the world stage.

Citrus Australia supports biosecurity policy that:

- Increases public and industry education
- Increases investment in resources for interception and detection
- Invests in biosecurity technology and innovation
- Invests in appropriate levels of resourcing



- Enforces biosecurity regulation, with the ability to enforce significant penalties for breaches of biosecurity border protection and breaches of protocols
- Regulates the nursery sector
- Supports pest free areas
- Expands capacity in biosecurity and sciences that underpin biosecurity
- Protects the growing investment in export markets

Market Access

The Australian industry is a global player with market access to over 50 countries. Despite having just 3 percent of world production, Australian citrus is renowned in overseas market for its high quality and safe production. On average Australia exports one third of its production and export volumes have achieved new benchmarks annually since 2015.

Citrus Australia supports market access policy that:

- Promotes Free Trade Agreements
- Supports improvements and maintenance of market access protocols
- Recognises industry's commitment and investment in export
- Prioritises the objectives of mature horticulture industries
- Recognises the immediate impact of improvements in protocols
- Promotes and assists the simplification of interstate market access.

Water

Irrigation practices in the Australian citrus industry continue to evolve through the adoption of new technologies. Citrus Australia is committed to sustainability, efficiency and productivity in the management and use of water resources. Citrus Australia supports policy that:

- Delivers water in a reliable and cost-effective way
- Supports adoption of efficient water use
- Supports compliance and metering of water use
- Promotes sustainable access to water and water infrastructure
- Recognises the citrus industry's value to rural and regional economies and the water efficiency measures already made in the citrus industry
- Supports and promotes compliance of water licensing including metering of use throughout the irrigation industry



Research and Development

Investment in research and development (R&D) and innovation is vital for ongoing growth and improvement in the productivity, profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of Australia's citrus industry. Citrus Australia supports policy that:

- Ensures efficient use of the grower levy
- Invests in the Citrus Industry Strategic Investment Plan
- Improves security of tenure for core skills
- Develops a field of applied scientists motivated by industry outcomes
- Centralises co-ordination of R&D for efficient delivery
- Encourages collaboration with international researchers for efficiency
- is industry driven

Energy

The Australian citrus industry is largely situated in rural and remote regions. Governments must work to supply affordable and reliable energy to rural Australia. Citrus Australia supports policy that:

- Delivers affordable and reliable energy to rural and regional Australia
- Delivers sustainable energy
- Supports and promotes a competitive energy market
- Supports maintenance of domestic gas reserves to ensure a competitive gas and electricity supply price
- Reduces costs in the supply chain

Agrichemicals

Whilst working to reduce the use of agrichemical in the citrus industry, Citrus Australia recognises the importance of effective products that assist industry to produce high quality, safe citrus and deliver it to market. Citrus Australia supports agrichemical policy that:

- Recognises R&D outcomes of suitable partner countries, adopting label rates and use patterns as recommended by appropriately certified agrichemical authorities
- Recognises the importance of access to agrichemical in the use of emergency/outbreak and works to streamline the processes
- Supports independent risk-based assessment of agrichemical in Australia
- Works with industry to streamline national and state-based regulation where appropriate
- Enables access to new chemistry



- Recognises the importance of integrated pest management (IPM) as an agrichemical resistance strategy
- Finds efficiencies in the registration process

Infrastructure

The Australian citrus industry comprises a range of business types, predominantly small to medium businesses in rural areas. Growing packing and delivering more than 710,000 tonnes of citrus products each year requires a reliable infrastructure. Citrus Australia supports policy that:

- Addresses mobile telecommunications black spots
- Delivers high speed internet in any form with wider availability and greater affordability, better speeds and effectiveness
- Improves efficiency, access and investment in ports, airports, rail, roads
- Recognises the growth in the agriculture and horticulture sector and invests to improve port efficiency