



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

Ms Anne Gething  
State President  
Country Women's Association of Western Australia  
PO Box 97  
WEST PERTH WA 6872

via email: [info@cwaofwa.asn.au](mailto:info@cwaofwa.asn.au)

Dear Ms Gething

Thank you for your letter to me on 5 September 2022, on behalf of the Country Women's Association (CWA) of Western Australia, regarding your special motion on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

FMD remains a very serious risk to our agriculture industry and an outbreak in Australia could inflict a \$80 billion impact across the country. Protecting Australia from pest and diseases such as FMD is crucial to ensuring our nation can obtain and maintain export market access.

The Albanese Labor Government's response to the detection of FMD in Bali so far does not match the gravity of the situation. I agree it was not swift and decisive. Minister Watt took too long to act.

In terms of ongoing measures, Minister Watt's announcement of an Australian Government taskforce to examine Australia's biosecurity preparedness is just a rebadge of what the former Coalition Government had in place. We had already committed \$67.4 million in the 2021-22 Budget to have a robust response in the event of an outbreak.

I appreciate your members and many other communities across regional and rural Australia are deeply concerned about the possibility of an FMD outbreak, and the devastating impact it would have.

With regards to your specific policy suggestions, the Federal Coalition had been calling for a simple ban on returning passengers from Indonesia carrying food products since 22 July.

Since the outbreak, we had also been calling for the Labor Government to immediately offer 3D-Xray technology to Indonesia, so that organic and plant matter in luggage could be effectively identified.

As well as this, we had been pushing for the introduction of mandatory disinfectant footbaths and mats at all international Australian airports, not just the major ones.

Being an organisation based in Western Australia, you may have heard the State Labor Minister for Agriculture say an outbreak of FMD in Australia would result in cheaper meat and milk.

That was an appalling comment.

This Minister demonstrated she is incapable of supporting the industry, and it explains yet again the Labor Party doesn't understand the needs and concerns of the agriculture sector.

Thank you very much to the CWA for supporting this critical industry through initiatives and sharing information, to help farmers on the ground implement these important biosecurity measures.

I appreciate your keen interest and please be assured the Coalition will always stand on the side of our primary producers and regional communities.

Thank you again for getting in touch and please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance in the future.

Yours sincerely *+ kind regards,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Dutton".

PETER DUTTON

*5/10/23*