



**INDUSTRY RELEASE 2<sup>ND</sup> February 2017**

**AUSTRALIAN LYCHEE GROWERS ASSOCIATION**  
**RESPONSE TO:**

**“LYCHEE IDENTIFIED AS CAUSE FOR MYSTERY DEADLY CHILDHOOD ILLNESS IN INDIA”**

The Australian Lychee Growers Association (ALGA) would like to express their concerns in regards to the recent release of the findings of “a case-control study” published in the medical journal The Lancet which has identified that eating green unripe immature lychee or any fruit from the Sapindaceae or Soapberry family could cause illness.

ALGA’s response is due to a number of phone calls the Association has received as well as to the articles published on radio & news media websites.

The release states that for more than two decades, apparently healthy children in the Indian region of Bihar suffered sudden seizures and lost consciousness. The research found that eating unripe green lychee, which contains an amino acid, could cause low blood glucose levels.

A number of undernourished children were spending their days in lychee orchards, picking & eating unripe green lychees from the trees & ground. During the areas lychee season, between May & June, the children consumed large amounts of unripe green lychee and were then not interested in eating their evening meal & then eventually falling ill.

ALGA always promotes the eating of “fresh ripe red lychee”. It is very sad that the children were or are in a situation where they needed to eat the green fruit. The findings also refer to the children’s age and state of nourishment as major factors in their illness.

Many unripe fruits, not only lychee, can cause illness and consumers of fruit would be aware of this.

The ripe lychee fruit does not present any known problems and has been found to have numerous health & nutritional benefits. Seven lychees (one serve) contain as much Vitamin C as a small orange and provide 100% of the recommended daily intakes of Vitamin C. Lychees are also ranked second behind strawberries in antioxidant levels. They have fewer than 66 calories per 100g and are fat-free. Lychees are also medium GI, with GI level of 57. Their slow releasing energy makes them a great snack to keep you going.

The findings state that “the researchers also said there were now studies looking at how to put the lychee’s glucose-lowering properties to good use in treating metabolic syndrome”. (Metabolic syndrome is a collection of disorders that occur together and increase your risk of developing type 2 Diabetes or Cardiovascular disease (stroke or heart disease)).

Derek Foley – President  
Jill Houser – Executive Officer  
AUSTRALIAN LYCHEE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

NB: The findings of the “Case Control Study” should be read in its entirety to obtain an overall understanding of the story. Media and internet headlines only issue sections to capture reader’s attention. The full reports can be found on the following links:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(17\)30046-3/fulltext?rss=yes](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(17)30046-3/fulltext?rss=yes)

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(17\)30035-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(17)30035-9/fulltext)

It is noted in the report that “The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention”.