

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Issued on behalf of Growcom and the Australian Lychee Growers Association

Safe for Australians to eat fresh lychees

Friday, 3 February 2017

The Australian Lychee Growers Association and peak horticulture body Growcom said today it was safe for Australians to continue to enjoy beautiful fresh ripe lychees despite concerning reports about an illness affecting children in India.

President of the Australian Lychee Growers Association Derek Foley said that the research published in the medical journal *The Lancet* clearly showed that the illness affected malnourished children eating large numbers of green immature unripe fruit.

“The report identifies an amino acid present in high concentrations in the unripe fruit which affects the way glucose is metabolised and has a particularly strong impact on malnourished children who did not eat an evening meal,” he said.

“Whilst we are very distressed to hear about the impact on these children, the pre-conditions for the illness are not likely to occur in Australia.

“The bottom line is that Australian consumers are unlikely to be in contact with green immature unripe fruit and are unlikely to be eating them in large quantities at the exclusion of other foods.

“We pride ourselves on picking fruit that is ripe red delicious and ready for consumption whereas these children are raiding orchards and gorging on green immature unripe fruit and then going without dinner.

"The researchers themselves recommended eating an evening meal and moderating the intake of green immature lychees.

"The researchers also pointed out that studies are looking at how to put the lychee's glucose-lowering properties to good use in treating metabolic syndrome."

For further comment: Derek Foley, President, Australian Lychee Growers Association, telephone: 0414 799 263 or Rachel Mackenzie, Chief Advocate Growcom on 0408 796 199.)

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