

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Mr Peter George MP

Member for Franklin

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20 AUG 2026

Dear Mr George

In Parliament on 12 August 2026, you asked the following question from your constituent Sadie Chrestman from Fat Pig Farm.

While pleased to see the government has walked back its plans to regulate crop swaps, honesty boxes and backyard growers, Sadie is concerned about the impact of the draft Primary Produce Safety (Horticulture Produce) Regulations on small commercial growers cultivating less than two hectares. Will the Government amend the draft regulations to exempt small commercial growers from accreditation, auditing and registration requirements and instead provide clear, freely available guidance on water quality, composting and produce storage? The Government's own food resilience strategy encourages small scale food producers, community gardens and local food resilience initiatives. How, then, does the Minister justify imposing unnecessary burdens on small growers, agritourism operators, school kitchen gardens and community food programs?

Firstly, thank you for the question on behalf of your constituent. Tasmania has a proud culture of growing, sharing, donating and selling small amounts of fresh produce within our communities, and I can assure you, this Government is committed to safeguarding producers' livelihoods while ensuring Tasmania's reputation for world-class, safe produce remains strong.

Phase 2 of the consultation draft proposed a tiered regulatory model designed to implement new national food safety standards. Throughout the consultation process, it became clear that many Tasmanians were concerned about the potential impact on backyard growers, community food sharing, local markets and small-scale producers.

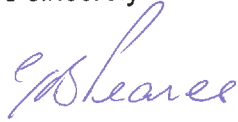
We have taken those concerns seriously and the Government's position is clear. The final regulations must protect backyard growers, community food growing, food relief organisations, local markets and small-scale producers from unnecessary fees, excessive paperwork and disproportionate compliance requirements.

Food safety remains extremely important; however, food safety and common sense must go hand in hand. We can achieve food safety through education, practical guidance and commonsense measures, not unnecessary red tape.

While I will not pre-empt the outcome of the consultation process, I can assure you that the Government is determined to strike the right balance. We want to maintain Tasmania's outstanding food safety reputation and market access opportunities for our producers, while ensuring small-scale growers, agritourism operators, school kitchen gardens and community food programs are not subjected to disproportionate compliance requirements.

Thank you once again for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Pearce', written in a cursive style.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water