




## Media Statement

3 Baron-Hay Court, South Perth, Western Australia 6151  
Telephone: +61 (0)8 9368 3333 Fax: +61 (0)8 9474 2018  
agric.wa.gov.au

 @DAFWAmedia

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### **Quarantine alert: don't post a pest**

The Department of Agriculture and Food has issued a warning to members of the public importing plant material from the Eastern States that they will get caught if they haven't followed the proper import conditions.

The caution follows a spate of seizures by the department's [Quarantine WA](#) at the mail and parcel facilities which could have posed a risk to the State's enviable biosecurity status.

Department biosecurity executive director Kevin Chennell said Western Australia remained relatively free of serious agricultural pests and diseases and it was vital to continue to safeguard the State's \$20 billion agriculture and food sector and the environment.

Border biosecurity director Greg Pickles said detector dogs from the domestic airport had recently been brought in to assist with detections in mail.

"The recent seizures could have created significant problems in Western Australia if they had not been detected," Mr Pickles said.

"A parcel of deteriorated figs could have introduced Queensland fruit fly which have the potential to devastate our major fruit and vegetable growing industries, while a seizure of papaya leaves from the Northern Territory could have introduced Black Spot and Ring Spot Virus which would have affected our pawpaw growers.

"A detection of lawn seed that breached the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* could have contained exotic weed seed contaminants that have the potential to become established in WA."

Mr Pickles said Quarantine WA staff were working with [Australia Post](#) staff to help identify postal items that could contain biosecurity risks.

People can check the legal status of organisms they wish to import to WA on the department website [agric.wa.gov.au](#) by searching for '[Western Australian Organism List](#)'. Materials are allocated a status of permitted, permitted with a permit, or prohibited, depending on the biosecurity risk they post to Western Australia.

People should also check the entry conditions for organisms via the [WA Import Requirements Search](#).

Mr Pickles suggested people unsure of the status of material they wish to import call [Quarantine WA](#) on 08 9334 1800 rather than risk having their mail seized for destruction or be fined.

**Picture caption:** *Detector dog Oscar checks parcels for biosecurity risk materials with Quarantine Inspector Lexy Martin.*

### **Media contacts:**

Jodie Thomson/Dionne Tindale, media liaison +61 (0)8 9368 3937

Greg Pickles, director Border Biosecurity +61 (0)8 9334 1828, 0427 443 631