

To the Australian Productivity Commission,

As an Australian fruit grower, what happens to SPC Ardmona (SPCA) has a direct impact on my business and livelihood.

SPCA has been hit by the flood of imported products appearing on supermarket shelves as a result of the high Australian dollar. The drought and floods did not cause the damage to SPCA – imports began rising before those natural disasters and have continued now that conditions are more normal.

As growers we are used to dealing with droughts and floods, but we cannot deal with the loss of the only processing plant that can process our produce.

What happens to SPCA will also affect the Goulburn Valley region

SPCA employs hundreds of workers directly but the impact of SPCA closing down would severely impact the whole region in terms of employment and income lost as well as social disruption.

I produce Apricot varieties and peach varieties and have approximately 20 acres. My supply to SPCA is approximately 100% of my income. My quota for the 2014 season has been dramatically reduced. We are left with little alternative but to destroy our trees and watch our fruit fall from the trees.

As a result of this reduced quota I am forced to make dramatic cuts to my own staff and farm spending. Spending less on my business costs means I am putting less money into our community, and as all other surviving growers will be doing the same. During the harvest period we employ a number of staff to help pick our crops, with our quota being reduced we have to employ no one which means more people without work and lining up to get centre link payments which is sad to see.

Like SPCA, I have invested in our business to make it competitive. I have replanted young trees to replace old ones; I am always talking with SPCA about new varieties coming out and if they would like us to plant some which we are putting in 2 new varieties for them this year for SPCA.

However the flood of cheap imports threatens to undermine everything I have done.

Our industry needs breathing space so that we can survive and then undertake the investment and productivity gains necessary to compete against imports longer term.

SPCA is asking for temporary breathing space through tariffs which are allowed under the WTO Safeguards Agreement.

I strongly support this reasonable request. In particular we support SPCA being given emergency provisional safeguards for 200 days, followed by longer-term full safeguards.

If this industry does not turn around and SPC Ardmona closes, my livelihood and career is over. I, along with many others, will have to re-educate myself into another field. That is why SPC Ardmona must survive. It is almost 100 years old and me and my family have been working on the land growing fruit for SPCA for 30 years plus, and would love to keep growing fruit for SPCA so I can keep my career going help out with unemployment in the harvest period and be proud of seeing my product on the shelves of supermarkets etc.

Shepparton, the Goulburn Valley and Australia need this company to regain strength and thrive like it once did.

Yours sincerely,

**Name**

Frank Scarcella.