

17th July 2013

Attention: Carole Gardner

Imported Process Tomato Products
Productivity Commission
LB 2 Collins Street East
Melbourne VIC 3003

Dear Carole,

As the Victorian State Member for Rodney I would like to lodge an official submission to the Productivity Commission in relation to the 'Safeguards Inquiry' into imported tomato products.

I write in support of Echuca-based tomato processing factory Kagome, our local tomato growers and the wider industry.

Kagome is extremely important to our local region as a major employer and as a significant player in the Australian tomato industry – they are Australia's largest tomato processing factory.

I believe strongly that Kagome deserves protection from other countries and their cheap imported, poorer quality products.

Times have been tough given we've had a high Australian dollar on top of devastating impacts from a 10 year drought followed by floods which virtually wiped out an entire tomato season.

I fully support the initiation of an inquiry into imported tomato products (namely processed fruit and processed tomatoes) and would support a recommendation to impose safeguards or temporary tariffs.

It is my understanding that if this were to happen imported canned diced tomatoes would increase in price.

This temporary action seems more than fair and responsible as it would level the marketplace and allow 100% AUSSIE GROWN products to compete.

The Rodney Electorate has been deeply affected by the negative impact to SPC Ardmona by the rise in cheap imported cans of diced tomatoes since 2009.

SPC Ardmona is a customer of Kagome Australia and our Echuca based processor would be significantly damaged if SPC Ardmona was to cease trading.

This would be an unacceptable outcome for SPC Ardmona, Kagome and its 30 local full time employees (up to 200 in peak harvest period), our local hard-working tomato growers and their families and the industry as a whole.

We also cannot ignore the devastating impact this would have on the much needed flow-on affect Kagome delivers to local industries in the immediate area. For the 11 local tomatoes growers, their employees and their families this would equate to total loss of income.



Paul Weller MLA

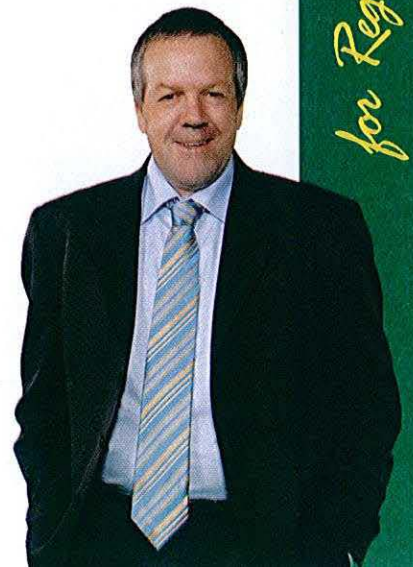
Member for Rodney

In addition, the local support industries including machinery, maintenance and on-farm assistance would be greatly disadvantaged by a decline in local food production.

Kagome and the local food processing industry needs our support and they have mine to support the introduction of industry safeguards or temporary tariffs to not only protect the industry but to keep the future of a fresh, high quality, locally-grown food industry alive in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Weller MP
Member for Rodney



for Regional Victoria