



Organic Industries

Voice of Australia's organic industries
www.organicindustries.com.au

60 Investigator Street
RED HILL ACT 2603

30 September 2021

Assistant Secretary, Residues and Food Branch
Department of Agriculture
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Attention: Tom Black (Tom.Black@agriculture.gov.au)

Dear Tom

We last wrote on 16 December 2019 with concern about the structure and operation of The Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council Inc (OISCC). A copy of that letter is attached.

At that time, we advised that we felt OISCC and the National Standards Sub Committee (NSsC) system has served the Australian industry well for the last decade. We also suggested that the system needed reform to address potential conflicts of interest, to improve transparency, and to increase stakeholder engagement to best serve Australia's organic industry into the future.

Since then, we met with the previous President and Secretary of OISCC and subsequently raised the issues with the current President. The responses we have received from OISCC to-date display neither the urgency nor solutions that we were expecting.

We are dismayed to learn that the President of OISCC, the first to be notionally independent of the certifiers, is resigning after only a few months in the role. We understand that two certifiers have resigned as OISCC members, and we are deeply concerned about irregularities in membership changes of NSsC.

The Organic Industry Advisory Group delivered a final report to Minister Littleproud on 29 June 2021; however, the report is yet to be made public. In the interests of transparency, we encourage the Department to make public the report and recommendations.

Partly in response to these issues, OIA will be convening a series of industry policy forums. Central to these forums will be the need to review the National (Export) Standard and domestic industry regulation, the adequacy of certifying to the National Standard, and the professionalism of auditing. We expect the forums to conclude that current regulations fall well short of fit for purpose.

OIA stands ready to provide leadership in respect of improving export and domestic regulations.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carissa Wolfe".

Carissa Wolfe
Chair, Organic Industries of Australia Ltd