



The Place To Be

# Media release

From the Department of Primary Industries

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## **POTATO PLANT PROTECTION DISTRICTS – A REMINDER**

The Portland and Colac-Otway Plant Protection Districts were established in recent years to reduce the risk of the pest potato cyst nematode (PCN) threatening potato crops in those areas.

The Districts are administered by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and DPI Plant Standards Officer David Sgambaro reminds local businesses that they need to remain vigilant.

“Being a declared Plant Protection District means that entry into the area of potatoes for planting or stockfeed, agricultural equipment used in potato production, and used potato bins or bags, is subject to a number of conditions,” said Mr Sgambaro.

“So far, the two Districts in the south-west of Victoria have been operating successfully. However, local potato growers and associated businesses must continue to comply with the movement conditions if protection against PCN is to be maintained.

“Road signs on the borders of the Districts remind business operators of these conditions.”

Mr Sgambaro said the PCN controls were requested by local growers to protect their industry, their customers and their suppliers.

“PCN feeds on the roots of potato plants and can seriously affect crop yields and marketability, but does not pose any risk to human health,” said Mr Sgambaro.

Potatoes for human consumption are exempt from the entry requirements.

Protection against PCN in Victoria received a further boost last month with the declaration of the Warragul Plant Protection District, which has similar status to those at Portland and Colac-Otway.

The establishment of potato Plant Protection Districts is part of the DPI plant biosecurity program, which aims to protect Victorian plant industries from pests and diseases and to enhance market access.

For information about conditions of movement into the Districts, please contact David Sgambaro on (03) 8731 3500.

*Photo caption:*

Look out for the Plant Protection District road signs.

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