



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Reduced time for organic certification

A new proposal acknowledges prior organic practices; reducing the time it takes some producers to achieve organic certification.

It currently takes three years for a farmer or grazier to achieve organic certification; this includes a year of 'pre certification' and two years of 'in conversion' until achieving full certification in the third year.

Under a proposal by the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council, which sets the *National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce* in Australia, producers could be fully certified after one year of inspections, if they can verify that the property has been under organic management for the previous three years.

Australia's largest and most recognised organic certification body Australian Certified Organic has been lobbying for the change and welcomes the proposal.

Its Chief Certification Officer Michael Baker says the change would bring Australia's organic standards in line with international standards.

He says, "This is an exciting development and is especially good news for certified organic producers who want to add additional land to their operations.

"It's a change Australian Certified Organic has requested for some time. It would make Australian organic producers more competitive on the international market and give producers converting to organic a market to sell 'in conversion' produce.

The *Australian Certified Organic Standard* would follow suit if the changes were made at a national level.

Michael says it's important that this change is not seen to give producers short cuts to organic certification.

"They still need to manage the property according to the *Australian Certified Organic Standard* and they would need to prove that they've been operating the farm organically for three years.

"Under organic certification initial soil tests are taken on farms and they're audited each year to make sure the property and its management complies with the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*," Michael says.

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