



**The Hon. David Littleproud MP**  
**Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources**

**M E D I A R E L E A S E**

Friday, 29 June 2018

**Coalition beefs up biosecurity**

- **Coalition announces the allocation of \$137.8 million for further, new biosecurity investment over five years**
- **The newly allocated amount and Budget measures total \$313 million in new spending over five years, including \$34.5M for on-the-ground instore checking for incursions such as white spot on prawns**
- **Will support cutting edge biosecurity technologies, improve biosecurity data, analytics and intelligence**

The Coalition Government is beefing up Australia's biosecurity system, through allocating \$137.8 million to build a smarter and stronger biosecurity system to further protect Australia's farm industries and environment.

"This investment is part of the Coalition's comprehensive plan to keep Australia's industries and environment safe from invading biosecurity threats," Minister Littleproud said.

"A \$25.2 million Biosecurity Innovation Program will invest in smart new technology, such as underwater sonar drones to check for pests on the underside of ships and x-ray guns to scan more passenger baggage more quickly at airports. Electronic sensors in sea containers will pick up intruding insects through sound and smell.

"A further \$36.5 million will be allocated for a team of biosecurity analytics specialists to help tell us which passengers, countries and imports are likely to bring in pests and diseases. Our data and analytics will also tell us when pests are extending their range in other countries which could heighten our exposure to them.

"The Indigenous Biosecurity Rangers program will be made ongoing with \$33.5 million over the next five years to employ 69 groups of Indigenous Rangers on our 10,000 km of northern Australian coastline. These rangers are a frontline defence for our farming and environment – keeping out invading pests and diseases. The amount includes training for an additional 13 Torres Strait Islander groups.

"The Rangers access remote areas to conduct animal disease samples, insect trapping and plant diseases monitoring and are now using drones to assist with plant surveillance work.

"We have set aside \$35 million in contingency funding, ready to go if we do face an incursion we need to stamp out.

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"Another \$7.6 million over five years will establish and appoint an ongoing Environmental Biosecurity Protection Officer and staff within the Department of Agriculture. This Officer and his or her staff would prepare plans and invest in projects to keep out environmental threats including the Asian black spined toad, which is similar to the cane toad.

"Pests and diseases have an environmental impact. Myrtle Rust, which arrived in Australia in 2010, causes disease in bottle brush, tea tree and eucalyptus, threatening some of Australia's iconic native flora.

"All this comes on top of the \$145.9 million of new funding allocated to biosecurity investment over five years in the recent budget, which included \$107.8 million for:

- Enhanced assurance and verification activities to enhance enforcement of our strict standards
- Monitoring pests and diseases overseas so we can reduce the risk of them getting to Australia
- More surveillance, monitoring and response around ports
- Keeping our vaccine bank ready for the risk of foot and mouth disease
- Funding the Australian Animal Health Laboratory and its vital testing for exotic pests and diseases.

"We also allocated \$18.1 million for more boots on the ground at our international ports over five years, with around 35 extra officers inspecting passengers' baggage and performing other tasks.

"I look forward to working with my state and territory counterparts to finalise a new Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) by late 2018."

#### Fast facts

- **The \$313 million in total funding includes \$293 million over the next five years, plus an additional one-off amount of \$20 million in 2017-18 to support Tasmanian fruit growers impacted by the fruit fly outbreak.**
- **Total funding for biosecurity in 2018-19 will be \$773.2 million – an increase of 28.1 per cent, or \$169.8 million, since 2012-13.**
- **The Coalition had already allocated \$145.9 million of the \$313 million towards biosecurity in the recent budget.**