

# FACT SHEET

# GRAIN INDUSTRY

# LEVY POLL



The grain industry does not currently have an agreed process for reviewing grain R&D levies. The accumulation of GRDC reserves and volatility in GRDC income has highlighted the need to develop and seek agreement on a clear process for undertaking reviews of grain levy rates.

GrainGrowers is looking to work with industry to develop a clear and transparent process to allow this to occur and to ensure growers across the country can have their say.

## LEVY POLL STEPS

The following is an overview of the process that GrainGrowers is proposing for Grains L&D Levy Review, based on the Australian Government's levy guidelines for levy review processes. The review process is intended to run over a six-to-eight-month period, with an agreed consultation process and timeframes best suited to Australian grower on-farm peak periods.


- 1. AGREE TO JOINT OVERSIGHT**  
Establish joint committee of the representative organisations and state farming organisations to oversee the review, set timeframes and appoint an independent chair.
- 2. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**  
The Minister and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) would be formally notified to ensure it meets their requirements and enables the use of the levy payer register.
- 3. DEVELOP EVIDENCE AND LEVY SCENARIOS**  
The joint committee would review levy rate options, funding impacts, risks and benefits, including effects on growers, GRDC investments and Commonwealth matching funds.
- 4. LEVY POLL PROPOSAL DEVELOPED**  
A levy poll proposal would be developed for levy payers, including neutral consultation and communication materials, that sets out rationale and implications for all levy rate options.
- 5. INDUSTRY CONSULTATION**  
Structured pre-poll consultation of growers would be undertaken regarding the levy poll to provide opportunity for feedback and discussion.
- 6. POLL DESIGN COMPLETE**  
The poll design agreed with DAFF, including agreement to use the levy payer register to ensure all eligible levy payers included in the poll.
- 7. POLL DELIVERED**  
Poll is undertaken using an independent provider to maintain neutrality along with an independent vote count to ensure grower confidence in the poll integrity.
- 8. REPORT RESULTS AND SEEK MINISTERIAL DECISION**  
Once completed the outcomes of the poll would be reported to the growers, and the final levy proposal submitted to the Minister and DAFF for consideration.

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## WHY AN INDEPENDENT CHAIR?

An independent chair would support the process and the work of the joint committee to ensure the levy poll process is impartial and credible, and ensuring decisions are made in the interests of levy payers. This independence will help to underpin grower confidence and provide assurance to the Minister and DAFF that the poll outcome is fair, transparent and credible.

## TIMELINE

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- 1989 Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989 (PIERD Act)** put in place establishing the framework for rural R&D corporations (RDCs), including industry levies matched by the Commonwealth.
  - 1990 GRDC formally established** under the PIERD Act to invest in research and development that improves the profitability, productivity and sustainability of Australia's grains industry.
  - 1990s–2000s Levy rates across agriculture (including grains) evolve** to include biosecurity levies to support work by Plant Health Australia as well as National Residue Survey testing.
  - 2011 Productivity Commission Inquiry into Rural Research and Development Corporations.** Found the RDC model was sound, with broader findings related to public-good research, and governance reforms.
  - 2015 Senate inquiry into agricultural levies and RDC governance.** Highlighted the need for improved consultation mechanisms and transparency across RDCs, including GRDC.
  - 2019 GRDC levy payer register established.** The register established to support better communication and accountability with growers for levy funded activities.
  - 2021 National Agricultural Innovation Policy Statement.** Provided long term objectives and priorities for the agricultural innovation system, with a focus on resilience, profitability and international competitiveness.
  - 2024 GRDC commissioned “Right-sizing GRDC RD&E Investment” review** to inform its forward expenditure and management of reserves.
  - 2025 Grain Producers Australia requests change levy rates.** A proposal to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to change levy rates (reduce grains R&D levy from 0.99% to 0.79% and to increase the biosecurity activity component from 0.01% to 0.07%) was rejected. Minister requests industry work together to bring forward a unified position on any future levy amendments.
  - 2025 National Strategic Examination of R&D** highlighted the need for national research coordination, including within the RDC system.
  - 2025 GRDC reserves exceed \$700 million.**

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