



GRAINGROWERS 2026-27 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION



PREPARED BY GRAINGROWERS LTD
JANUARY 2026

INTRODUCTION

GrainGrowers welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission for the 2026-27 Budget.

Australia has long been regarded as the “Land of Plenty,” enjoying a high level of food security. Central to this success is the Australian grain industry, a cornerstone of Australia’s economy and a powerhouse of agricultural production.

A strong and resilient grain sector ensures households have access to affordable food with grain underpinning the everyday pantry staples Australians rely on, such as bread, cereal, pasta, and noodles and is essential for livestock feed. In addition, the Australian grain industry not only meets domestic demand but exports more than twice the volume consumed locally, making it a critical contributor to national prosperity and global trade.

However, as highlighted in the [Australian Strategic Policy Institute Food Preparedness Green Paper](#), the pace and scale of global change means that traditional assumptions, policy settings, and economic frameworks are no longer sufficient. Australia’s food system faces mounting pressure from a convergence of cascading risks that threaten its long-term sustainability and accessibility.

These risks are not hypothetical, they are the high-probability, high-impact threats that are visible yet often neglected until they escalate into crises. Land-use competition, climate extremes, rising input costs, emerging biosecurity threats, geopolitical uncertainty, and supply chain fragility are compounding vulnerabilities across the food system. Importantly, the past decade has demonstrated that major shocks no longer occur one at a time; they often compound and overwhelm systems already under strain.

Left unaddressed, these pressures could undermine national security, economic stability, and community resilience.

This submission sets out practical, forward-looking budget asks to strengthen the resilience of Australia’s food system. By acting now, Australia can safeguard affordable, nutritious food for the country, protect regional economies, and maintain Australia’s position as a reliable global supplier in an increasingly uncertain world.

ABOUT GRAINGROWERS

With over 15,000 individual grower members across Australia, GrainGrowers is a national organisation working to enhance the profitability and sustainability of Australian grain growers. GrainGrowers achieves this through focus areas of policy and advocacy, grower engagement, thought leadership and active investment in future focused activities. Australian growers are at the heart of all that GrainGrowers does and the focus of its work.

Should you require any further information in relation to this submission, please contact GrainGrowers General Manager for Policy and Advocacy, Zachary Whale on (02) 9286 2000 or Zachary.Whale@graingrowers.com.au.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Safeguard agricultural land

- \$10 million over four years to support the continued development and application of the Spatial Agriculture, Forestry, and Environment (SAFE) model to deliver a national agricultural land capability assessment

Secure access to inputs

- \$5 million research and development grant package to support the use of Australian agricultural feedstocks
- \$7 million package to improve farm input price transparency
- \$9 million per year in ongoing public funding for the APVMA's public benefit functions
- Maintain the fuel tax excise rebate for off-road diesel use for agriculture while diesel is still in use

Strengthen supply chains

- \$900 million per year in targeted funding for key regional freight corridors to improve the long-term resilience of freight networks
- \$100 million in targeted funding each year as part of the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program to rebuild critical aging bridge infrastructure
- \$900 million to continue and expand the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network program nationally, enabling upgrades to critical local government-managed freight routes that connect to state and national highways
- \$1 million to enable the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to increase staffing capacity dedicated to partnering with local governments to improve heavy vehicle road access and streamline access approvals

Boost Australian exports

- \$100 million over four years to support market access, maintenance and utilisation activities by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Capitalise on climate opportunities

- \$5 million to develop a central climate-risk information database, so that growers have access to comprehensive and regionally specific data on climate hazards
- \$2 million to review current off farm income tax treatments that restrain incentives for sustainability activities on private agricultural land, so that grain growers are not financially penalised for participation
- \$2 million for the Clean Energy Regulator to establish a transparent database to track the performance and history of natural capital market intermediaries, so that accountability and trust are built among participating landowners

Support farmer mental health

- \$50 million over four years for a national, agricultural industry led approach to grow farmers' wellbeing and prevent suicides

Strengthen Biosecurity

- \$50 million over four years to fund the implementation of the National Biosecurity Strategy and Action Plan

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT



There are **24,000** grain farm businesses in Australia¹



>34,000 employed by Australian grain farms, with thousands more in the value chain & services²



Agricultural businesses manage **49%** of Australia's landmass, cropping **31 million** hectares³



57.3 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds and pulses are grown each year (in the 5 years to 2023-24)⁴



Grain farmers' estimated contribution to the Australian economy **\$23 billion** GVP each year (in the 5 years to 2023-24)⁵



Australian farms provide **88%** of our domestic food supply⁶



Grain growers contributed **\$225.3 million** to research, development and extension **through industry levies** in 2023-24⁷



\$19.8 billion in Australian grain, oilseed and pulse **export earnings each year** (in the 5 years to 2023-24)⁸



Only **2.3%** agricultural support given to Australian farmers as a share of gross farm receipts (compared to OCED average of 13.7%)⁹

BUDGET REQUEST DETAILS

Safeguard agricultural land:

Agricultural land is an invaluable finite resource crucial for Australia's domestic food security. With a growing population and increasing climate pressures, safeguarding agricultural land resources will be critical in ensuring Australians have reliable access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food produced domestically.

Encroaching non-agricultural development poses a threat to the long-term availability and productivity of the land needed to meet the nation's food requirements. Over the last forty years, Australia has seen a reduction of approximately 100 million hectares, or 20%, of its agricultural land.

- \$10 million over four years to support the continued development and application of the Spatial Agriculture, Forestry, and Environment (SAFE) model to deliver a national agricultural land capability assessment

Fundamental to robust policy development is data. The recently released ABARES SAFE model provides a valuable foundation for future policymaking, demonstrating potential outcomes under different land use scenarios and offering a landscape-level view of how agriculture and environmental markets may interact. However, to develop truly comprehensive and effective land use policies, data on national land use trends, beyond environmental plantings, and their impacts on agricultural productivity is still needed. Baseline data on national land use trends, including the extent and distribution of land use changes affecting agricultural land, is essential for informing policy decisions, measuring the effectiveness of interventions, and adapting approaches as the transitioning economy evolves. This baseline data is crucial in ensuring competing land uses, including renewable energy infrastructure, minerals sand and mining, urbanisation, conservation, and carbon farming, do not erode the finite agricultural land needed to protect domestic food security.

Currently, the available information and data is scattered across multiple sources, making it difficult to consolidate and interpret in a useful, user-friendly manner. Without integrated baseline data, it is challenging to formulate robust policies that can adequately address and manage the underlying drivers of land use change in a transitioning economy while simultaneously contending with the challenges of climate change and food security.

This data-driven approach will help ensure that efforts to reduce emissions do not inadvertently undermine the long-term viability and productivity of Australia's agricultural lands, which may compromise domestic food security.

Secure access to inputs

Australia's grain sector faces escalating strategic risks due to its reliance on imported fuel, fertilisers, and agricultural chemicals. These dependencies expose Australia's food production systems to global supply chain disruptions, energy market volatility, and geopolitical instability, threats that directly undermine national food security.

- \$5 million research and development grant package to support the use of Australian agricultural feedstocks

Australia's fuel security is at a critical juncture. With 91% of liquid fuels imported, limited domestic stockholdings, and vulnerable supply chains reliant on geopolitical stability, the nation faces growing risks to its energy resilience. In times of crisis or conflict, securing a reliable, sovereign fuel supply is not just an economic necessity, it is a matter of national security.

These risks are particularly acute for the grain industry, which is one of Australia's most fuel-intensive agricultural sectors. Grain growers rely heavily on diesel at every stage of production and transport, from sowing and harvesting through to on-farm storage and long-distance freight to domestic processors and export ports. Disruptions to fuel supply or sharp price volatility directly increase production costs and threaten the reliability of domestic and export grain supply chains.

However, with an abundance of domestically grown agricultural feedstocks, established supply chains, and the capability to produce sustainable fuels that meet environmental standards, Australia is ideally placed to produce low carbon liquid fuels domestically.

Grants supporting research and development (R&D) will be critical to unlocking Australia's potential as a major producer of low-carbon liquid fuel feedstocks.

Targeted public investment can de-risk innovation, attract private co-investment, and ensure that the benefits of emerging technologies are shared across the agricultural sector.

A key pathway to meeting growing global demand for sustainable feedstock is to intensify oil production within the existing farming footprint, rather than expand land use. Government-supported investment should focus on enhancing feedstock productivity, emissions accounting, and conversion efficiency, with coordinated programs that bring together CSIRO, RDCs, universities, and industry partners.

- **\$7 million package to improve farm input price transparency**

Input pricing for critical farm products such as fertilisers and agricultural chemicals is often opaque, limiting growers' access to timely, accurate and independently verified information. This lack of transparency reduces effective competition, creates information asymmetries across the supply chain, and contributes to inefficiencies that ultimately increase production costs and undermine farm profitability.

GrainGrowers is calling for \$5 million to support ABARES to develop of a national farm input portal, to centralise price and quantity data in a single, publicly accessible platform and \$2 million to increase public reporting on an expanded list of agricultural inputs.

This would enable growers to compare prices, identify trends, and make informed purchasing decisions based on reliable and current information. Increased transparency would strengthen market integrity, reduce information asymmetry, and improve growers' ability to negotiate fair prices.

Currently, significant gaps exist across the import and distribution supply chains for key farm inputs. Government data collection is limited and highly aggregated, with substantial reporting time lags that prevent effective monitoring of markets that can fluctuate rapidly week to week or month to month. In some cases, such as glyphosate, publicly available pricing information is largely anecdotal, difficult to source, and not independently verified, leaving growers to make decisions on a user-beware basis. Addressing these gaps through improved data collection and reporting would deliver more competitive, efficient and resilient input markets for Australian agriculture.

- **\$9 million per year in ongoing public funding for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority's public benefit functions**

Agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines are essential to producing safe, affordable food and fibre in Australia, and timely access to these products underpins farm productivity, national food security, public health and consumer confidence. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is responsible for ensuring these products meet strict safety and efficacy standards. However, it is the only pesticide regulator in the OECD funded entirely by industry fees and levies. This model, combined with Australia's relatively small market size, discourages global innovators from registering new technologies and limits access to safer and more sustainable products.

Many of the APVMA's core responsibilities, including chemical reviews, compliance, and monitoring, provide clear public benefits by protecting human health, the environment and Australia's trading reputation. Ongoing public funding of \$9 million per year would help address these structural constraints, improve efficiency across the regulator's functions and support timely access to new and improved technologies for Australian growers.

It would also strengthen public confidence by aligning the APVMA's funding model with other public-good regulators, such as the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the Therapeutic Goods Administration, reinforcing trust in the safety and integrity of Australian food and fibre. By reducing barriers to entry for registrants, particularly for minor crops and niche industries, targeted public investment would also encourage innovation and improve Australia's access to cutting-edge agricultural technologies.

- Maintain the fuel tax excise rebate for off-road diesel use for agriculture while diesel is still in use

While alternate technologies are being commercialised and the fuel excise remains in place, it is essential that the fuel tax credit is preserved for agricultural vehicles used off-road. The excise is designed to fund road maintenance, and as such the fuel tax credit scheme rightly acknowledges that diesel used off-road does not contribute to wear and tear on public roads and therefore should not incur this charge.

This credit is critically important to agriculture, reflecting the substantial off-road diesel use that occurs on farms. In GrainGrowers' 2024 survey, 97% of farmers reported that the fuel tax credit positively impacts the sector's sustainability and profitability. Any changes to the scheme would significantly increase costs for farmers, reducing their capacity to produce food efficiently and improve sustainability.

Strengthen supply chains:

Efficient and resilient freight networks are critical to the success of the Australian grain industry and the broader Australian economy.

Overlapping natural disasters in recent years has demonstrated how quickly food distribution, transport and storage networks can be compromised when multiple climate shocks occur at once.

Potential delays in transporting food can have a significant impact as there is typically less than a month's supply of non-perishable food and less than a week's supply of perishable food within the supply chain at any one time and most households typically only have a 3–5 days' supply of food.

- \$900 million per year in targeted funding for key regional freight corridors to improve the long-term resilience of freight networks

High-capacity and efficient freight routes are vital for improving grain freight productivity; however, persistent and unprecedented weather events have caused a deterioration in the condition of critical road infrastructure across Australia's grain growing regions.

GrainGrowers' recent report, [Australia's Priority Grain Freight Routes: Critical Infrastructure, Bottlenecks, and Strategic Investment Requirements](#), has identified that many of the key grain freight routes are vulnerable to climate risks. With climate change forecast to result in more frequent and intense climatic events such as riverine flooding and bushfires, it is crucial that investments are made now in building resilience. These works should be conducted through rolling packages of upgrades to raise the standard of the full corridor, rather than a single bottleneck to ensure the efficiency of the entire route.

- \$100 million in targeted funding each year as part of the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program to rebuild critical aging bridge infrastructure

Bridges are a vital part of Australia's infrastructure; however, many rural and regional road managers lack the resources to replace aging bridge structures as they near the end of their operational life. To preserve these assets, managers are often forced to impose load limits, which reduce the weight heavy vehicles can carry and require the use of smaller, less efficient vehicle combinations to transport grain. In the FY24-25 Budget, the Bridges Renewal Program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program were merged into the

Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program. Recognising the critical role of bridges, GrainGrowers is advocating for a dedicated funding stream for bridges within this program to ensure essential bridge upgrades are prioritised, supporting regional transport efficiency and productivity.

- \$900 million to continue and expand the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network program nationally, enabling upgrades to critical local government-managed freight routes that connect to state and national highways

As identified in GrainGrowers' recent report [Australia's Priority Grain Freight Routes: Critical Infrastructure, Bottlenecks, and Strategic Investment Requirements](#), many local roads play a critical role in transporting grain to market, however, were never designed to accommodate the larger, heavier vehicles now required by industry to remain competitive. As a result, these roads are increasingly unsafe and inefficient, creating bottlenecks for key supply chains. Continuing funding for the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network program and expanding nationally with a \$900 million investment will enable upgrades to critical local routes that connect to state and national highways. These upgrades will improve road geometry, strengthen pavement, and allow access for higher-capacity freight vehicles. This will increase transport efficiency by reducing the number of trucks required, lowering costs, and improving safety outcomes, including a reduction in the killed and seriously injured (KSI) rate.

Western Australia's program demonstrates the success of this approach: a jointly funded collaboration between 42 Wheatbelt local governments and the State and Commonwealth Governments is delivering a rolling upgrade of 4,400 km of high-priority routes. A national rollout will replicate these benefits across regional Australia, ensuring safer roads, stronger supply chains, and improved productivity for industries critical to the economy.

- \$1 million to enable the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to increase staffing capacity dedicated to partnering with local governments for the purpose of improving heavy vehicle road access and streamlining access approvals

While the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) is responsible for processing access requests, final decisions rest with individual road managers across state and local governments. This decentralised model, combined with varying levels of technical capability, has resulted in significant inconsistencies in access conditions and assessment approaches across jurisdictions.

These inconsistencies create inefficiencies, increase administrative burden, and limit the productivity benefits available through improved heavy vehicle access.

Enhanced NHVR resourcing would allow the regulator to provide stronger, hands-on support to councils, including technical assessments, network planning advice, and assistance to expand gazetted access where safe and appropriate.

This would support councils to unlock these benefits nationwide, delivering more consistent access outcomes, reducing administrative burden, and improving freight productivity for growers and industry.

Boost Australian exports:

Australia's agricultural sector is navigating one of the most complex global trading environments in recent history. Rising protectionism, increasing tariffs, and non-tariff barriers have created unprecedented uncertainty for exporters. Grain markets, in particular, are at the epicentre of these disruptions, with global trade flows increasingly interdependent and vulnerable to sudden shocks.

Trade and market access play a vital role in supporting domestic food security. Each year, around 70% of Australia's grain production is exported. These international markets enable growers to diversify risk, manage seasonal variability, and smooth out fluctuations in both production and prices. Export demand is not just an outlet for surplus grain; it underpins the entire domestic production system. Without access to global markets, the Australian domestic market would be too small to sustain efficient scale, leading to higher costs, lower productivity, and reduced incentives for investment in research and development.

- \$100 million over four years to support market access, maintenance and utilisation activities by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Amidst this increasingly challenging global environment, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provides the technical expertise that underpin Australia's ability to keep markets open and secure new opportunities for exporters. Yet the scale and complexity of today's challenges are outpacing current resources.

To safeguard Australia's competitiveness and ensure the prosperity of regional communities, the Federal Government must commit to sustained and increased funding for DAFF's trade and market access functions, including the Agriculture Counsellor network and technical specialists. Strengthening this capability is an essential policy investment to support Australia's \$78.4 billion agricultural, fisheries and forestry exports and capture future growth in contested global markets.

By maintaining diverse export markets, Australia reduces its reliance on any single trade route or partner, improving resilience against supply chain disruptions, tariff changes, and non-tariff trade barriers. Supporting a strong export base ensures that the industry can adapt to shifting global dynamics and continue contributing to Australia's balance of trade, regional relationships, and long-term economic security.

Capitalise on climate opportunities:

The escalating impacts of climate change pose significant risks to Australia's grain sector, underscoring the critical need to account for these threats when planning and managing Australia's vital agricultural land resources.

The effects of climate change have been estimated to have reduced potential wheat yields by around 27% since 1990.

According to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), declining rainfall from 2001 to 2021, compared to 1950 to 2000, saw simulated farm profits reduced by an average of 23%, or \$29,200.

Such climate-driven challenges threaten to undermine the long-term productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector, with the National Risk Assessment stating that by 2050 the climate risk to primary industries and the food system is expected to increase to high–very high. The report states that increasing impacts on the agriculture sector will cascade to other systems including public health and safety and reduced food security in some areas.

- \$5 million for the Australian Climate Service to develop a central climate-risk information database, so that growers have access to comprehensive and regionally specific data on climate hazards

This investment is aimed at supporting and protecting Australian growers and ensuring the long-term productivity and profitability of the grain sector under a changing climate, which is critical for national food security.

The first National Risk Assessment clearly identifies the climate risks facing agriculture that may decrease productivity, quality and profitability, and increase biosecurity pressures. A recommendation by the Productivity Commission in the 'Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation' Inquiry report is for the government to improve access to climate risk information through a national database. This builds on the National Climate Risk Assessment and would support decision-making and risk management by providing growers with the data they need to better prepare for and adapt to the changing climate, safeguarding the continuation of essential agricultural production.

The proposed \$5 million investment for the Australian Climate Service would aim to address the current gaps in climate risk information and data accessibility. These gaps include: the limited spatial granularity of available data, which limits the ability to identify localised climate risks; the fragmentation of existing climate information which prevents a cohesive national picture; and the issue of information being difficult for end-users, including growers, to make more informed decisions to enhance the resilience of their homes and farm businesses in the face of escalating climate challenges.

The investment would build upon existing programs and datasets, leveraging the work done to date by governments, the Australian Climate Service, and the National Emergency Management Agency, to create a comprehensive, user-friendly platform that provides growers with the regionally specific climate risk information they require to effectively manage their operations under climate change and secure the long-term productivity and profitability of the agricultural sector, which is critical for Australia's food security.

- \$2 million to review current off farm income tax treatments that restrain incentives for sustainability activities on private agricultural land, so that grain growers are not financially penalised for participation

Inadvertent perverse incentives may exist that potentially penalise growers who choose to host renewables or engage in environmental markets. This \$2 million investment would enable research to explore how incentives for emissions reduction on private agricultural land can be improved, including analysing tax arrangements and other financial mechanisms, to refine existing programs and develop new incentives that will increase the uptake of emissions reduction practices by grain growers.

Current tax treatments for grain growers are designed to support businesses uniquely exposed to income volatility, with tools like the Farm Management Deposit scheme aiming to create more stability and resilience, helping growers better withstand the ebbs and flows of production.

However, modern farming is evolving, with many growers interested in diversifying their income sources beyond traditional commodity production. This can take various forms, such as hosting renewable energy infrastructure and participating in carbon and biodiversity markets.

These alternative revenue streams not only contribute to the government's nature positive agenda and national decarbonisation goals, but they can also provide growers with more predictable cash flows. Yet, there are valid questions about whether the current tax settings are adequate to support growers looking to transition their business models. This \$2 million investment will ensure that growers are not financially penalised for participating in emissions reduction and environmental stewardship activities on their land, and that these activities can contribute to the ongoing productivity and profitability of growers, helping to protect food security in the long term.

- \$2 million for the Clean Energy Regulator to establish a transparent database to track the performance and history of natural capital market intermediaries, so that accountability and trust are built among participating landowners

A barrier to increased participation in natural capital markets, including the Australian Carbon Credit Unit scheme and the emerging Nature Repair Market, is concern around the independence of intermediaries, such as aggregators and brokers, due to information asymmetry, inequitable distribution of financial benefits, and a perceived lack of transparency. This investment is aimed at ensuring growers have the necessary information and confidence to engage effectively in these markets.

To address similar concerns that have arisen during the rollout of renewable energy projects, the government has introduced a clean energy Developer Rating Scheme. This initiative aims to provide landholders and communities with greater transparency and confidence about the companies proposing new renewable energy infrastructure in their area.

A comparable scheme could be developed for natural capital markets. Such a program would help build trust by offering growers and participants more visibility into the activities, track records and financial arrangements of intermediaries operating in natural capital markets. This would empower growers to make informed decisions about which entities to partner with and ensure they are able to fairly participate in and benefit from these emerging markets.

The proposed \$2 million investment would enable the Clean Energy Regulator to establish a comprehensive, publicly accessible database that provides growers with detailed information on the performance, credentials and practices of natural capital market intermediaries. Expanding income opportunities beyond traditional commodity production can enhance the long-term viability and resilience of Australian grain farms, which is critical for maintaining national food security in the face of climate change and other challenges.

Support farmer mental health

Australia's food security depends fundamentally on the wellbeing and resilience of the people who produce our food. Growers are the most important asset in the agricultural system, yet they are increasingly exposed to severe and compounding pressures. Recent bushfires in Victoria and repeated flooding events in Queensland have disrupted farm operations, damaged critical infrastructure, and created prolonged uncertainty for farming families and regional communities.

These acute climate shocks sit alongside ongoing challenges such as market volatility, rising input costs, regulatory pressure, workforce shortages and social isolation. Together, these pressures place sustained strain on farmers' mental health and wellbeing, resulting in significantly poorer outcomes than the broader population. Evidence shows suicide rates among Australia's farmers are around 59% higher than the national average.

GrainGrowers will be launching a pilot mental health initiative Right Now. Right Now, which is a free on-demand online mental health tool designed to meet the needs of grain growers and grower communities across Australia. It consists of short video messages providing support in times of distress and self-care practice, as well as listings of services offering further help. However, the scale and complexity of the challenge means that industry-led efforts alone cannot address the systemic drivers of poor mental health. Broader, nationally coordinated reform and sustained government investment are required to complement industry initiatives, close service gaps, and deliver lasting improvements in farmer wellbeing that underpin long-term food security.

- \$50 million over four years for a national, agricultural-industry led approach to grow farmers' wellbeing and prevent suicides

While a range of mental health services currently operate across Australia, support for farmers remains fragmented, with no overarching national coordination to maximise impact, prevent duplication, or address persistent service gaps. This fragmentation limits reach, reduces effectiveness, and creates barriers for farmers seeking timely and appropriate support.

To address this, iFarmwell and the University of South Australia, in collaboration with Lifeline Australia, Farmsafe Australia, the National Centre for Farmer Health, and the Regional Wellbeing Survey at the University of Canberra, have developed a proposal for a coordinated, national, agricultural-industry-led approach to farmer mental health. Supported by more than 60 organisations and individuals through the Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Agriculture, the proposal would deliver a five-year program to co-design and implement farmer-focused mental health education campaigns and an accessible, farmer-friendly helpline.

A coordinated, bespoke, industry-based approach would improve early intervention and suicide prevention, strengthen wellbeing, and support better decision-making and productivity across the agricultural sector. Given the significant impacts of poor mental health on individuals, farm businesses and supply chains, a targeted, multi-modal national program is needed to drive cultural change, build resilience, and deliver lasting improvements in farmer wellbeing.

Strengthen biosecurity:

Australia's biosecurity system is facing increasing pressure from complex and evolving threats, with direct implications for national food security. The growing scale of the challenge is evident in the persistent spread of red imported fire ants, the ongoing multi-state response to varroa mite, and near misses such as the recent interception of khapra beetle, one of the world's most destructive grain pests. Emerging risks, including highly pathogenic avian influenza nearing Australia's borders, further underscore the vulnerability of domestic food production systems. As climate change and global trade intensify biosecurity risks, it is increasingly critical that Australia's biosecurity system is adequately resourced and equipped to safeguard agricultural productivity, protect the reliability of domestic food supply, and maintain Australia's reputation as a trusted global food exporter.

- \$50 million over four years to fund the implementation of the National Biosecurity Strategy and Action Plan

The National Biosecurity Strategy (2022–2032) and its Action Plan (2024–2026) provide a clear, nationally agreed roadmap for modernising Australia’s biosecurity system, outlining a vision for a proactive, collaborative and resilient approach. Endorsed by Commonwealth, state and territory agriculture ministers, the Strategy identifies priority reforms including shared responsibility, stronger partnerships, workforce development and better integration of technology and data. However, progress is being constrained by the absence of dedicated, long-term funding. Without targeted investment, Australia risks diminishing its capacity to prevent pest and disease incursions, detect emerging threats early and respond effectively when outbreaks occur.

A \$50 million investment over four years would enable the Australian Government to lead and coordinate delivery of the agreed reforms and ensure the biosecurity system remains fit for purpose in an era of increasing global movement, climate change and geopolitical uncertainty. It would also support transparent annual reporting and performance monitoring, which would help strengthen public trust, support accountability and demonstrate value for money across the system.



Stay in touch with GrainGrowers

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