



QUEENSLAND FRUIT
& VEGETABLE GROWERS

10 April 2024

To whom it may concern,

RE: Inquiry: The Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Levies Bill 2024 [Provisions] and related bills.

I am writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy with a mixture of frustration and disillusionment.

It must be noted from the outset, Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) acknowledges the aim of enhancing long-term national biosecurity outcomes; however, our primary concern stems from the lack of comprehension of industry operations and the absence of genuine consultation by the government to ensure these measures benefit all Australians reliant on positive biosecurity outcomes.

Our reservations regarding this Levy primarily revolve around the hasty approach the government has taken in introducing new legislation without first grasping the existing data on industry contributions to biosecurity outcomes and assessing the fairness of the methodology. It appears that the government has shown disregard for the Attorney General's principles for clearer laws, which emphasise enabling affected parties to understand the law's application to them. Unfortunately, many commodities, just two months away from implementation, remain unaware of the Levy's impact on their increasing production costs.

The industry currently invests in biosecurity preparedness and response activities, including on-farm initiatives, research and development, membership fees for organisations such as Plant Health Australia, and contributions to emergency responses under deed arrangements.

Since the government's initial announcement of the Biosecurity Protection Levy as part of the budget, without prior consultation with the industry, the Levy has encountered numerous issues. Despite industry efforts to address these concerns with the government, the overwhelming feedback from industry stakeholders opposing the Levy suggests that we have yet to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.

It is imperative to pause the Levy and assess the current industry investments in the national biosecurity system, as recommended by the Craik Review. Subsequently, the results should be made public, and the collective resources should be evaluated within the broader context



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of the entire system. Only then can we make informed decisions on how to establish a sustainable biosecurity funding system, rather than pursuing a fundamentally flawed approach rejected by industry stakeholders.

In conclusion, meaningful engagement with stakeholders, transparent communication of revised levy structures, and a comprehensive economic analysis are crucial to develop a fair, equitable, and effective biosecurity funding framework.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0488 034 344.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Chambers', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Rachel Chambers
Chief Executive Officer